

Help! I Have To Teach Large Group Time

I. Preparing yourself

As you begin preparing a Large Group Time lesson, something far more important than the message must be considered. It's you – the messenger! Think about three areas you need to prepare before presenting a lesson to your Awana clubbers:

A. Prepare your **head**

Start early in preparing each lesson. Don't wait till the last minute! If you do, you won't be effective in presenting it. And God won't honor your teaching.

Remember the aim and goals of each lesson. Make sure you understand the spiritual truth being taught. Read each lesson as many times as necessary to familiarize yourself with it. Look up Bible verses and passages. Read surrounding verses to understand the context. Use a Bible commentary or Bible dictionary to help understand difficult concepts. Make sure you know what each verse says before attempting to teach it. Think through each lesson. Develop specific questions to stimulate clubbers' thinking. Try to anticipate possible questions that clubbers may ask. Think through answers for them.

B. Prepare your **heart**

Spend time in prayer. Ask God for wisdom and guidance. Ask God to help you teach through the power of the Holy Spirit within you. Otherwise, your teaching will only be done in your own strength. Throughout your preparation, ask the Lord to use you. Ask Him to give you the right words to say.

C. Prepare your **hands**

Reach out and touch clubbers where they have needs and problems. Be sensitive to things they're experiencing. Don't let the desensitizing elements of television, newspapers, and the news steal your ability to feel the hurts and joys of your clubbers. If you do, your effectiveness as a teacher will be severely limited.

Teach for maximum learning. The best learning results when the greatest number of senses are used in the learning process. A study in the Industrial Education Department at the University of Texas produced the following results. A person will remember:

10% of what he reads
20% of what he hears
30% of what he sees

50% of what he hears and sees
70% of what he says
90% of what he says and does

Strive for the greatest retention during each lesson. Be creative! Always enhance your lesson presentation with visuals! Remember, the effective use of visuals in teaching helps minimize discipline problems. Think of other ways to complement your teaching for maximum learning. Read books or related Scriptures dealing with the theme of each lesson.

II. Your audience

Your group of Awana clubbers is unique. Their characteristics may be similar to other kids their age. They probably even face the same problems. But as they come together with varied backgrounds and needs, they form a group only you can reach as you lovingly share yourself with them. Don't overlook their need for salvation and Christian instruction! Treat each lesson as a vital truth to share with them. Let them see that each truth you teach has also made an impact on your life.

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III. The lessons

- A. The purpose of teaching the lessons is to communicate God's Word in a way that will transform lives – both yours and your clubbers.
- B. Make sure there is a life application given at the end of each lesson. Allow clubbers to be creative and to respond personally to what they've just learned.
- C. As you teach each lesson, choose your words carefully. Use vocabulary your clubbers will understand. If you don't, you'll lose their attention – the result – discipline problems. Don't, however, resort to slang expressions. To speak on your clubbers' level, you don't have to speak like them.

Be careful with your terminology – particularly “church terminology.” Many times teachers use words unchurched clubbers don't understand. If this happens, your clubbers won't understand what you're teaching. Think through what you want to say. Eliminate church clichés and jargon. Explain words or ideas that might raise questions in clubbers' minds.

- D. Don't read the lesson! Tell it! Know each lesson well enough to present it with only a few glances at your notes. Clubbers will be more attentive if you maintain good eye contact with them.
- E. In communicating the lessons, use your hands, different voice level, different tones and inflections in your voice, and visual scanning. Walk around the room, if necessary.
- F. Plan ahead so you don't lose clubbers' interest. Involve them whenever possible, making them a part of your lesson. Ask questions to draw clubbers out. Create an atmosphere where clubbers feel important. Help clubbers see the value of what you're teaching. Help them understand how to put it into practice in their own lives. The goal isn't just to teach lessons, but to see lives changed!
- G. While teaching, be in control. Watch for clubbers fooling around. Several ways to get their attention might be to: pause briefly while speaking, look at them – let them know you see them, ask them questions, or physically move closer to them. If they aren't listening, they aren't learning!
- H. Make each lesson interesting. Introduce each lesson by building on something familiar to your audience. Ask questions to get clubbers thinking and to direct them. Use the lesson material to catch the interest of the group. Use the goals as stepping stones to the central aim of each lesson.

Large Group Time brings clubbers together to hear a Bible message. The message is the central focus of Large Group Time, but announcements, award presentations, singing, and testimonies are important for developing club unity and promoting achievement.

Announcements:

The best opportunity for communication with clubbers is during the club night itself, especially during Large Group Time. A few minutes of every Large Group Time should be set aside for announcements. Keep your announcements brief and to the point. Enthusiastic and creative announcements will go a long way toward creating a spirit of excitement for activities in Awana. Use skits, props, costumes, or other creative ideas to get the point across at the clubbers' level.

Song Time:

Recruit leaders with musical ability to direct singing during Large Group Time. If no one is available to play a piano or guitar, bring a cassette or CD player and use recorded music. Song time is just like any other aspect of club – it works better with advance planning. The song leader should have a list of songs in mind before Large Group Time begins. He or she should lead the clubbers from one song to another at a quick pace. Songs and choruses with biblically sound, age-appropriate lyrics can help set the proper tone for the Large Group Time message. If the song leader is informed ahead of time what the content of the message will be, he or she can choose appropriate songs that reinforce the theme.

Testimony Time:

One benefit of encouraging clubbers to share testimonies during Large Group Time is that it prepares them to share their faith with their peers. During the first few club meetings, leaders should give their testimonies to set a good example for clubbers.

Message:

Large Group Time messages should include a clear presentation of the gospel or instruction on applying biblical truths to everyday life, or both. An invitation should be given. For guidelines on using biblically sound salvation invitations, see the *Blessed Calvary* video in the Awana catalog.