

Especially for Sparks Leaders

Find the *Especially for Sparks Leaders* interactive training module associated with this resource under the Club Specific category at awana.org/clubclinic.

! Key Principles

- Sparks is the Awana club for children kindergarten through second grade. The Sparks program emphasizes building a truth foundation for **wisdom** by taking children on a chronological journey through the entire Bible. This builds a solid foundation for knowing Jesus Christ.
- Children this age are fully capable of knowing, loving and serving Christ. In fact, statistics show that many children trust Christ as Savior between the ages of five and eight.

A Sparks Club Meeting

Handbook Time

Handbook Time is one of the three main segments of an Awana club. This is where relationships are built and discipleship happens. In handbook time, Sparks leaders gather with a small group of children to pray and listen to verses recited from handbooks.



On a child's first night of Sparks, she should receive a **Flight 3:16 entrance booklet**. Flight 3:16 features an illustrated story and helps kids learn and memorize John 3:16 – a perfect introduction to Sparks and the gospel of Jesus Christ!

There are three handbooks that make up the Sparks program: **HangGlider**, **WingRunner** and **SkyStormer**. These handbooks contain stories, Bible biographies, Scripture memory and other activities.



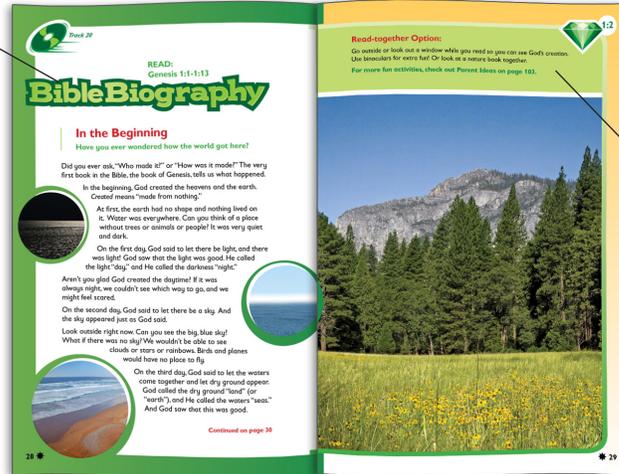
The Sparks handbooks take children on a chronological journey through the Bible. Because of this, the Sparks program follows the “first book” method. This means that every new Sparkie, no matter his age, begins working in the first handbook, **HangGlider**, after completing *Flight 3:16*. It's also the easiest book to complete because it has the lowest memory verse count. This sets a child up for early success.

Genesis	35 Verses	Judges	50 Verses	Christ	64 Verses
HangGlider		WingRunner		SkyStormer	
Joshua		Christ		Revelation	

Ideally, Sparkies should aspire to complete one handbook each year in Sparks. A child should not advance to a handbook until the previous one is completed. If a child begins Sparks as a kindergartner, she must wait to work on *WingRunner* until she is in first grade and must wait to work in *SkyStormer* until she is in second grade. Extra credit options are available for children who finish their handbook before the club year is over.

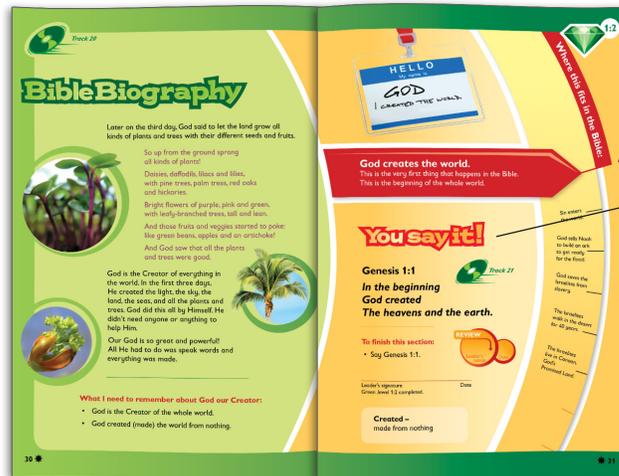
Each Sparks handbook is divided into "sections" or individual units. Take a look at some of the features that make up this *HangGlider* section:

Bible Biography: Before club, Sparkies and their parents can read the listed Scripture passage and the Bible biography together. Sparkies can also have the story read to them using the audio CD that accompanies the handbook. The corresponding track number is indicated at the beginning of the section.



Section number: This number listed in the upper right corner of the page. This is Green Jewel one, section two.

Read Together Option: This area provides parents with additional interactive ideas to engage their child as they read the passage and biography together. It also directs them to the Parent Ideas in the back of the book.



Where This Fits in the Bible: Children this age enjoy learning new facts and details. This feature shows them where the Bible biography they just read fits in the big picture.

You Say It!: This area lists what a Sparkie must say in order to pass the section. In this case, a Sparkie must memorize Genesis 1:1 and say it to his leader during handbook time. The leader signs and dates the section.

Uniforms and Awards

Uniforms, for both leaders and Sparkies, are important because they display achievement awards and create a sense of community. Clubbers earn awards that are displayed on their vests by completing sections in their handbooks.

HangGlider Rank Emblem

HangGlider Review Emblem

HangGlider Pilot Wings and Jewels

Red and green jewels are earned for completing sections in the handbook. Blue jewels are awarded for club attendance.

Church Attendance Emblems



Game Time

Game Time is an important segment in Sparks because it draws kids to club and keeps them coming week after week. Sparks Game Time should be characterized by low-intensity team competition.



Game Time is led by the game director and is generally a 30- to 40-minute segment of club. This segment is ideally played on an Awana Game Square. If you don't have the space for a traditional Awana Game Square, play any games that are age-appropriate and keep Sparkies engaged.

As a Sparks leader your responsibilities during Game Time include:

- Keeping your team organized
- Supporting the game director
- Helping to explain and enforce rules
- Ensuring participation and modeling good sportsmanship

The *Official Sparks Game Book* is an essential resource providing a wide variety of age-appropriate game ideas. More information about Game Time can be found in the *Sparks Director* and *Leader Role Books*.



Large Group Time

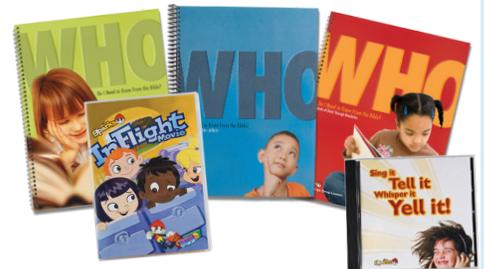
During Large Group Time all Sparkies and leaders gather together for announcements, singing, award presentations and a Bible lesson. Large Group Time can be just as fun as Game Time. You can help your Sparkies worship the Lord by leading them with enthusiasm and keeping them engaged with interactive and visual lessons. Generally, the Sparks director plans and leads Large Group Time.



As a Sparks leader your job could include:

- Sitting with clubbers and guiding them towards good behavior
- Preparing a testimony or Bible lesson
- Leading songs
- Helping to pass out awards

There are many resources available to guide you as you prepare for Large Group Time including three volumes of the book, *Who Do I Need to Know From the Bible?* Each book contains 30 interactive Sparks Large Group Time Lessons.



Additional resources include the *Sparks InFlight Movie DVD* and a worship CD called *Sing It, Tell It, Whisper It, Yell It*.

Leader Training

Awana Leadership Structure

In many ways, an Awana club is as strong as its leadership. Jesus built His church by equipping 12 men who would train others. Awana follows a similar discipleship model of multiplication. Commanders equip directors, directors equip leaders and leaders equip children and youth.

Child Protection

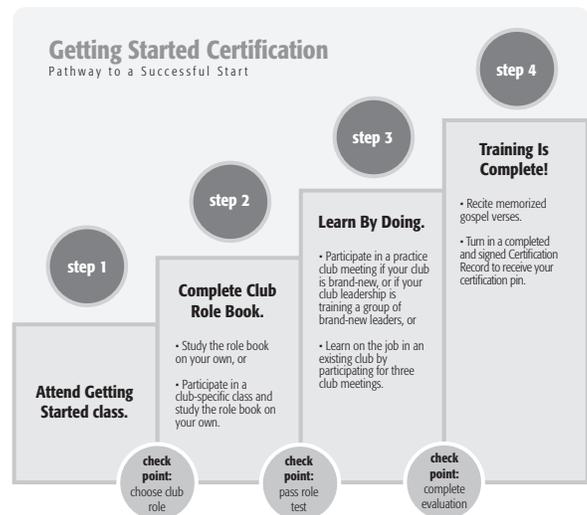
As part of your Awana ministry program it's important that your church leadership develop and follow a Child Protection plan. If your church doesn't have a Child Protection policy, encourage your commander to work with the appropriate people in your church to create one. This policy should be developed with the help of a qualified legal attorney. A good Child Protection policy should include guidelines for screening workers, retaining records, leader to child ratios, and a process for reporting suspected abuse.

On-Going Training

Becoming certified is just the beginning in leadership development. There are many resources available to Awana leaders for on-going spiritual growth. Every Awana leader can benefit from annual training and renewal at an Awana Ministry Conference. These local events are a perfect opportunity to meet other leaders, learn new skills and get more invigorated for the new club year. Visit awana.org/amc to learn about the current conference theme and find the dates and locations of a conference near you.

Awana Leader Certification

Awana is committed to providing training and resources for those who work with children and youth. It's important that every Sparks leader become certified. There are four steps in this process:



Stop and Think

What excites you most about serving children in kindergarten through second grade?

What questions do you still have serving in Sparks or being a Sparks leader?

Share your answers with your commander or director. He or she will be able to provide you with additional information and training options to grow as an Awana leader. Thank you for stepping up to serve!



Resources

Watch the Club Clinic module *Section Standards* to learn about the standards for passing handbook sections.

Find it: awana.org/clubclinic under the *Handbook Time* category

Find answers to your Sparks club questions at awana.community.org

Questions? Contact us at leadershiptraining@awana.org.