

A Quick Start Guide for the Adventurer Club Director

Manuscript created for the Youth Ministries Department of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

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Introduction

Welcome to the ministry leadership team for children in your church and community. The nominating committee has prayerfully considered the position of Adventurer Club Director and you have been asked to fill this important role. Thank you sharing your time and talents to minister to some of your church family's youngest members. Your ministry will influence young lives for the kingdom of God.

The Adventurer Club is for children in grades 1-4. Membership is open to boys and girls from the church and community. To some members of your church, an Adventurer Club may not seem as important as other church programs. However, leading children to Christ is an integral part of the Adventurer program. When children are well grounded in their beliefs at a young age, they are more likely to remain in the church as teens and adults.

Getting Started

As Adventurer director, your many areas of responsibility will include selecting staff, organizing the club, choosing goals and objectives, planning club meetings and a yearly calendar, evaluating the club's progress, and communicating with the conference, club members, parents, and the community.

One of the first items on your to-do list is to contact your local conference office. They will provide you with materials and guidance for operating your club. You will also receive support, training and organizational ideas from the conference Adventurer, Pathfinder, children's ministries, or youth director.

Adventurer Brochure



This attractive 4-color brochure provides an informative and interesting introduction to the world of Adventurers. This brochure outlines the goals of your club. It's ideal for recruiting and handing out at Adventurer registration. Sold in packages of 100. Available from *AdventSource* at www.adventsource.org or 800-328-0525. Catalog #001175

Adventurer Club Objectives

- Providing spiritual, recreational and social instruction.
- Teaching children about nature and a Creator God.
- Reaching out to both Adventurers and their parents to strengthen family bonds.
- Allowing children to learn by example through the leadership of club personnel.
- Showing children that they are an important part of their church family.
- Providing groundwork to help children understand Jesus' love for them.
- Preparing Adventurers to make a decision for baptism. When children are well grounded in their beliefs at a young age, they are more likely to remain in the church as teens and adults.
- Demonstrating good health through exercise and hygiene.
- Teaching the skills of self-discipline and teamwork.
- Developing Adventurers' creative talents.

If your church does not have an existing Adventurer Club, you will need to submit plans to the church board for authorization to organize a club. When you present to the church board, remember to share how an Adventurer Club can help your church minister to children.

With board approval, plan an organizational meeting and invite the church family to attend. You may wish to invite an experienced Adventurer leader or the conference Pathfinder or youth ministries director to share how this club ministers to children. You may choose to plan an entire church service highlighting children's ministries, with a special focus on the Adventurer program.

Register Your Club with the Local Conference

It's important to register your club with the local conference office. Registration provides several benefits:

- You will receive a calendar of conference events your club can attend throughout the year.
- Your staff can attend conference leadership training events.
- Your club will be assigned an area coordinator. This person has extensive experience with the Adventurer program and can assist you with programming and other details.

When you contact your conference, they will send all the necessary paperwork. Your pastor and several church officers may need to sign the registration materials.

Conferences often require a registration fee. These fees typically are used to fund conference-level Adventurer activities. The fee is usually minimal, but it is necessary to include the amount in your budget.

Organizing and Training Staff

The local Adventurer leadership team consists of a director, one or more associate directors, unit counselors and instructors. The director and associate director(s) are selected by the nominating committee and voted into office by the church body. As director, you will need to meet with your associate director(s) and determine who to ask to fill other positions. Check with your pastor because the church board may need to approve each person selected to serve on the leadership team.

As you choose your leadership team, remember that counselors and instructors should work well with children. They should be committed Seventh-day Adventists who demonstrate a growing friendship with Jesus.

It is imperative that each staff member and instructor completes the Adventurer Staff/Volunteer Service Information Form. You can find a master copy in the *Adventurer Club Manual*. Completed forms must be mailed to the local conference where they will be kept on file.

Director

The most important thing you can do as Adventurer Club director is to spend regular time in prayer for your staff, Adventurers and their families, and the club's ministry. Although planning and preparation are important, prayer is the vital component that must be part of every Adventurer Club.

As director, you will be a member of the church board. You will need to work with the pastor and other church leadership to keep everyone informed about the Adventurer Club's activities.

You will also be responsible for planning and chairing club staff meetings, unless you appoint your associate director to handle this responsibility.

Although you do not need to be in charge of every aspect of the entire Adventurer program for the year, you will need to lead the planning and ensure that others complete their assigned duties. You will also need to oversee all Adventurer meetings and activities.

You will need to communicate regularly with the parents of the Adventurers. You can achieve this through email, a monthly newsletter, a calendar of events, or whatever works best for your situation. In addition to the parents, you must let the entire church membership know what is happening in your Adventurer Club. Make sure your activities are listed in the bulletin and on the church website. You also need to keep in contact with the conference Pathfinder, Adventurer, children's ministries, or youth director and submit monthly reports.

As you work with the club staff, be aware of any friction and handle it as quickly as possible. A staff working together with a common goal has more influence on the young lives they are trying to touch.

Associate Director

The role of associate director is to assist the director in whatever areas need to be covered. If the director has to be absent from a meeting, the associate director will be in charge.

A club can have more than one associate director. If this is the case, various duties can be divided among the group. These duties might include providing transportation and planning outreach activities, nature activities, recreation, crafts, and public relations.

Unit Counselors

Unit counselors are key members of the Adventurer staff. Each counselor is assigned a unit of four to eight Adventurers, male counselors for boys and female counselors for girls.

Counselors work more closely with individual Adventurers than any other member of the Adventurer leadership team. They stay with their unit through all club meetings and activities and are familiar with each child's parent or guardians, home situation, and social, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Counselors are responsible for unit members' attendance and completion of Adventurer curriculum requirements.

Instructors

Instructors are responsible for the curriculum levels from Busy Bee through Helping Hand. They may also teach awards. Instructors can come from the church, or you can use specialists from the community.

Staff Preparation

Adventurer staff must learn about the characteristics of Adventurer-age children. Your local conference offers an Adventurer Staff Leadership Training Seminar which every staff member should attend. Contact your local conference for details about the next seminar. This weekend event also provides a time to strengthen the bonds of your leadership team.

The seminar covers the following topics:

- History, Philosophy and Purpose of the Adventurer Club
- Understanding the Adventurer
- Club Leadership
- Club Organization
- Club Programming
- Adventurer Curriculum
- Adventurer Awards
- Adventurer Family Network
- Resources

Master Guides

Though you do not need to be a Master Guide in order to work with Adventurers, you and your staff are free to work toward this goal. Achieving Master Guide status signifies one has dedicated time to learning more about children and child development. It also shows that one is interested in personal development and learning new skills.

If a number of your staff members have not obtained Master Guide status, you could organize a class and encourage everyone to participate.

About Adventurers

Physical Attributes

- This age group is full of energy and is always on the go.
- Although they want to do everything, their coordination is still developing and they can sometimes become frustrated with small motor skill activities.

Mental Attributes

- Adventurers want to know about everything. They ask questions and want answers that are more simple than complex.
- They learn best by doing.
- Adventurers have good imaginations and need to learn constructive ways to use them.
- Adventurers can easily memorize. This is a good time to instill Bible verses and songs.
- Adventurers like variety. They need to see and experience things in many different ways.

Socio-Emotional Attributes

- Adventurers are developing their social skill set.
- Excitement can easily get out of control with this age group. Impulse actions are not uncommon.
- Interacting with friends is an important activity.
- Although they still think their parents can do no wrong, Adventurers are becoming more independent.
- Adventurers need approval.

Spiritual Attributes

- Adventurers want to know right from wrong.
- Adventurers are ready to learn as much about Jesus as they can.
- Adventurers look out primarily for themselves. Direct them to think of others in their actions and words.

Planning the Adventurer Club Year

The Adventurer Club year may correspond with the calendar year or the school year. Check with your conference for their master schedule.

Take time before the Adventurer year begins to create your calendar. Schedule a time when you can meet with your staff for several hours to plan events, programs and other activities. Consider planning a weekend retreat so your staff can get to know one another while spending time in prayer and planning. If a weekend retreat isn't possible, plan at least an afternoon to meet together.

When you meet with your staff, consider the following questions:

- What do we want to accomplish this year?
- How can we meet these goals?
- When will each event take place?
- Who will be responsible?
- How will we communicate with Adventurers, parents, church members, and the community?
- How often should the club meet?
- How often should the staff meet?
- How will we evaluate our programs?

Be sure to include the following on your calendar:

- Weekly meetings
- Induction
- Adventurer Sabbath
- Crafts
- Conference-sponsored activities
- Nature activities
- Curriculum requirements
- Adventurer Fun Day
- Investiture

It's important to include Adventurer awards when planning your calendar. Choose awards, crafts, and activities that will appeal to both boys and girls. Consider who can teach the various classes on your schedule and find outside helpers who can contribute to the Adventurer program. This will keep your staff members from taking on more than they can handle.

The church board must approve the Adventurer Club's annual calendar, including field trips and other off-site activities. This will build support and put the club in a better position to ask for financial considerations when the board develops the annual church budget. The local church board must approve all off-site activities in order for insurance coverage to be effective.

Planning for an entire year may seem like a lot of work. However, your time is an investment. Annual planning creates a roadmap for the entire Adventurer year. Your team will work more efficiently when they can see the big picture.

Early planning on your part also allows families to plan their schedules around Adventurers and eliminate scheduling conflicts. This will help attendance stay strong throughout the Adventurer Club year.

Recruiting Adventurers

During the summer months, your leadership team can visit in the homes of prospective Adventurers. Meet with children and their parents/guardians and tell them about the club and activities. Use this time to build relationships and get to know the families who want to join your club.

Four weeks before registration, begin placing announcements in the church bulletin with all the details parents and Adventurers will need. You can also post information on the church bulletin board. Remind parents that their attendance is important because their signature is required on several forms.

Send a letter to prospective Adventurers and their parents, encouraging them to join the club. This is a good time to let them know about uniform costs and club dues.

Because not all families will be able to afford the cost of uniforms and dues, you could recruit sponsors to help defray expenses. You could also consider purchasing uniforms to rent to Adventurers each year.

Recruit Adventurers by:

- Visiting prospective Adventurers and their parents at home
- Bulletin announcements
- Sending letters to prospective Adventurers and their parents
- Posting announcements on church bulletin board
- Promoting the Adventurer Club on your church website

The Adventurer Year Begins

Adventurer Registration

The first official event of the Adventurer year is registration. You've done lots of legwork; now your recruiting efforts will pay off. Below are several ideas for helping registration run smoothly.

Choose a time when you know most people will be able to attend. If you schedule registration for your regularly scheduled meeting time, it will help parents know when they need to drop off their children each week. Adventurer registration can coincide with Pathfinder registration, though you will probably want to pick different locations within the church.

Set up a welcome station where you can greet Adventurers and parents and distribute registration materials. From here, Adventurers and parents will need to:

- Complete an Adventurer Club Membership Application. (A master copy is included in the *Adventurer Club Manual*.)
- Complete an Adventurer Club Health Record. (A master copy is included in the *Adventurer Club Manual*.)
- Be measured and place a uniform order. Assign someone familiar with taking measurements to this station.
- Receive a class level assignment.

Provide parents with a calendar of events, at least for the first part of the Adventurer year. The calendar should include weekly meetings, induction, Adventurer Sabbath, field trips, campouts, investiture and any other events. This will help families plan their schedule around Adventurer activities.

Registration is generally held in the fall when the Adventurer year begins. You may need to hold a second registration in January if more children wish to join your club. Adding new Adventurers halfway through the year may be difficult. By joining the club late, they may be behind in their curriculum requirements and may not be ready for Investiture in the spring. Your leadership team will need a plan for late registrations.


Induction

Induction is a special ceremony where both new and returning Adventurers are dedicated to the Lord. It should be scheduled three to four weeks following club registration. By waiting few weeks to hold the induction ceremony, Adventurers have time to learn the Adventurer pledge, law and song. Adventurers should wear their dress uniforms for this ceremony.

The Induction service may include:

- Flag ceremony
- Pledge to American flag
- Pledge to Christian flag
- Pledge to Bible
- Adventurer theme song
- Adventurer pledge and law
- Invocation and welcome
- Homily
- Recognition of parental responsibility
- Dedication prayer
- Dedication song

Adventurer Bulletin Covers



Use these bulletin covers during the induction ceremony, investiture service, or to promote the Adventurer ministry in your weekly church service. Sold in packages of 100. Available from AdventSource at 800-328-0525 or www.adventsource.org English #001197 Spanish #001297

Weekly Meetings

The director's responsibilities include the following:

- Arrive early to prepare for the meeting. Unlock the building before staff and Adventurers begin to arrive.
- Arrange for a worship speaker each week. It is always advisable to have something prepared in case the planned speaker is not available.
- Ensure all units are adequately supervised. If a unit counselor is unable to be present, you will need to step in or delegate someone else to supervise the unit.
- Begin meetings on time.
- Help Adventurers and staff transition smoothly between activities.
- Deal with any discipline problems in a way that won't alienate the misbehaving Adventurer, but will bring the situation under control.
- End meetings on time so both parents and children can stay on schedule. This is especially important if your club meets on school nights.

Investiture

The Adventurer year will pass faster than you can imagine. As the weeks and months slip by, the Adventurers will feel a sense of accomplishment as they complete class work and gain new skills through completing awards. With the end of the Adventurer year comes the investiture service. If your church has a Pathfinder Club, you may choose to combine the investiture service for both clubs.

This service is a time for recognition of work done well. It is a time for Adventurers to share what they have learned so the church family can recognize their accomplishments. Adventurers will enjoy displaying their finished projects.

Elements to include in an investiture service:

- Adventurer theme song
- Adventurer pledge and law
- Special music
- Memory work
- Practical demonstrations or skits
- Parental recognition
- Charge
- Presentation of Adventurer awards and certificates
- Closing song
- Closing prayer

Permission Forms
For insurance purposes it is essential that the church board approves all outings, and that parents/guardians complete a separate permission form prior to each outing.

Relating to Parents

Successful clubs require the participation of every member's parent/guardian in some capacity. Engaging parents in club activities will strengthen the overall program. If parents are unable to serve as staff members, encourage them to provide transportation for outings, teach an award, host Adventurer parties, etc.

As Adventurer director, make it a point to understand the families of children in your club. What is each child's home situation? Are their parents or guardians strict disciplinarians or overly permissive? What level of supervision do they expect from the Adventurer staff? How will they evaluate your program?

While most Adventurers in your club will probably come from Christian homes, you should also be prepared to minister to children and families from different backgrounds. Demonstrating your genuine interest in each child will help you win parents' confidence. Below are some recommendations:

- Communicate regularly with parents via email, phone, letters, in-person discussion and the Adventurer calendar
- Make sure each parent has a clear understanding of the club's goals
- Recognize parental contributions on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis

Finances

Before the Adventurer year begins, meet with your staff to plan the annual budget. Your club's funding will come from several sources. Each Adventurer will contribute annual dues. In addition, the church will provide a portion through the annual church budget. Donations may round out the budget.

Include the cost of the following in your budget:

- Adventurer awards
- Certificates
- Craft supplies
- Outreach projects
- Conference events
- Field trips
- Conference registration fee
- Transportation

Summary

Directing an Adventurer Club is a big job that will make a significant impact on children's lives. Thank you for taking on this important responsibility. May God bless you in this important journey. As you work to bring Adventurers and their families closer to Jesus, remember that God has a plan for you and each of the Adventurers that will be touched by your ministry.

Resources

The resources are available from AdventSource. For a complete listing, visit www.adventsource.org or call 800-328-0525.



Adventurer Club Manual

The *Adventurer Club Manual* is a must for leaders who are going to have a first-class club. This manual carefully outlines the philosophy and objectives of the Adventurer organization and gives a detailed description of an individual Adventurer as well as a wealth of knowledge, ideas, and plans to help you succeed as a leader. Comes in a three-ring binder with divider tabs.

English #001049

French #001022

Spanish #001051



Adventurer Theme Song CD

This CD contains the theme songs for Adventurers, Eager Beavers, and Little Lambs in English and the Adventurer song in Spanish. Each song has a background track and a demo with words.

#000868



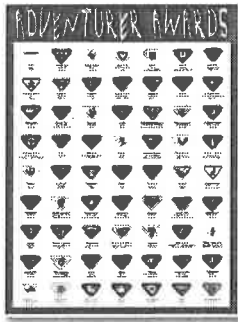
Adventurer Club Pledge and Law Banners

Display the Adventurer pledge and law banners with pride. These 24" x 36" four-color banners featuring the Adventurer logo and fringe are a classy addition to your meeting room. Hang these banners in full view at every Adventurer meeting and at all Adventurer ceremonies. Includes hanging cords with tassels and end caps. (Club must supply 3/8" dowels for crossbars.)

English Pledge and Law Banner Set #000086

Spanish Pledge and Law Banner Set #000078





Award Poster

This 17" x 22" full color poster displays all the Adventurer award patches at a glance. Hang this poster in your classroom so your children can see all the awards they can earn! Award names listed in English, Spanish, and French.

Folded Poster #001505

Rolled Poster #001506

Laminated Poster #001507

Adventurer Uniforms

AdventSource is your complete source for Adventurer Club uniforms, award patches, and gear. To order uniforms for your staff and Adventurers, visit www.adventsource.org or call 800-328-0525 and request a catalog.

Adventurer Club Ministry Description

Introduction

Jesus loved little children, and valued them highly. He empathized with the plight of sick children and their parents, and often went out of His way to heal a sick child (Matthew 5:35-43; Mark 7:25-30; Luke 9:38-42). He enjoyed interacting with the children in the temple (Matthew 21:15). When His disciples minimized the value of children by sending away the mothers who were seeking blessings for their children, Jesus reasserted their importance (Matthew 19:14).

Jesus clearly instructed His followers to reach out and minister to children: “He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, He said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me’” (Mark 9:36, 37). The Adventurer Club is one way in which the church can welcome and care for His children.

God designed the family to be the primary place where children would learn to love and obey God. Religious instruction and devotion in the Old Testament centered around the home (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Exodus 12:21-27). In recent years, families have become increasingly fragmented and the church has taken over more of the spiritual education of children. In the end times, God will “turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers” (Malachi 4:6). The Adventurer Club director will seek to involve parents in the ministry of the Adventurer Club.

Jesus trained His disciples by bringing them apart from the world and into a strong fellowship with Himself and each other. The club atmosphere can create a community of love and help protect children from the negative influences of worldly society.

Jesus chose a child to demonstrate the humility, trust, and lack of self-consciousness found in a member of His kingdom (Matthew 18:2). He stated that, “From the lips of children and infants (God has) ordained praise” (Matthew 21:16). Our children have a tremendous capacity to witness for the Lord!

Duties of the Adventurer Club Director

The Adventurer Club Director will:

1. Communicate with the church and community in order to promote the club.
The conference Adventurer coordinator provides guidance in running the club, and may ask for regular reports to be sent to the conference office. A church Adventurer executive committee (including the pastor, primary Sabbath School leader, church school teachers, parent representatives, and Adventurer Club leadership) will help to set the major policies and goals for the Adventurer Club. The church board should be consulted regarding major decisions.
2. Staff the Adventurer Club with caring, well-qualified adults and teens. The Adventurer director will seek out persons who are clearly growing in the love of Jesus, love children and work well with them. The director will see that each staff member is trained carefully and given a job which is appropriate to the interests of the club.
3. Organize the Adventurer Club by working with the executive committee and staff to identify what goals and objectives need to be accomplished in the coming year. The director and staff may choose the general types of activities to take place. Staff are assigned to lead out in each area. Then a budget is set up, based on the income from church appropriation, club dues, and fundraising. Finally, an amount is designated for each area of the club to spend.
4. Plan the club meetings and yearly calendar. Make a schedule of activities for each regular club meeting, and a yearly calendar which may include regular club meetings, special activity nights, family nights, Adventurer Family Network meetings, and yearly events such as induction and investiture.
5. Evaluate how well the club is reaching its goals. Take time at staff meetings to discuss ideas and concerns. Use what is learned to create a better, more effective club.

As Adventurer Club director, you will be ministering to children in grades one through four. These young "Christians-in-training" are active, fun-loving, little people who have the capacity to truly love Jesus. As you discover the needs of the children and families in your church and community, you will acquire a vision of what the Lord wants to do through your Adventurer Club. You will seek to

bring together staff and programming to help the children become more closely acquainted with the love of Jesus and His plans for them. This will help them acquire the habits, skills, and knowledge to live for Him in today's world. God has ordained parents to be their primary spiritual leaders, and you will seek to include and support them in every way you can through the Adventurer Club.

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Adventurer Club Director

This Quick Start Guide for Adventurer Club directors is full of important information to help you start or revitalize an Adventurer Club in your church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or a seasoned volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your church.

Other titles in the Quick Start Guide series include:

- Pathfinder Club Director
- Children's Ministries Coordinator
- Primary Sabbath School
- Child Evangelism

For a complete listing of Quick Start Guide titles visit www.adventsource.org



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