

# Developmental Characteristics of Children & Youth compared to Master Life Threads taught in Awana Clubs

## Preschool

Club	Age	Developmental Characteristics*	Master Life Thread	Application
<b>Puggles</b>	2 & 3 years old	<p><u>Copy Cats</u> – watching and copying the behavior and actions of others.</p> <p><u>No!</u> – Seeking boundaries of acceptable behavior</p> <p><u>Ok!</u> – Follows simple instructions</p> <p><u>I Can Do It!</u> – Exploring independence</p> <p><u>Look!</u> – Begins to sort, match, identify &amp; describe</p>	<b>Respect</b>	<p>In the account of Joseph, we learn that he respected the authority of God. His parents taught him to know God.</p> <p>Preschool aged children learn about the character of God, and His authority through the adults He has placed in their lives.</p>
<b>Cubbies</b>	2 years prior to KG	<p><u>Copy Cats</u> -watching and copying the behavior and actions of others.</p> <p><u>Emotionally Communicative</u> – shows affection and concern for others through actions and words</p> <p><u>Mine!</u> – Understands and uses words that demonstrate possession (mine, his, hers, ours, theirs, etc.)</p> <p><u>Turn Taker</u> – shares objects and takes turns in games and activities</p> <p><u>Repetition</u> – Loves and learns best through repeated activities and situations</p> <p><u>Regimented</u> – Thrives on routines and can become frustrated or upset if the routine is disrupted</p>	<b>Respect</b>	<p>God has given us rules and boundaries to protect us because He loves us. He has given us parents and teachers to love and guide us. Respecting our parents and those they place in authority over us is a direct application to learning to respect the authority of God.</p> <p>In Puggles and Cubbies, we learn that God is the Creator, the One who established the heavens and the earth and who continues to hold it in His hand. God is creative, holy, just, loving, and forgiving.</p>

## Early Elementary Years

Club	Age	Developmental Characteristics*	Master Life Thread	Application
Sparks	K-2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	<p><u>Yes!</u> - Desire to please others demonstrated through words and actions.</p> <p><u>Rule Follower</u> – Early elementary aged children like rules, want to know the rules and get upset when rules are broken.</p> <p><u>Fact or Fiction</u> – understands the difference between what is real and what is pretend</p> <p><u>Data Heads</u> – children of this age memorize well and retain what they’ve learned</p> <p><u>Futuristic</u> – comprehends the idea of time in the future and uses language that demonstrates that understanding “Next year, we will go on vacation to the beach.”</p> <p><u>Written communication</u> – Reads (or beginning to read) and writes thoughts and ideas in order to communicate with others.</p> <p><u>Story Tellers</u> – This age group loves stories and loves to retell and act out the stories they have learned.</p>	Wisdom	<p>In the account of Joseph, we learn that he was wise, and that he knew his wisdom originated from God.</p> <p>As Sparks, children love facts and thrive on learning and communicating new knowledge. They memorize well and can recall facts more easily than at any other age. They are learning to read and to better comprehend what they read.</p> <p>This is the perfect time to foster a love for the reading and memorizing of Scripture!</p> <p>During this time, we want to help kg-2<sup>nd</sup> graders to apply wisdom to the knowledge they store up from the study of God’s Word.</p> <p>In Awana Sparks and Awana TruthSeekers, children study biographies of the people in Scripture so they can see how they learned from their mistakes, as well as see how God used them and their actions to His glory. We learn wisdom through the narrative story of His Word.</p> <p>In TruthSeekers, the stage for Large Group time is set with drama, either in the form or a story, skit or puppets. Children in kg through second grade are drawn in and their attention is focused.</p>
TruthSeekers	KG-6 <sup>th</sup> grade	<p><b>The developmental characteristics are broken down in the K-2, and 3-6<sup>th</sup> grade groups with Sparks and T&amp;T.</b></p> <p><b>The application is best made during the small group time when ages are better divided.</b></p>		

## Upper Elementary Years

Club	Age	Developmental Characteristics*	Master Life Thread	Application
T&T	3 <sup>rd</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> grade	<p><u>BFF</u> – begins to demonstrate stronger, more intimate friendships with peers</p> <p><u>Everyone’s Doing It!</u> – Begins to feel peer pressure when making decisions</p> <p><u>Focused</u> – Has a more developed attention span</p> <p><u>Analytical</u> – Wants to know why decisions are made, how things work, seeks substantiated information in order to make decisions.</p>	Grace	<p>Joseph practiced grace in his relationships. When he is reintroduced to his brothers, he could have cast them aside in a dungeon forever. Instead, he brings his entire family to Egypt and makes provision for them in the way of food and land.</p> <p>Children in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade are learning to apply grace in their relationships with others and can begin to understand the grace God has given to believers. God could have simply destroyed us as He washed the world with the great flood. He could have condemned each of us to hell and forgotten us forever. Rather, He provided a means of salvation and forgiveness, granting us mercy. He further lavished grace upon us, promising us a home with Him in heaven with streets of gold and walls adorned with jewels.</p> <p>It’s important, during these years to teach upper elementary aged students that God did not simply make an exception to our sin. He didn’t say “Never mind, I forgive you. It’s all good.” He didn’t say “Since Jesus died on the cross, was buried and rose again, and that it was sufficient for the salvation of all, everyone can go to heaven.” No, God requires that we believe (John 3:16, Acts 16:31). God didn’t make an exception, He gave mercy and grace.</p> <p>T&amp;T is a course in Christian apologetics, providing Scriptural answers to the questions upper elementary aged children and their peers are asking. It prepares them with the answers to life’s questions through God’s Word.</p> <p>TruthSeekers provides a big picture view of God’s provision of salvation with zooming in and focusing on important details that establish a firm foundation for understanding who God is and His plan for us.</p>
TruthSeekers	KG-6 <sup>th</sup> grade	<p>The developmental characteristics are broken down in the K-2, and 3-6<sup>th</sup> grade groups with Sparks and T&amp;T. The application is best made during the small group time when ages are better divided.</p>		

## Adolescent Years

Club	Age	Developmental Characteristics*	Master Life Thread	Application
Trek	(6 <sup>th</sup> ) 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade	<p><u>Self-Image</u> – Young teens are very self-conscious regarding both their physical appearances and interactions with others.</p> <p><u>Complex Thinking</u> – middle school students are capable of processing the past and planning for the future.</p> <p><u>Better Communicators</u> – this age group is better able to express their thoughts and feelings, and more likely to think through counsel provided</p> <p><u>Purpose</u> – young teens care about who they are, are searching for strengths and talents with in themselves and peers</p> <p><u>Thinking Ahead</u> – middle school students tend to dream about their futures, consider careers, families, and legacies</p>	Destiny	<p>Joseph had a great sense of destiny and purpose that came from God.</p> <p>Because of Joseph’s knowledge of God and the character of God, and because of his relationship with God the Father, Joseph was able to understand that God had a purpose for his life.</p> <p>Each of us are created by God. We are individually unique and special to Him. We are who He created us to be. Middle school students struggle with identity and purpose. Many succumb to peer pressure, and others struggle with self-esteem. What do others think of me?</p> <p>As middle school leaders, it is our role to remind the students that God created each of uniquely to be an intricate part of His story. We are special and worthy because God chose to make us. He has a purpose for our lives.</p>
Journey	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade	<p><u>Independence</u> – shows less independence from peers and parents, beginning to make decisions on own.</p> <p><u>Purposeful</u> – makes intentional decisions based on information (or perceived information)</p> <p><u>Personal</u> – forms deeper, more personal relationships with fewer people. Maintains associations with others, but limits close friends to a smaller circle</p> <p><u>Still learning to control emotions</u> – Emotions still play a heavy role and it takes time to sift between emotions and facts</p> <p><u>Establishing habits</u> – patterns of behavior and activity become routine</p> <p><u>Futuristic</u> – concern about the future becomes more imminent and important</p>	Perspective	<p>Joseph’s perspective of life started with the sovereignty of God.</p> <p>Journey students are reflective and contemplative. They consider the past and evaluate their futures. Youth at this age are purposefully looking to the future. They are considering college, career and family choices. Their relationships are fewer, but more meaningful. They are establishing lifelong habits.</p> <p>As Journey leaders, we need to recognize their life experiences, validate their emotional responses, but help them to gain perspective, stepping back to see the whole picture of God’s story, and His purpose for their lives with in His story. We need to remind them that the world is tainted with sin and therefore, bad things, really bad things can and do happen. However, God already knows the future, and part of His plan is to help us through rough spots in our lives, developing our character (Romans 5), shaping our future for our betterment and His glory.</p>

\*Developmental Characteristics and application compiled by Michelle Bowen, Awana Missionary, and are based, in part from the Important Milestones information as posted on cdc.gov.