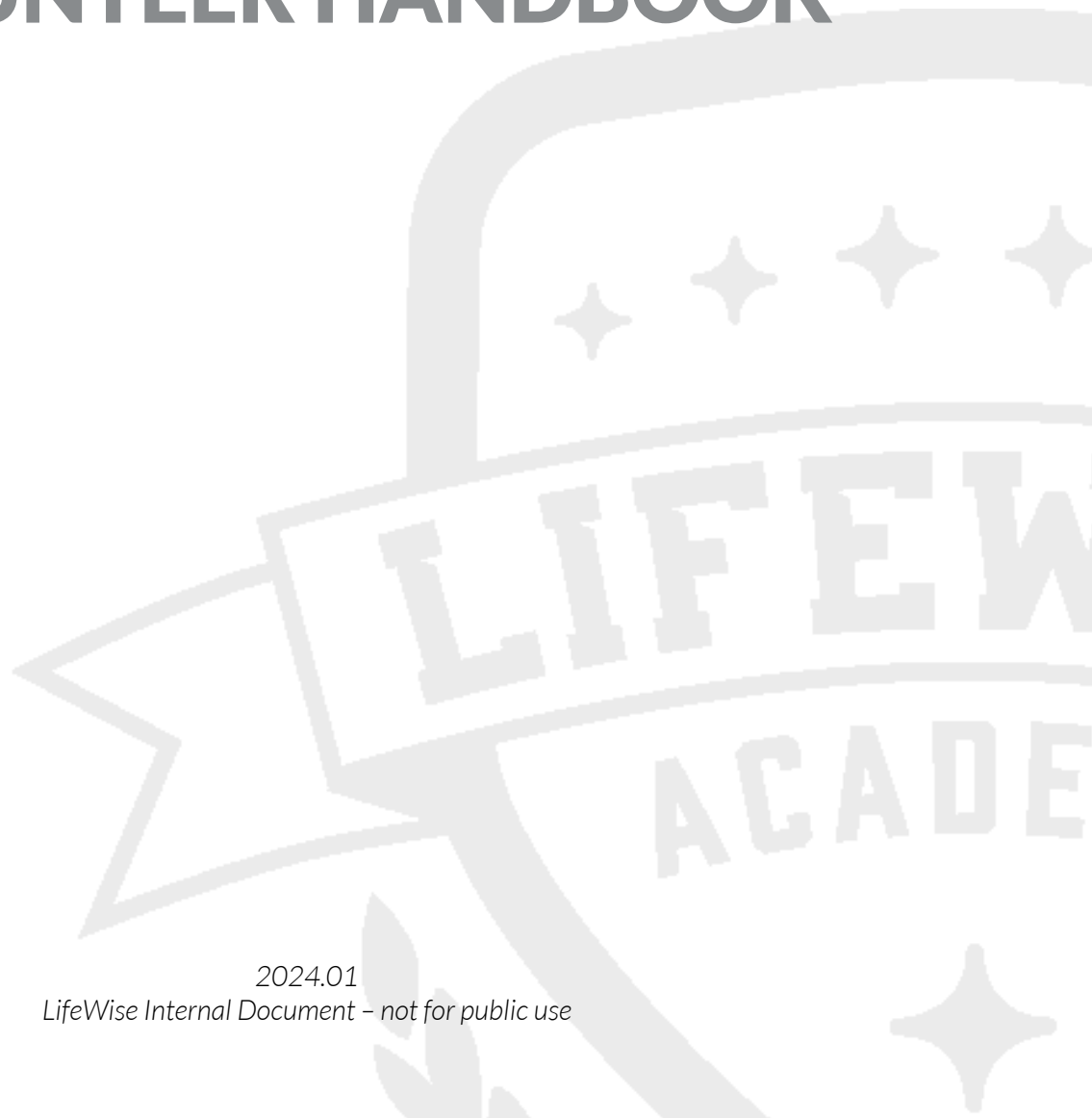


LIFEWISE ACADEMY



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



2024.01

LifeWise Internal Document – not for public use

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INTRODUCTION

We're glad you are here! We consider your presence, as a part of the LifeWise Academy team, a blessing from God and are committed to coming alongside you so that we can effectively reach the next generation with the gospel.

A LifeWise team member is anyone who serves in an official capacity with LifeWise. As a LifeWise volunteer team member, you represent the Body of Christ in both your work life and your private life. As a result, we count on you to always be sensitive to how others may see you biblically, spiritually and ethically. You are inextricably linked with the integrity of this ministry. Accordingly, we encourage you to strive toward living a life that reflects your personal commitment to Jesus Christ and is an example to others of your support of the vision and values of LifeWise.

The LifeWise Volunteer Handbook is intended to provide guidelines and summary information about serving on the volunteer team. It is important that you read, understand and become familiar with the contents of this handbook in order to comply with established standards.

Please do not proceed with the online background screening process until you have carefully read this handbook. As part of the screening process, you will be asked to acknowledge that you have read and reviewed the LifeWise Volunteer Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained therein.

It is not possible to anticipate every situation that may arise in the ministry or to provide information that answers every possible question. Please talk with your LifeWise Program Director if you have any questions or need additional information.

The policies and practices described in this handbook are subject to change from time to time, with or without notice, at the sole discretion of LifeWise, who reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind or revise any policy, benefit or provision as it deems necessary or appropriate.

100 – GENERAL INFORMATION

101 Released Time Religious Instruction

LifeWise is a released time religious instruction program that teaches the Bible to public school students at all grade levels. Released time is a period of time during which "...a student is excused from school to attend a course in religious instruction conducted by a private entity off school district property."¹ Released time allows students to receive religious education in public school and honors the judicial doctrine of the separation of Church and State by adhering to the guidelines established in the key U.S. Supreme Court decision *Zorach v. Clauson*, which has been tested and upheld ever since.

"We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being. When the State encourages religious instruction or cooperates with religious authorities by adjusting the schedule of public events to sectarian needs, it then follows the best of our traditions, or it then respects the religious nature of our people and accommodates the public services to their spiritual needs. To hold that it may not would be to find in the Constitution a requirement that the government show a callous indifference to religious groups. That would be preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe. We find no constitutional requirement which makes it necessary for government to be hostile to religion and to throw its weight against efforts to widen the effective scope of religious influence."

– Justice William O. Douglas, *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952)²

Released time guidelines both guard against government establishment of any one religion while allowing expression of our right to the "free exercise of religion" also protected by the First Amendment. Specific state policies vary. For example, Ohio law HB 171 (ORC 3313.6022) was added by the 130th General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor in 2014. The law allows public school students to be excused from school to receive religious instruction as long as certain conditions are met:

- ◆ The released time program is conducted by a private entity off school district property.
- ◆ The student's parent or guardian gives written consent.
- ◆ The released time program maintains attendance records and makes them available to the partnering school(s).
- ◆ The released time program makes provisions for and assumes liability for the student.
- ◆ No public funds are expended and no public school personnel are involved in providing the religious instruction.
- ◆ The student assumes responsibility for any missed schoolwork.

No student may be released or excused from a Core Curriculum subject course to attend a released time program. While attending a released time program, students are not considered absent from school.

LifeWise is a replicable released time program which meets all of these conditions and legally teaches the Bible during school hours.

¹ Taken from HB 171: 3313.6022 Released time courses in religious instruction.

<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3313.6022>, accessed 3/11/2019.

² <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/343/306.html>, accessed 3/12/2019.

102 Religious Affiliation

LifeWise is organized and operated within, and as a part of, the world wide community of believers, the Church of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, independent of any other recognized denomination, organized local congregations and any other part of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because LifeWise is a parachurch ministry with a missionary focus, it shall regularly partner with other denominations and organized congregations and other parts of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in order to fulfill its mission. LifeWise will not officially endorse any particular church or denomination.

103 Background Checks And Screening

LifeWise has a duty to undertake reasonable efforts to safeguard the children it serves, the public and its own interests. Therefore, it is the policy of LifeWise, as a minimum requirement for consideration for service, to conduct a thorough background screening of all staff, Board and volunteer team members. Screenings include reference checks, personal interviews and background checks. All background checks will be done through our background screening provider. Mandatory rechecks will be done every three years for all team members. Additionally, LifeWise may periodically reassess current team members.

Background checks include:

- ◆ National Criminal Database Search (over 1 billion records)
- ◆ National Sex Offender Registry Search
- ◆ SSN Verification and Name/Address History Trace
- ◆ Automatic Search for criminal records under Maiden or Alias Names discovered on SSN Trace
- ◆ Automatic Re-Verification of Records and Possible Records
- ◆ Child Safety Training (required for all team members)

LifeWise reserves the right to reject team member applicants, suspend or dismiss current staff and volunteers, based on the content of all utilized background screening processes. Additionally, LifeWise will abide by pertinent employment law regarding its background check policy and other employment matters.

LifeWise will conduct background screenings and reference checks only with the consent of candidates. Negative hiring, continued employment or volunteer service decisions that are based on a background screening will be disclosed to the employee or candidate in order to allow the employee or candidate opportunity for rebuttal. Background screening information will be maintained and kept strictly confidential.

Volunteers and staff members who have undergone a background check with another LifeWise program (within the last three years and at the same background check level) may transfer their background check information to serve at another LifeWise program without the need to run an additional background check. To verify and transfer the background check, Program Directors should submit a ticket for Human Resources, requesting this information.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

What We Believe

LifeWise Academy maintains a high view of the authority of Scripture and we align ourselves with historic, orthodox Christian beliefs as expressed in the Nicene Creed.

We believe the storyline of Scripture that climaxes in the central gospel message, that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead. We believe this gospel is true and essential and announces the way by which sinners are reconciled to God.

What We Teach

The work of LifeWise Academy to reach unchurched public school students with the gospel is celebrated and supported by Christians from diverse theological backgrounds. We seek to avoid discussions about denominational differences in the classroom while keeping the focus on what's clearest in Scripture. We strive to keep the main and plain things in Scripture the main and plain things taught in class.

LifeWise teachers and content reflect the following beliefs in all teaching:

1. Scripture, God's infallible written Word consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, was uniquely, verbally and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and that it was written without error (inerrant) in the original manuscripts. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks.
2. There is one true God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of Deity and the characteristics of personality.
3. Jesus Christ is God, the living Word, who became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. Hence, He is perfect Deity and true humanity united in one person forever.
4. Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and voluntarily atoned for the sins of men by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone.
5. Jesus Christ rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died.
6. Jesus Christ ascended bodily into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father, where He, the only mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for His own.
7. Man was originally created in the image of God. He sinned by disobeying God; thus, he was alienated from his Creator. That historic fall brought all mankind under divine condemnation.
8. Man's nature is corrupted, and he is thus totally unable to please God. Every man is in need of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.
9. The salvation of man is wholly a work of God's free grace and is not the work, in whole or in part, of human works or goodness or religious ceremony. God imputes His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby justify them in His sight.
10. The Holy Spirit has come into the world to reveal and glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to men. He convicts and draws sinners to Christ, imparts new life to them, continually indwells them from the moment of spiritual birth and seals them until the day of redemption. His fullness, power and control are appropriated in the believer's life by faith.
11. Every Christian is called to live so in the power of the indwelling Spirit that he will not fulfill the lust of the flesh but will bear fruit to the glory of God.

12. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, His Body, which is composed of all people, living and dead, who have been joined to Him through saving faith.
13. God admonishes His people to assemble together regularly for worship, for participation in ordinances, for edification through the Scriptures and for mutual encouragement.
14. At physical death, the Christian enters immediately into eternal, conscious fellowship with the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his body to everlasting glory and blessing.
15. At physical death, the unbeliever enters immediately into eternal, conscious separation from the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his body to everlasting judgment and condemnation.
16. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth – personally, visibly and bodily – to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.
17. The gospel referred to in the LifeWise vision statement is the good news of Jesus Christ. This gospel is Christological (the message centers on the death and resurrection of Christ, that Christ died for our sins and was raised), biblical (His death and resurrection are according to the Scriptures), theological and salvific (Christ died for our sins to reconcile us to God), historical (if the saving events did not happen, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins and we are to be pitied more than all others), apostolic (the message was entrusted to and transmitted by the apostles, who were witnesses of these saving events), personal (where it is preached, received, believed and held firmly, individual persons are saved) and communal (Christ’s work unites Christians with fellow members of the body of Christ).

NOTE: We relied heavily on framework and language from the internationally known and respected ministries of Cru and The Gospel Coalition in producing this “What We Teach” document.

VISION STATEMENT & PHILOSOPHY

“To reach unchurched public school students with the gospel through a replicable released time religious instruction program.”

Vision Philosophy

About Our Mission Field – “unchurched students in public schools”

Our vision to reach unchurched students in public schools requires that we interface with groups who may or may not be sympathetic to our gospel-centered objective. Therefore, we will be vigilant to “walk in wisdom” as we interact with those “outside the faith. (Col 4:5). All our public messaging, branding and communication will be intelligible, relatable and engaging to those without a church background or a prior understanding of the intrinsic value of Scripture. Classes themselves will also be designed primarily to engage unchurched students as opposed to mimicking traditionally Christian gatherings, such as corporate worship services and Sunday school classes.

About Serving Schools – “a replicable released time religious instruction program”

We are committed to providing a high-quality released time program with an emphasis on character education. We believe such a program meets the felt needs of schools for improved student behavior, mental health, academic performance and other benefits. We seek to meet these needs out of a sincere desire to serve students, schools and communities, not simply as the means to an evangelistic end.

About Teaching Scripture – “the gospel”

We are committed to faithful, gospel-centered teaching of Scripture. We believe Scripture is the revelation of God manifested most supremely in the person and work of Christ, the Word of God incarnate. For this reason, all biblical teaching will be tied to the broader context of the gospel, the metanarrative of God’s unfolding plan of redemption—that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has come to reconcile individuals by His grace and to renew the whole world by and for his glory. This is the gospel that saves and empowers true inward change. Out of this gospel-centered teaching, we will apply explicit and implicit character principles. We will also use apologetics when appropriate to help engage students with the text of Scripture, but we will not expect anyone to be intellectually argued into the Kingdom of God.

About Results and Responses – “reach ... with the gospel”

We trust that the faithful teaching of the Word of God is spiritually effective and fruitful. We expect the results to vary in magnitude and visibility. We plant and water, but it is God who brings true inward growth and change. While many tools to mark spiritual conversions have been used, such as altar calls, recited prayers and commitment cards, we will avoid using formulaic methods and defer to families and local churches to authenticate and celebrate spiritual conversions. Our continual appeal to students will be to believe the gospel, repent from sin, trust in Christ and get connected with a local church. While always striving to be winsome, we will measure our success primarily by whether students are hearing the gospel. We will look for and track other indicators of effectiveness, but we do not feel obligated to accomplish the impossible task of fully quantifying the spiritual results.

About Relating to Churches – “a replicable released time religious instruction program”

We understand that LifeWise Academy is not a local church. However, we aim to serve local churches as an effective tool they can wield in their mission to reach their communities. We will look for every

opportunity to strategically connect students and their families to the broader ministry of local churches. We will be careful to leave the responsibilities of robust spiritual shepherding, church discipline and administering baptism and communion to local church leaders.

About Fighting Vision Drift

We are fully committed to our vision. While our methods and strategies will evolve over time, our vision is settled. We recognize that vision/mission drift is a constant danger to all ministries, particularly one like ours, which interacts so closely with government institutions such as public schools. Therefore, we will always be careful to consider every decision in light of our vision. We understand this will be a path of hard choices and sacrifices. We will opt out of seemingly good opportunities which would move us away from our vision. We will also opt into challenging situations which are necessary for the effective pursuit of our vision. We trust that God will use our efforts in the building of His Kingdom as our team is totally unified around our vision.

TEAM MEMBER CONDUCT

By serving on the Volunteer Team, one enters into a visible leadership role. Everyone with whom we interact, particularly young people, will be paying close attention to what we do and say. As representatives of the Lord, LifeWise expects all volunteers to maintain the highest standards of character and personal conduct in ministry, at work and at home.

LifeWise also recognizes that it is the proper role of a local church to cultivate and maintain godly standards among its members. For this reason, it is required that each LifeWise volunteer attend and be in good standing with a church whose doctrine and ministry are in alignment with the “What We Believe” section of the LifeWise Statement of Faith. As a local church-driven ministry, LifeWise will depend on local churches to qualify and hold accountable their congregations. If a moral issue arises with a volunteer, LifeWise will coordinate a course of action with the volunteer’s local church leadership.

Any instances of perceived misconduct may be reported via the [Misconduct Report Form](#).

VOLUNTEER TEAM MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Attending LifeWise is a privilege. Whether you help volunteer with getting the children to and from the LifeWise class or assist in the classroom, we ask that you help us maintain a high standard of behavior at all times in accordance with transportation, classroom and public school policies. Whenever possible and appropriate, to the best of their abilities, all volunteers will:

- ◆ **Model positive behavior**
 - ◆ Strive to model godly character
 - ◆ Set the example for classroom behavior
 - ◆ Actively listen during Bible lessons
 - ◆ Participate in classroom activities

- ◆ **Develop relationships with students**
 - ◇ Learn the students' names
 - ◇ Get to know the students
 - ◇ Pull up a chair or walk around the room during activities and chat
- ◆ **Assist with classroom management (as needed or directed)**
 - ◇ Assist the teacher(s) with students who behave inappropriately during class
 - Stand or sit next to the student
 - Remind the student of the desired behavior (e.g., listen quietly)
 - Relocate the student to another desk (away from other students) if the inappropriate behavior continues
- ◆ **Help with classroom activities**
 - ◇ Pass out pencils, pens, crayons, Bibles, papers, etc.
 - ◇ Help lead class games
 - ◇ Sit with and provide extra help to students with special needs
- ◆ **Escort students to the restroom**
 - ◇ Stand outside the restroom while the student is inside
 - ◇ Only one boy and girl are to use the restroom at a time

CLASSROOM SAFETY AND CONDUCT

Adult to Student Ratio

The minimum recommended adult to student ratio in a LifeWise classroom is as follows:

- ◆ Grades K-5 = 1:10
- ◆ Grades 6-8 = 1:15
- ◆ Grades 9-12 = 1:20

In addition to these guidelines, LifeWise requires that each classroom has at least two volunteers, in addition to the teacher, at all times. *Note: For middle and high school classes, only one volunteer is required (in addition to the teacher) as long as security cameras are in use and actively monitored.*

General Contact Guidelines

For any activity sponsored by LifeWise, at least three adults, all of whom have successfully completed Child Safety Training and a background check and who are not related to each other, must be present. Whenever possible, at least one of the adult team members should be female. This rule applies to all LifeWise functions within the classroom and event space where youth are present. No other persons shall have contact with LifeWise students during LifeWise classes and/or events except with the prior approval of the Program Director. Moreover, the number of the adults is to be in proportion to the age and number of the participants, and the duration and difficulty of the activity. Prudence is required in applying this policy to different age groups, length of activity and the risk level of the activity. *Note: For middle and high school classes, only one volunteer is required (in addition to the teacher) as long as security cameras are in use and actively monitored.*

One-On-One Contact

When a one-on-one conversation with a student is necessary (e.g., correction or counsel), visibility is required at all times. If the one-on-one conversation takes place in an office, classroom or other room, the

door is to remain open. If it becomes necessary to close the door part way to reduce distraction, this may be done only if the office, classroom or other room has a window free from adornment. If the window has blinds, the blinds must remain open. *Note: These policies remain in place even if the program has a functional security camera system.*

Using the Restroom

Should a student require assistance in the bathroom, it is mandatory for two screened adults to be present. One adult should assist the student with the door open, while the other adult is responsible for visually monitoring the environment. In no instance should this task be delegated to another child, or any person other than an approved adult female team member. If a class has a student who may need assistance in the restroom, an additional screened volunteer should be scheduled.

When gendered bathrooms are assigned at a LifeWise facility, LifeWise team members and students attending LifeWise will use the bathroom that corresponds to the gender identified on their birth certificates. LifeWise team members, including all adult staff and volunteers, who do not adhere to this policy may receive disciplinary action. If a child does not adhere to this policy, the child's parents or legal guardians will be contacted and appropriate action will be taken, including suspension from the LifeWise program.

Physical Contact or Displays of Affection

LifeWise team members may only engage in appropriate physical contact and displays of affection with students in the LifeWise program (or otherwise) and are expressly prohibited from engaging in inappropriate physical contact and displays of affection. The following descriptions of appropriate and inappropriate physical contact between team members and students are specific but not exhaustive. It is our expectation that each program conducts LifeWise in a manner consistent with the spirit of these policies as well as with the literal interpretation of them.

Appropriate physical contact and displays of affection may be used to show support, encouragement and healthy affection toward students who are receptive to this form of emotional expression. However, adults are required to exercise good judgment and will never be allowed to force physical contact on any youth. Examples of appropriate physical contact and displays of affection could include:

- ◆ Hugs initiated by students
- ◆ Holding hands while walking with small children
- ◆ Hand-shakes
- ◆ High-fives, hand-slaps and fist-bumps
- ◆ Verbal praise
- ◆ Putting an arm on or around shoulders
- ◆ Pats on the shoulder or back

Inappropriate physical contact and displays of affection between adults and youth are prohibited at all times. Any inappropriate physical contact will not be allowed or tolerated. Examples of inappropriate physical contact and displays of affection include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Any form of actual or perceived sexual contact
- ◆ Any form of kissing
- ◆ Initiating full-frontal hugs or bear-hugs by adult team members
- ◆ Massages or shoulder rubs

- ◆ Tickling or wrestling
- ◆ Hugging from behind
- ◆ Comments related to physique or body development
- ◆ Patting on the thigh, knee or leg
- ◆ Lengthy embraces
- ◆ Piggyback rides
- ◆ Any other physical contact that is unwelcome or unwanted by the student

Any instances of perceived misconduct may be reported via lifewise.org/contact.

Digital Communication and Social Media Interaction with Students

LifeWise team members shall not initiate social media connections with youth. Team members shall treat their interaction with youth on social networking sites, as well as any electronic communication, as though the interaction were occurring in public in front of other adults and youth. Additionally, team members should avoid one-on-one texting and private messaging with students. LifeWise team members shall refrain from electronic interactions that can be seen by a reasonably prudent person as inappropriate in frequency, tone or content.