

Promoting Your Awana Clubs

Publicity is a critical tool of evangelism for your Awana® program and is especially important for your new Awana club. Flyers, posters, press releases, home visits, invitations from clubbers, word-of-mouth and the Internet are all ways to spread the news. The *Awana Ministry Catalog* also features a publicity section with many creative products to help you get the word out.

Use these suggestions to develop a promotional strategy that works for your church. If you need assistance, contact the Awana public relations staff with your questions.

Send Your Club Into (Cyber) Space

Promoting your Awana club ministry on your church's Web site is an easy, inexpensive, and creative form of outreach.

There are many ways to present your Awana ministry on your church's Web site:

- Publish pictures from your clubs or programs only with written permission from parents.
- Add a news page and/or calendar of events that lists theme nights.
- Include a page of comments by clubbers – either fun or serious (salvation decisions, etc.).
- Recognize handbook finishers, Bible Quizzing winners and Awana Grand Prix™ racers.
- Let parents know of any rules you may have.

Note: The Internet, like any other ministry tool, should be used thought-fully and with appropriate precautions. Follow these guidelines to protect the privacy of those in your Awana program:

- When necessary to reference a child by name, use only their first name and last initial, e.g., "John D." Avoid mentioning hometowns or other identifying information. Use the same approach with adults unless you have their written permission to do otherwise.
- When picturing children, never associate their name (even their first name) with their picture. Use the same approach with adults unless you have written permission to do otherwise. Instead, focus your captions on what's happening in the picture.

Preparing "Perfect" Press Releases

1. Feel free to contact Awana for a press approval, including information about our history, mission and leadership.
2. If you are targeting your local newspaper, find out who handles this type of press release. Addressing the press release to a specific person or department will increase its chances for publication. Include a contact name (you or someone from your club or church staff) and phone number.
3. Plan to submit the press release two or more weeks before the event. Most newspapers have a backlog of press releases fighting for publication, so give the editor plenty of advance notice.
4. Send the press release via e-mail if possible. It's faster, more dependable and easier for the newspaper to process. In any case, do not write the press release by hand. Handwritten releases are harder to read and leave room for error.
5. When you start writing, get to the point. Mention the reason for the press release in the first paragraph. Succinct writing (no more than one typed page) will make editing your release easier – creating a favorable impression of your ministry in the editor's mind. Follow these content guidelines:

- Give your press release a local angle. Most local newspapers give first priority to local press releases, since their target audience is local readers. Mention your church, the city in which it is located and the towns from which your church draws clubbers.
 - Include the time, date and location of the event. Give a specific address – don't assume that readers know the location of your church.
 - "Awana" is the only correct spelling. Don't use "AWANA", "Awanas" or "Awana's." For example, instead of writing "Awana's Truth & Training® club," write "the Truth & Training club from Awana."
6. Include a photograph if one of high professional quality is available. Describe what is going on in terms of the activity being portrayed. However, avoid naming pictured individuals unless someone is singled out as an award winner, etc. In those cases, always get written permission – either from the pictured adult or from a pictured child's parent – before including a name. In lieu of pictures, another option is to include clip art of the Awana logo, available via the Awana Web site.
 7. Don't pester the newspaper about the status of your press release. However, you should inquire (respectfully) if the press release hasn't run in a reasonable amount of time.
 8. Once the release appears, thank the editor for running it. The only feedback that editors usually hear from the public is in the form of complaints. Your phone call or thank you note will be a testimony and will help the next time you submit a press release!