

VERSEATHON

a  program



 Awana®

LET'S GET STARTED

VERSEATHON

— a go program —

awana.org/verse-a-thon

What is Verse-a-Thon?

Verse-a-Thon is similar to a Walk-a-Thon. Kids get sponsors for how many Bible verses they can say on a given night or specific timeframe.

What are Verse-a-Thon funds used for?

Verse-a-Thon money is used to reach kids around the world with the gospel through the Awana ministry. Every \$10 raised allows one more child to be able to attend an Awana club for 4-6 years.

Who Can Participate?

Anyone! Find ways for everyone to get involved: kids, leaders, parents, the entire congregation.

- Awana kids set a goal for the number of verses they want to say and identify people who they can ask to sponsor them.
- Leaders encourage and motivate the kids each week leading up to the Verse-a-Thon. They can even participate by reciting verses as well!
- Parents help their kids understand the impact they will make through this missions project. Assist your kids in identifying appropriate sponsors and encourage them to practice verses.
- Individuals in the congregation can sponsor kids or volunteer to listen during the Verse-a-Thon event.

Hear why others are saying Verse-a-Thon is a Win for Everyone:

"By asking for outside sponsors, kids were able to tell their friends and family members about Awana."

"Children and leaders are brought to a deeper understanding and appreciation of missions."

"The fundraising capabilities are far beyond what we've seen before."

"Kids working this hard to memorize a LOT of verses means that the Word is going D-E-E-P in their hearts."

"Many of our Verse-a-Thon listeners became Awana leaders the following year."

Where to Start

First Things First!

1. Schedule Verse-a-Thon in your club calendar.
 - Consider including Verse-a-Thon during your Missions Month as a way for kids to tangibly reach out to kids around the world.
 - Holding your Verse-a-Thon after the holiday break serves two purposes. Kids have learned a good portion of their handbook verses making it simple to review and recite again. Secondly, it infuses new excitement and energy mid-year when it is often needed.
2. Review and be familiar with the various Verse-a-Thon resources all downloadable at awana.org/verse-a-thon.
3. [Sign your club up](#) for Awana GO (awana.org/goclubs) to intentionally integrate missions education and outreach into your club's DNA.
 - Receive free resources that will connect your kids to Awana kids and ministry around the world.
 - Teach discipleship truths on loving and serving by using the GO Large Group lessons.
 - Join a community of mission-minded individuals who want to engage their kids in the Great Commission in fun and meaningful ways.

Casting Vision...

...with your leaders

At a leader meeting...

- Show the [Verse-a-Thon Introductory Video](#)
- Share the purpose and focus for your mission project and why you are doing Verse-a-Thon
- Allow time for Q & A
- Identify the key people who will oversee main areas
- Logistics for the event itself can follow at a later meeting or through email

...with the parents

Communicate in multiple ways. Get creative because it takes a lot for the message to get through. (e.g., Letters sent home with kids, emails, Facebook, parent meeting, bulletin insert, etc.)

- What is Verse-a-Thon
- What is the purpose (kids reaching kids with the gospel) and focus for the mission project
- Expect everyone to participate both in memorization and sponsorships
- Ask for parents to volunteer during the event
- Logistic details

...with the kids

Help them understand how easy and exciting it is to participate in a Verse-a-Thon and the impact they can make.

- Show the Kids Verse-a-Thon Video
- Explain how Verse-a-Thon will work (logistics, deadlines, etc.)
- Explain the content of the Verse-a-Thon packets
- Highlight any contests or incentives (see ideas below)
- Role play how to ask a sponsor to support them. Maybe do a real sponsorship in front of all the kids or use the Kid Script to help them practice.
- Challenge them with a club goal. How many kids do you think we can reach? Can we double or triple our club size?

Make Verse-a-Thon more about how many kids WE can reach together as a club and put less emphasis on individual competitions and winners.

Club Goal and Celebration:

- As a church or club, set a goal for how many kids you want to reach and then celebrate when you reach it.

Group Competition/Incentives:

- Using averages will help when the number of participants in each competing group varies.
- Have fun! Be creative! Competitions/incentives are meant to inspire and motivate kids.
- Most sponsors, most verses, most money raised (by combined averages—see example below)
- Groupings could be done by...

Club vs. Club (ie. Sparks vs. T&T)

Boys vs. Girls

Kids vs. Leaders

Example: Taylor Creek Church - Build Your Own Ice Cream Sundae Party

Contest Categories	T&T	Sparks
Average # of verses recited per child (# of kids/total verses recited)	20.69 average per child	18.42 average per child
# of sponsors (# of kids/total # of kids)	6.25 average per child	3.31 average per child
Average dollars raised per clubber (Total raised/# of kids)	\$91.96 average per child	\$61.09 average per child

The best two out of three categories won the competition. In this example, T&T won.

Additional ideas:

- You could consider having a party for everyone, but the winning team serves the losers. Or the winning team gets a topping bar while the other team simply gets ice cream. You decide what will inspire and motivate your kids.

Individual Competitions/Incentives:

- Offer a drawing. Tell your kids that EVERY child with x-amount of dollars raised or x-number of verses recited will have their names entered into a drawing for the prize. This creates excitement in your entire club!
- Set level incentives. For example, if they help two kids go to Awana (raise \$20) they will receive a predetermined award (e.g., GO emblems, 10 shares, etc.). Everyone is eligible if they reach this level.
- When awarding individual recognition or prizes, be careful! For example, if you tell your kids that the person who raises the most money gets such-and-such a prize, you may find that you lose the enthusiasm for the majority of your club when they find out "Jimmy" has already raised \$400. It might cause the rest of your kids to quit trying.

Preparation for Verse-a-Thon Event:

3 weeks or more in advance:

1. Layout your event schedule (see sample schedules below)
2. Have leaders help their kids set goals for recitation (the book-specific tracking sheet is a good tool to use for goal setting all the way through the recitation night).
3. Prepare packets to go home with your kids. Include:
 - Sponsor Sheet (inserted in or print on a [9x12 envelope](#). Some have printed the sponsor sheet on [8x11 label sheets](#) and adhered to the envelope)
 - Kids Script (could be a sheet inserted into the packet or printed on the backside of the envelope).
 - Parent Letter or Information Sheet
 - Thank you cards for sponsors
 - Book Specific Tracking Sheet

2 weeks in advance:

Cast vision for the mission project and explain Verse-a-Thon.

For your kids during Large Group or Opening Time...

- Role-play how to ask sponsors to support them
- Instruct kids to give sponsors the Thank You card at the time of sponsorship
- Allow time for questions and answers
- Send home the fundraising packets

For your church congregation on Sunday morning...

- Invite them to participate by sponsoring kids or give financially
- Invite volunteers to help listen to verses on recitation night
- Include an announcement in church bulletin

For your parents...

- Keep in close communication with your Awana parents
- Parent letter should be included in packets sent home
- Email the parents and include the Parent Video available online
- Use various methods to communicate and engage the parents

1 week in advance:

1. Build on the momentum and excitement

Remind your kids...

- To continue collecting sponsors and practicing verses.
- About your incentives/competitions—be excited!
- Of the schedule for next week's Verse-a-Thon event
- Of the importance to bring their packets and handbooks with them next week

Keep your parents in the loop...

- Email details again
- Invite them to help listen
- Send home a second informational sheet/card

Remind your church congregation of any details...

- By posting on your Facebook group
- Sending emails
- Bulletin announcements, etc.

2. Finish recruiting extra volunteers...

- Volunteers can be parents, youth group students, or anyone from your congregation.
- Plan a time to have a brief informational meeting with them. This can be during Opening Time before the event starts or the week before the event.

Day of Verse-a-Thon:

1. Set up your recitation areas (chairs, tables, pens, Bibles, activity supplies, tracking sheets, extra handbooks, etc.)
2. Meet with volunteers at specified time. Make your volunteers feel valued. Provide bottled water, pens, pencils, all the necessary supplies and clear instructions.
3. Have fun! Create an exciting atmosphere for the kids.
4. Your schedule will likely be different from normal club nights—this is a special event!

Schedule Samples for Verse-A-Thon Event

After your Verse-a-Thon:

For your kids...

- Remind them of the date to turn in their packets and money. Some clubs only give one week to collect on sponsorships while others give two weeks.
- Announce results as soon as possible.
 - You should be able to announce the number of verses recited the week following your Verse-a-Thon (some clubs announce the verse count before the end of the event). This will be very exciting for them!
 - Total number of sponsors and money raised will need to be announced after all packets have been returned.
 - Follow through on incentives and prizes as soon as possible.
- Keep the momentum going by sharing successes throughout the rest of the year.

For your volunteers...

- Thank everyone who helped with a card or treat. Include the total number of verses recited during the Verse-a-Thon (Ice cream or pizza party for your youth volunteers goes a long ways).

For parents...

- Remind them of the date that packets need to be returned.
- Thank them for their support of this mission project.

For your church...

- When all your results are in, announce on a Sunday morning the impact your church/club will be making.

Example: 2 hour club time

Opening Time (10 minutes)

All kids are together and includes Verse-a-Thon instructions.

Recitation/Activity Time (50 minutes)

Two separate areas rotating between recitation and activity stations (can include [letter writing](#) or notes of encouragement).

Snack Time (10 minutes)

Game Time (15 minutes) All Sparks and T&T together.

GO Large Group Lesson (30 minutes) All kids together —make it super interactive and engaging!

Announcements and Dismissal (5 minutes)

Example: 1.5 hour club time

Opening Time (15 minutes)

All kids are together and includes Verse-a-Thon instructions. Volunteers are being prepared during this timeframe in the recitation area.

T&T Recitation Time (30 minutes)

Sparks are in Game Time.

Sparks Recitation Time (30 minutes)

...T&T are in Game Time.

Large Group - Announcements/Dismissal (15 minutes)

Other Things to Consider:

- Decide what your recitation standards will be per verse. (Make sure leaders, listeners and kids clearly understand your expectations.)
- This is a fundraising event. Help your kids be successful, maybe you want to relax your standards for this special event.

Ideas to Maximize Your Verse-a-Thon:

- Consider lining up a few people who will sponsor the unsponsored. All kids can and should participate in your Verse-a-Thon event.
- Consider inviting your church's mission committee or a major donor in your congregation to match what your kids raise or up to a certain dollar amount. When your kids hear that someone is matching their efforts it will go a long way in motivating the kids to rise up to the challenge.
- Consider hosting a [Reach Kids Sunday](#) ([reachkidssunday.org](#)) or other ways to engage your entire congregation. See the sample of how one church did that below.

Keeping Your Kids Engaged Following Verse-a-Thon

- Have a time of prayer with your Awana kids for the children that will be reached because of your club.
- Create a visual for your church of how many children your club reached through your Verse-a-Thon. This may be done with the paper dolls and maps available in the [GO resources \(awana.org/go\)](https://awana.org/go) or any other creative visual method.
- Create a prayer reminder for your kids. One option is to print out paper dolls that represent children reached because of your Verse-a-Thon. Pass them out to your kids and have them make bookmarks or decorate them to hang on their refrigerator. These serve as a reminder to pray for the kids who will hear the gospel through the Awana Ministry around the world.
- Use the GO Lessons throughout the year to continue that connection with Awana kids and leaders around the world.

Sample of how one church involved the entire congregation in the Verse-a-Thon:

Verndale Alliance Church in Minnesota has made Verse-a-Thon a regular event in their club calendar. Kids and the entire church anticipate and look forward to it each year in February. As a normal part of leading up to the club Verse-a-Thon, the GO Coordinator is given time during the church service the week before the event.

Things included on that Sunday include...

- Casting vision for the project (show a video, convey what last year's Verse-a-Thon and church offering helped do, tell a story of a child impacted in the area we are supporting, etc.).
- Sharing what the kids hope to do in this year's Verse-a-Thon.
- Inviting everyone to participate either by sponsoring kids and/or by coming to be listeners during the recitation time. It's all hands on deck!
- Taking an offering to help reach more kids through the Awana GO mission project. This in itself unifies the entire congregation and the club in one shared outreach effort and really shows the kids that the adults are in it with them.
- Utilizing this Sunday as a service opportunity for your kids. They can come in their Awana uniforms, pass out the church bulletins, assist with the Awana offering, and maybe even have a Verse-a-Thon station in the foyer where people can sign up to sponsor kids or come to let you know they are willing to help out as a listener.
- Utilizing this Sunday to invite all Awana families to your church. In order for this to be effective, you will need to build in stage time for the Awana kids to sing songs, quote some Bible verses, or engage in some other creative ways.

Close Out Your Verse-a-Thon

- Complete the Verse-a-Thon Event Summary & Donation Form.
- Complete all the fields on the form and make sure to specify how your funds should be designated.
- **Checks should be made payable to "Awana".**
- Please review all checks and confirm they are made payable to Awana. (Checks made out to your church, Verse-a-Thon, blank, etc. will be returned to the person listed on the check as we cannot accept them.)
- If a personal check is used to cover the cash donations, please write "club gift" in memo line. Please do not mail cash.
- Use the Itemized Sheet to record all individual checks.
- Mail your checks and Summary Form to:

Awana
1 East Bode Road
Streamwood, IL 60107

- If you have questions, please email go@awana.org or call 630-540-4546.

Please Note: All Verse-a-Thon materials were created for the intended purpose of helping your group raise funds for Awana GO to reach more kids with the gospel and engage them in lifelong discipleship through Awana ministries. We ask that you not use these materials for other purposes including sending all or part of the Verse-a-Thon funds raised to other mission organizations. Thank you!