

Why Volunteers Quit ... And How To Prevent It

The most common reason churches give for dropping their Awana ministries is “lack of volunteer leaders.” So how do you keep leaders from “burning out”?

Here are nine reasons, taken from the book “Leadership Skills” by Emily Morrison, why volunteer workers quit:

1. Discrepancies between expectations and reality.
2. No feeling of making a difference
3. Too routine – no variety
4. Tension among co-workers
5. Lack of support from co-workers
6. Little prestige related to the task
7. No chance for personal growth
8. No chance to meet personal needs
9. No chance to give input or use creativity

Surprisingly, these reasons have little, if anything, to do with the amount of work to be done or resources (time, space, budget) available for ministry. And the good news is that these issues can be addressed quite simply:

1. When recruiting volunteers, give them the whole picture. Invite them to observe club for several weeks before committing to serve. This will help to cut down on “surprises” later. Make sure leaders’ gifts and talents are aligned to their roles in club.
2. Continually lift up the vision and purpose for having Awana in the first place – to introduce a new generation to Jesus Christ and to help them apply God’s living Word to their lives. Have leaders routinely share ministry “success stories” directly with one another or in group settings that you organize for their encouragement.
3. Freely praise, thank and esteem your volunteer leaders. Let them know they are valued members of the team.
4. Pray together with your leaders. Share prayer requests, needs and praises. Build a sense of community among the team.
5. As much as possible, try to include everyone in the information loop. Allow a broad group to give input when decisions need to be made.
6. Fight stagnation by challenging your volunteers to stretch and grow in the coming year. Set goals that will take them to the next level of ministry leadership: completing a clubber handbook, giving a Council Time devotional or leading a child to Christ.

When a team of Awana workers share a vision, encourage one another and celebrate successes together, ministry will happen. And not just for the children!