

PROMOTING BIBLE MEMORY

The Bible gives answers to daily questions and problems. It warns against disobedience to God and instructs how to develop godly discretion. It tells how to properly respond to people and circumstances. It teaches us to think, speak and act as God intends. From God's Word we learn right and wrong. We learn to recognize and overcome temptations.

The most effective way to convince clubbers that memorizing God's Word is worth the effort is by memorizing it yourself. Use the Word of God when you talk with clubbers. Refer to it naturally by quoting and applying it to situations that arise during your contact with boys and girls.

When you work with clubbers during Game Time, Council Time and Handbook Time, quote Bible verses on proper Christian attitudes, speech and behavior. Your constant reference to the Word of God demonstrates that you consider it seriously and live by it yourself.

Communicate to Clubbers What You Expect from them

When clubbers return to school each fall, teachers spell out what is expected of them. Students are required to do their homework each day. They must read assignments and remember to bring textbooks to class. Establish similar requirements for your clubbers in Handbook Time.

Make it clear that you want boys and girls to start studying immediately when Handbook Time begins. Until they form the habit of seating themselves quietly, remind them to do so. Resist the impulse of listening to clubbers recite before you have checked to make sure every clubber is settled and studying.

Tell your clubbers you expect them to recite at least one section per week. If you are vague in stating your expectations, clubbers will find excuses for not achieving. Encourage them to spend at least 10 minutes daily practicing their sections.

Tell your clubbers you expect them to bring their handbooks to club each week. If they have difficulty remembering, suggest they keep their handbook near their gym shoes or in the pocket of the coat they wear to club.

Express Confidence In Your Clubbers

Children usually live up to the expectations adults set for them. If they think you don't expect much, they won't exert much effort. But if you communicate high expectations for them, most clubbers will respond accordingly.

Challenge clubbers to set short-term, realistic goals for themselves. Goals should be based on individual ability. Challenge fast learners to memorize three sections each week. Slow learners should recite at least one section per week.

Post a calendar in your handbook room. Mark the anticipated date clubbers will complete various parts of their handbooks. Refer to your calendar to note each clubber's progress. Praise clubbers when they achieve or surpass their goals. Encourage and acknowledge the progress of clubbers who may fall short but are making a real attempt to achieve.

It's better for some clubbers not to attempt to complete their handbook in a year. Rather, they should work toward precise, short-range goals which will encourage them in accomplishing the long-range goals.

Alert Leadership to Be Ready For Unprepared Clubbers

Don't allow clubbers to assume they won't be studying during Handbook Time if they lose or forget their handbooks. Make sure clubbers are reciting, memorizing or working during Handbook Time. For unprepared clubbers, purchase an extra entrance booklet and handbook. Write your name inside or mark them as "club copy." Be sure to collect loaners at the end of Handbook Time. Mark achievements on record forms, so you can sign off on sections the following week.

Provide extra Bibles for your handbook group.

Work with Clubbers Who Repeatedly Fail to Bring Their Handbooks or Seldom Recite Sections

Send a postcard to underachieving clubbers during the week. Clubbers will always be pleased to receive something in the mail. If you know the clubber's parents, telephone them one or two days before club night. Ask them to remind their child to work on memorization and bring his or her handbook to club.

If a clubber does not respond to prompting or resists cooperating with you, talk to your director. He or she may decide to deny such clubbers Game Time privileges. When a clubber is not allowed to participate in games, assign a leader to give individualized attention in memorizing sections.

Regardless of your methods, the principle of love transcends all attempts to motivate clubbers. Boys and girls memorize the Word of God best when they are motivated by love for them.

Remember, you are working with individuals –not just a group! Each child has needs. Each will respond when he or she realizes you care.

Getting Through the Handbooks In a Year

1. Pray for your clubbers, other leaders and the club meetings. Encourage boys and girls to share prayer requests as you begin each Handbook Time briefly in prayer.

2. Preparation for the club season is essential for handbook success. You can increase clubber motivation for passing sections in the following ways:

- Plan contests.

- Schedule activities with time for learning and reciting sections.

Conduct parents' meetings to explain requirements for outings, slumber parties, Grand Prix Meets and special club treats.

- Remind clubbers about AwanaGames team requirements.

- Plan an end-of-the-year trip for all who complete their handbooks.

3 Give clubbers constant, loving prodding. A leader who is memorizing Scripture encourages clubbers to memorize. Concentrate on individual clubbers' progress, not just how many sections were passed tonight.

4. Know your club handbooks. Learn what the requirements are. Find out what clubbers need to do and what order they need to do it in. Your lack of familiarity with the handbooks and award system will only discourage clubbers to achieve.

5. Visit clubbers' homes to encourage them in handbook work. Ask them how they are doing and have them show you what they're working on. Explain the requirements to parents. The support of a child's parents often makes the difference in a clubber's progress. Never be a threat, however, to clubbers in their home.

Be a friend!

6. Personal attention goes far with clubbers. You'll be amazed at the increase in sections passed in relation to leaders' smiles, hugs and a few minutes of chatting. Clubbers enjoy pleasing their leaders. Show your delight when they achieve. Give each clubber a reasonable chance to recite each week. Don't undo all your hard work by turning away a clubber who wants to try.

7. Recognize achievements publicly. Give awards the night they're earned, if possible. Make a BIG DEAL about awards. Praise a child's accomplishments in front of the entire club.

Memory Games

The following memory games can be used when clubbers become restless at the end of Handbook Time, at a club party or outing, in Council Time or between active games in Game Time. Keep ideas handy for nights when the speaker doesn't show. Never allow games, however, to take the place of Bible teaching.

Phrase Frenzy – Played as a competition between all four teams. Key words, pictures or objects are given as clues to a particular phrase in a Bible verse. When a player recognizes the correct phrase, he or she jumps up to give the answer. All team members should participate. When necessary, limit the number of times one player may answer.

Hot Potato – This is a fun way of rapidly repeating a particular verse or phrase. Clubbers are divided into small groups and seated in circles. A small rubber ball or some other small object is used as the potato. Players toss the potato back and forth. When one player receives the potato, he or she must recite a Bible phrase or verse accurately within the time limit. When a player finishes reciting, he or she tosses the potato to someone else. If the game is played for team points, no player should be allowed to toss the potato to a member of his or her own team.

Potato Race – Leaders arrange teams in circles to recite a given verse. The starting player holds the potato. The leader calls out a reference and says, "Go!" The player holding the potato recites the first word of the verse and passes the potato to his or her left. The next player recites the second word. Play continues until the entire verse is recited. If a player cannot give the next word, the potato reverses direction until the correct word is given. Play then returns to the original direction. The player who completes the verse jumps tip holding the potato in the air.

Memory Ping-Pong – Place two chairs in front of the group facing each other. Two players from the different teams are picked as servers. The leader calls out a Scripture reference. One player serves by reciting the first word of the

memory verse. The other player returns the serve by reciting the next word. Play continues until the verse is finished. If the verse is perfectly recited, both teams earn points. The first word a player says counts. No corrections are allowed. If an incorrect word is given or a player cannot answer within three seconds, a point is given to the other player. Players alternate serving. Four to six serves constitute a game. New servers are picked for each round of play. Keep this game fast-paced.

Memory Spotlight – All players stand up. A player in the "spotlight" begins by reciting a verse. At anytime, this player may point to any other player who must recite at least one word before pointing to another player. If the player chosen cannot respond, he or she must sit down. After

saying at least one word, he or she may point to any other player who will then become the new “spotlight” player.

Circle Team Recitation –This game is similar to the Potato Race. Use this idea when beginning memorization. Leaders seat their teams in a circle. One player begins by reciting the first word of a verse. Each team member adds a word until the verse is complete. Try to increase the speed as members recite. At the beginning, clubbers can look at the verse in their handbooks or on a blackboard, but as the game continues, have them rely on memory.

Executive Basketball Throw –Loosely wad newspapers into balls. Place a wastebasket eight feet from four chairs. Players take turns reciting a verse. When a verse is recited correctly, all that player’s team members may attempt to throw a wad of paper into the basket. The team with the most baskets wins. **Bible Baseball** –Set up five chairs for home plate, first, second and third base, and a pitcher (leader). The batter must give a correct answer to each question (pitch) to advance around the diamond. Questions may be graded on the basis of difficulty to count for a single, double, triple or home run (batter chooses which category he or she wants).

Toothpick Stack –This game requires a box of flat toothpicks and a pop bottle. Divide all your clubbers into two teams. When a player gives a reference or verse correctly, he or she places a toothpick on top of the pop bottle. Each toothpick is worth one point. The contest is over when one or more toothpicks fall from the stack.

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down –Clubbers sit in teams and close their eyes while a leader reads a reference, verse, or phrase. All clubbers who think the leader is reading correctly raise their arms into the air with their thumbs up. All who think it is incorrect put their thumbs down. Obviously, no peeking is allowed. While players’ eyes are still closed, the leader quickly counts the number of right responses on each team. Then, players are allowed to open their eyes. The leader tells the correct answer and announces how many points each team earned.

Make a Mistake –As the leader reads a verse and its reference, he or she purposely makes a mistake. Team points or a small prize are awarded to the first player catching the mistake.

Speed Quizzing –Leaders choose three or four members from each team to recite verses. A leader gives a reference. The first players up for each team raise their hands if they know the verse. The first clubber to raise his or her hand re- b cites. If he or she is correct, that clubber earns points for his or her team (45 seconds to answer). One person “quizzes out” when he or she answers four questions and is replaced by a team member.

Volleyball –You can use this game for review or for learning long verses. Each team must determine a “serving order” before beginning. One team “serves.” Its team leader gives a

reference for a verse. The opposing team player “returns the serve” by reciting the first three words of the verse. If he or she can only say one word, a second or third player may say the next one or two words. The verse then goes back and forth between the teams. A team must say three words to score. Points are scored by the serving team when the other team makes a mistake, or when the whole verse is completed correctly. The serve goes to the other team when a mistake is made by the serving team.

Break the Sound Barrier –Leaders recite a verse at least five times together with the clubbers. Everyone starts in a whisper, getting a bit louder each time. The fifth time the verse is recited very, very loudly.

Team Phrase Rotation –One team recites the first phrase of a verse in unison. Then the next team recites the following phrase, and so on, until all phrases of the verse are recited. Repeat the verse with a different team beginning. When each team has had a turn starting, each team will also have had a turn reciting each phrase.

Tic-tac-toe –Leaders divide clubbers into two teams and arrange chairs around the chalkboard. Teams take turns answering questions. If a clubber answers the reference or verse correctly, he or she fills in an O or X for the team. If the wrong reference or verse is given, the opposing team has a chance to answer the same question. If neither team knows the answer, a new question is asked. The team which scores three O’s or X’s in a row receives a point and is the first to begin the next round.

Bible Quote-down –Two teams come to the **front of the room** and stand in rows. A leader quotes the first part of a verse, and the first player of one team tries to complete it. If a player cannot, he or she sits down. Then the first player on the other team gets a chance to finish the verse. When a player finishes a verse correctly, he or she remains in the game. After the first players have participated, continue on down each line in the same manner. The last team with a player standing is the winner.

Books of the Bible Race –Make four sets of cards with the names of all the Old Testament and/or New Testament books printed on them. Mix the cards and give each team a set. Keep time to see which team can put its cards in the proper order first. Keep a record of timings. Throughout the year, encourage clubbers to beat their record.

Write and Erase –Leader writes a Bible verse on a blackboard. Then, as a word or phrase is erased, the group recites the verse together, filling in the missing word. Repeat the procedure until all the words are erased and verse is learned.

Group Recitation –Clubbers recite the verse out loud in unison.

Team Recitation –Teams take turns reciting the verse or passage. **Single Recitation** –As one person recites, the others check for accuracy. **Neighbor Nudging** –Clubbers recite to the person sitting next to them. (Allow only a brief time to prevent long conversations.)

Definitions –Define difficult words while practicing a verse for memorization. **Personal identification** –Clubbers insert their own names into a verse. For example, *God so loved [Eric], that He gave*

Hand Motions –Leaders use hand motions (or sign language) to illustrate the words and thoughts of a passage. See examples below in *1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*.

For the Lord (point upward) *Himself shall descend* (lower your hand) *from heaven with a shout* (hand beside mouth), *with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump* (position hands like you're playing a trumpet) *of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise* (raise your hand) *first; then we* (point to yourself) *which are alive and remain shall be caught up* (raise hand slowly) *together with them in the clouds to meet* (pretend to shake hands) *the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

Handbook Camp

The purpose of this activity is for clubbers to learn and recite handbook sections.

When –Handbook Camp is an overnight activity which begins the evening before a day off from school. For example, Friday evening to Saturday afternoon or Sunday evening to Monday afternoon (when clubbers have Monday off from school).

Preparation –At club, begin advertising Handbook Camp well in advance. Talk up the activity at leaders' meetings, too! Three weeks before Handbook Camp, send a letter home with boys and girls. Explain what will take place and what they should bring: handbooks, Bibles, clothes, three dollars to cover food cost, etc.

Details –Perhaps the best way to explain Handbook Camp is to let someone who's been there share what happened. Read this report from a club commander.

Handbook Camp began Sunday shortly before 6 p.m. The girls moved their possessions into one classroom of our Awana building, and the boys into another. Each clubber was then assigned to a team different from his usual Awana club team. At our regular Sunday evening church service, Pastor gave a message based on Ephesians 2:8-9. After church, dinner was served to clubbers. Then everyone settled down for an hour of reciting previously learned sections. Leaders listened to boys and girls, explaining verses and encouraging clubbers to study for the next handbook session in the morning. Before daylight, the older girls were up and dressed. They were

practicing sections in the dim quietness of the game floor. Boys retreated into solitary corners. Breakfast was an intrusion. Handbooks were visible everywhere. Thirty minutes of Game Time separated two handbook sessions. Then materials and supervision were provided so clubbers could work on missionary-related sections.

Early that afternoon, more than a dozen awards were given for completing Discoveries or Challenges. The winning team was announced, congratulated and treated. Clubbers went home promising, "I'm going to have even more sections to say on Wednesday!"

Results –As they discover their ability to memorize at Handbook Camp, clubbers will recite more sections at club. Relationships between leaders and clubbers flourish in the relaxed atmosphere of Handbook Camp. Camaraderie between clubbers increases. Plus, the Word of God deeply penetrates the hearts of your boys and girls.

Handbook Helps for Leaders

1. Survey the section title and opening paragraph to familiarize yourself with the teaching aim of the section. Also refer to text-related illustrations that complement the teaching aim.
2. Note that verses to be memorized are printed in bold type. Words that are defined in Things to know are printed in bold italic type. Teach your clubbers to refer to these definitions on their own, as well as in club.
3. Invite clubber/leader interaction by asking at least one of the Tell Your Leader questions.
4. Allow clubbers to recite the entire section before you discuss the verses or ask questions.
5. Make sure your clubbers understand the verses they are trying to recite, even if they are unable to pass the section.

No matter how good your intentions and preparation, Handbook Time can be a hassle. It is a challenge to actually teach and counsel clubbers in the handbook group. Many times, the leader/clubber ratio is too high for thorough teaching. Boys and girls don't always sit in a neat semicircle and review their sections as they quietly wait their turn to recite. But dedicated leaders who use the handbook helps effectively can make a lasting impact.