

## Sparks Themes

### 100 Night

Each clubber brings 100 of the same item – safety pins, beads, rocks, pennies, etc. The Large Group Time lesson can be about the lost sheep.

### Airplane Trip Night

This is a great way to interest clubbers in missions. The week before, take a vote of the countries they'd like to visit on a mission trip. Choose the top one and get some digital photos or videos of the area. In club the next week, position chairs like in a plane. Dress a few clubbers or leaders as flight attendants. Play recorded sound effects during takeoff, then have the pilot welcome passengers aboard. Serve in-flight refreshments. As you land, show slides or videos of the country you are visiting. Ask someone who has visited that country to share stories.

### Apple Pickin' Contest

Clubbers earn five apples for bringing a visitor, two for passing a section and one for bringing dues. When they reach a goal, they pick a construction paper apple off a paper tree (on a bulletin board), write their names on it and drop it in a basket. The child with the most at the end wins.

### Awana Appreciation Night

Clubbers wear all four colors – red, blue, green and yellow for extra team points (one point per color worn). Have team contests – whichever team can list the most items/things that are the four colors wins. For example – whichever team lists the most things that are red wins that round; whichever team lists the most things that are blue wins that round, etc. Play Dress up the Leader game (see Sparks games).

### Bring a Friend Night

Awana is always about bringing friends and reaching them with the gospel of Christ. But sometimes it's fun to have a special night just for friends! Hang pictures of pairs of things that go together like a chicken and an egg, a notebook and a pencil or a foot and a sock. Celebrate friends with candy and a special snack. Play games that involve pairs like three-legged races. This way, visitors won't feel nervous about not being with the friend who brought them.

### Birthday Bash

It's everyone's birthday tonight! The week before, hand out birthday party invitations to all clubbers. Hang streamers and a "Happy Birthday" sign. Have birthday cake or cupcakes. See if anyone in club has a golden birthday (like if they were born on the 10th of the month and they turn 10 this year) and give them a special honor – like a prize or special privilege at club that night.

Play typical birthday party games like Pin the Tail on the Donkey, Simon Says, etc. Another idea is to wrap a small box in another box, wrap that box in another box and so on. Repeat this four to five times and do it for each team. Have a race to see which team can open all the boxes first. Consider putting candy in the smallest box as a treat for everyone.

#### Birthday Jamboree

Help Sparkies think more about heaven and how wonderful it will be. Celebrate their spiritual birthdays (the day they trusted Christ as Savior). Have cake and decorate the room with streamers, balloons and banners.

Sing:

Happy birthday to you,  
Only one will not do.  
Receive Christ as your Savior,  
And then you'll have two!

#### Chew-Choo Night

A week before this theme night, print this poem on train-shaped invitations:

"You might have to chug-chug like a choo-choo, or chew-chew like a moo-moo, but make sure you're at club on \_\_\_\_\_ with a friend or two-two!"

Buy bubble gum and train whistles for prizes for games played that night. Play Bubble Gum Relay (see Sparks games).

#### Clubbers' Choice Night

A few weeks prior to the designated night, allow clubbers to write (if they can write, or they can say their idea to their handbook leader) what kind of theme night they would like to have. The following week, pick the most repeated ones and have a vote. Then plan accordingly.

#### Crazy Caps

Leaders come to club wearing a ridiculous cap they've designed. Encourage clubbers to come the next week with their own crazy caps. Award prizes for the most ugly, beautiful, silly, original, etc. All clubbers wearing a crazy cap earn team points. Play clubbers' favorite games but put crazy hats in the middle instead of the typical pin and bean bag. Or see which teams can run around the game circle with their hats still on their heads – without them having to use their hands to keep it on their heads.

#### Crazy Hair Night

The week prior, tell clubbers to do their craziest, wackiest, funniest hairstyle. Purchase clips, headbands and hats (for boys) as prizes for the best and craziest. Have clubbers take a turn walking in front of everyone to show off their fun do.

### Crazy Shoe Night

Give prizes for the largest, the ugliest, the strangest and the funniest shoes. Use a sock for the bean bag and a show for the pin during Game Time. Play shoe games: All kids pile their shoes in the center of the circle. At the signal, they scramble to find their shoes, put them on and stand at attention. Or, see who can kick his or her shoe the farthest across the gym. Give a Large Group Time lesson about walking with God (Ephesians 5:8-10).

### Dress Like David Night

Clubbers can dress like King David before he was a king by carrying a harp (a toy or a harp made of cardboard), a shepherd's rod and a stuffed sheep.

### Drive-in Movie Night

Each clubber makes a car from a cardboard box and "drives" it to the gym (or large group meeting area). The leaders are carhops and deliver popcorn and beverages to the clubbers. Watch a VeggieTales® video on a big screen. During Game Time, let clubbers race their cars. Give prizes for the best designs.

### Elephant Appreciation Night (September 22 is National Elephant Appreciation Day)

Decorate rooms with pictures of elephants and interesting facts about them. Have peanut butter with celery and/or crackers as a snack. Lay down newspapers and give each team a bag of peanuts still in their shells. Whichever team can unshell all their peanuts first wins.

### Fall Festival Night

The week before, send a note home asking parents to provide Sparkies with items pertaining to fall. Make a sign that reads "Fall Festival" and hang it with other fall decorations in your club room. Have children set any objects they bring on a Fall Festival table. Allow them time to explore.

Share Scripture verses about autumn or the harvest: Matthew 9, Luke 10, etc. Encourage the game leader to include fall objects in the games. Pass a pinecone instead of a baton; grab a pumpkin instead of a beanbag. Have apple cider and popcorn for an end-of-evening snack.

### Goldfish Night

Clubbers receive fish-shaped crackers for saying sections. Crackers are given for snacks and team awards. The Large Group Time lessons can be about fish – Peter, Jonah or the feeding of the 5,000.

### Favorite Sport Night

There are so many sports being played at this time of year! Encourage Sparkies to dress in their favorite sports apparel. They might wear their little league uniform, a jersey from their favorite sports team, their tennis outfit, etc. During Large Group Time, talk about how it takes work and effort to do well at our favorite sport. How much harder should we be working in our lives to please God?

### Football Theme Night

Encourage clubbers to come dressed like football players. Do a Large Group Time lesson about a well-known football player who is a Christian, or see if your church has a high school football coach that attends and invite him to come speak.

During Game Time, clubbers take turns attempting to kick or throw a football through a hula hoop from a set distance (appropriate for Sparkies). The hoop can be held by a leader or hung from the ceiling.

### Fruity Night

The week before, give clubbers bananas with an announcement written on them in marker. Play games with fruit – use bananas for batons, pineapples for pins and grapefruit for bowling balls. Give a Large Group Time lesson on the fruit of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22-23.

### Great Prize Game

Place three buckets next to each other on each team's diagonal inside the circle. One player from each team stands at the starting line holding three balls. When the whistle blows, the clubber attempts to throw a ball into each bucket. Award one point for each ball that lands and stays in the first bucket, two points for the second and three points for the third. The team with the largest point total wins. Hint: the game moves fastest when there are nine or fewer players per team.

### Golf Putting

Set up a putting area with two putters and at least six golf balls. Clubbers take turns trying to land a ball in one of the holes in a wooden board set on end. You can also use a putting cup that returns the ball. Or lay a carpet runner on the floor with a 3" hole cut out at the far end. Kids have their choice of three marked lines from which to putt. The longer the distance, the more points they get if they sink the putt.

### International Night

Choose a country to study during club. You could draw a huge map in the parking lot with sidewalk chalk and let the kids add mountains, rivers and cities. Eat a native snack and ask a missionary who serves there to speak in Large Group Time. Adopt-a-Club there as a group.

### Kickoff Night

Kickoff night is perfect for the first club night. Decorate the game room to look like a football stadium with goal posts at either end. Hang pennants on the walls. Play regular Awana games with footballs in lieu of bean bags or batons. Focus Large Group Time on kicking off a great club year – encourage clubbers that this can be their best club year yet.

### Kindness Night

Any time leaders see a clubber showing kindness to someone else, that clubber gets a treat from a treat bowl. Turn the tables, too – when clubbers see a leader showing kindness to someone, they get to give the leaders a treat.

### Mission Night

When a missionary is available to speak at your club, feature his country. Discuss aspects of the culture. Draw a big chalk outline of the country on the parking lot (or chalk board if going to the parking lot doesn't work) and have clubbers chalk in mountains, rivers and cities. Draw and explain the flag. Eat food from the country. Have the missionary tell about the country and describe an Awana club there (if the missionary is from Awana).

### Missionary Gift Night

Find out which missionaries will be in town and invite them to your club meeting. Ask them in advance for a list of small items they may need (personal or ministry related). The week before, print out the requests and include them with a letter to parents explaining the special theme night. Kids bring the items to club the following week. Ask one of the missionaries to present the Large Group Time message. Have snacks and decorations native to the country where they serve. Provide a map of their location or even draw one on the parking lot or floor with chalk.

### Parent Night

Get parents involved by inviting them to one of your early meetings. Parents work alongside their children throughout club – even Game Time. Parents will get the inside scoop on Awana and you can present the gospel to everyone during Large Group Time.

### Pass it on Night

Play passing games such as Hot Potato or passing a football or basketball back and forth. Large Group Time could teach passing the good news of the gospel on to friends.

### Pinata Night

Highlight Mexico during Large Group Time. Break a piñata during Game Time and have clubbers scramble for the candy and prizes. Encourage the kids to dress Mexican style.

### Pastor Appreciation Night

In honor of Pastor Appreciation Month, have a night dedicated to honoring your pastor. Have the clubbers make cards for him. Hang some signs that say "thank you" around the room. Have a cake made especially for him. Invite him to come watch your club night but don't have him do anything. Have it be a night where he gets to just sit back and watch.

### Penny Night

The week prior, announce that the next club night will be a Penny Race. Clubbers will bring in pennies to support Adopt-a-Club, your Awana missionary, etc. Decorate a jar for each team. At the beginning of the night, have clubbers deposit their pennies into

their team jar. Consider running this for three weeks. At the end, everyone gets ice cream as a treat. But the team with the most pennies gets an extra topping for their ice cream!

#### Picture Night

The week prior, announce that next week a photographer will be taking pictures of teams and the whole club. Encourage Sparkies to wear their vests. During Game Time, have individual teams gather for pictures and then bring the whole group together for a photo. If using a digital camera, you can print them out that night for clubbers to take home or have them ready the following week.

#### Pop Challenges

To motivate clubbers to wear their uniforms and pass sections, have a surprise contest. Award candy bars to whoever is wearing their uniform that night. Also award candy bars to whoever passes a section that night. Do this every three to four weeks so that clubbers never know which week it'll be and will be motivated to always wear their uniforms and pass sections.

#### Puzzle Night

Have clubbers bring in their favorite puzzles. Allow them to work on them when they have a few minutes in Handbook Time or make it a part of Game Time. Award points for the smallest puzzle, the biggest puzzle, most colorful, etc.

#### Red, Blue, Green, Yellow Night

Encourage clubbers to only wear their team's color that night. Have snacks in the four colors. Encourage leaders to use special spray paint made just for hair to color their hair their team's color. Put special paper or gels in the lights to make the rooms one of the four colors.

#### Snowman Night

When a handbook group says four sections, they earn a roll of toilet paper. At the end of the night, clubbers wrap their leaders in the tissue. Prizes are awarded for the best "snowman" (or woman).

#### Special Delivery Night

Have everyone dress up as various delivery people. There are FedEx, UPS and the US Postal Service. There are also people who deliver flowers and home appliances.

#### Stuffed Animal Night

Every clubber brings a stuffed animal. To display them, place one table on top of another and use black paper to create bars. Hand out animal-shaped treats. Have someone bring an unusual pet for a Large Group Time lesson on creation. Promote a contest with a trip to a zoo for the winners.

#### Summer Fun Night

Set up an area in the Sparks room where children can relax, read and pretend. Lay several beach towels on the floor with a beach umbrella overhead. Display pairs of colorful sunglasses, sand pails, shovels and other summer items. Invite children to review their handbooks in the summer fun area. Include summer objects during Game Time in place of bean bags, balloons and pins.

#### Swap Meet Night

You've heard the saying, "Your trash is someone else's treasure." Ask kids to bring an unwanted toy, puzzle, book, etc. Teach about how we might think we're trash, but we are treasure in God's eyes (Luke 12:6-7 or Romans 5:8).

#### Travel Time

The week before, encourage Sparkies to bring a favorite item to take on trips: a pillow, stuffed animal, game or whatever. Decorate with pictures of places both cold and hot. Wear a host uniform – maybe for a safari or a cruise. Encourage Sparkies to dress like they would for their favorite trip destination.

#### Under the Baseball Dome Night

Wear baseball garb and play games with baseballs. Large Group Time could be a game of Bible baseball. The clubber who is "it" chooses whether she wants a single, double, triple or home run. The "shorter" the hit the easier the question. A kid who doesn't know the answer is out.

#### Winter Festival

Warm up a January night with a Sparks Winter Festival. Set the date and arrange for parents to donate and serve refreshments. Invite Sparkies to cut snowflakes, mittens or snowmen from paper and hang them around the room. Use mittens, hats and scarves as objects during Game Time in place of beanbags and pins. Sing winter weather songs and share Scripture verses that pertain to winter.

#### Holiday Themes

##### Valentine's Day

##### Red and Pink Night

Leaders and clubbers dress in ALL pink or ALL red. They can color their hair, their skin, hand out colored candy to color their tongues red or pink and serve red and pink snacks and drinks. The Large Group Time lesson might focus on the love God has for us no matter what we look like, what we do or who we are.

##### Spread the Love

Send Valentine invitations to parents and have a Valentine's Day party for kids and parents. Have cupcakes that do not have icing on them ready to be decorated. (Have icing, sprinkles and other sorts of toppings available.) Encourage kids and parents to have fun decorating cupcakes together. Prepare a Large Group Time lesson on the love of Jesus – the best love of all.

### Halloween Alternatives for Club Night

Plan a "dress up like a Bible character" night. Or run an Awana fair with a "trunk or treat" concept. Set up booths outside in the parking lot next to leaders' vehicles. Kids enjoy the games and then "trunk or treat" at each car for sweets!

### Thanksgiving

#### Pilgrim's Party

Ask clubbers to dress as Indians and early settlers. Decorate with pumpkins, cornstalks, turkey cutouts and brown and gold streamers. Award team points for each child dressed in Thanksgiving style. Build the meeting around the Christian faith of our country's forefathers.

### Christmas

#### Live Nativity Scene

Contact a local petting zoo and see if it's possible for employees to bring some animals to your club. Make sure the children bundle up if you live in a cold area. Ask some leaders to dress as Mary and Joseph to tell the Christmas story while the children look at the animals. You can also see if there are families in your church who have live animals such as sheep, goats, etc., and would be willing to bring them to church for a couple of hours.