

# LIFEWISE ACADEMY



## TEACHER HANDBOOK

2024.11

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# INTRODUCTION

LifeWise teachers are the frontline of LifeWise Academy's ministry as the leader of the classroom. Thank you for your commitment to reaching public school students in your community with the gospel *during school hours!*

This Teacher Handbook is intended to provide guidelines for teaching LifeWise Curriculum and interacting with students in the classroom. It is important that all LifeWise teachers read this handbook in its entirety and become certified through the Teacher Certification courses offered through the [LifeWise Learning Center](#). Teacher Certification is required before teaching in the LifeWise classroom.

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 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND RELATIONSHIPS

See [Program Structure and Relationships](#) for an overview of how the director role interacts with the responsibilities of a LifeWise teacher.

If conflict arises in your program, follow the steps outlined in [Local Conflict Resolution Support Process](#) to resolve the issue. If these steps don't help, contact your program coach.

# 200 TEACHING OVERVIEW

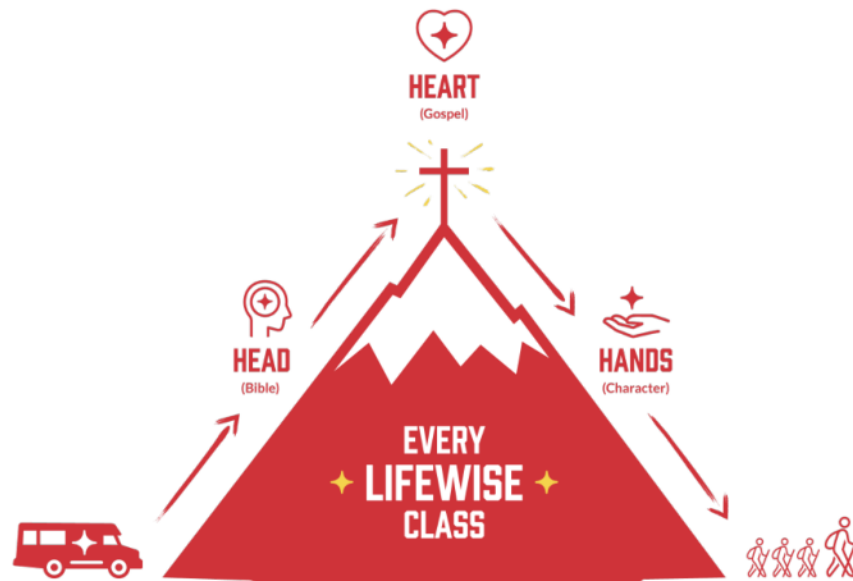
## 201 Philosophy of Teaching Scripture

We are committed to the faithful, gospel-centered teaching of Scripture. Instead of focusing on the moral commands and laws in the Bible that students should implement, we focus on presenting the Bible, and the gospel, in terms of personal transformation. Each lesson is tied to the broader context of the gospel, the metanarrative of God's unfolding plan of redemption, specifically that through the life, 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, we will present and apply implicit and explicit character principles, which the students can live out in their schools, families and communities.

## 202 The LifeWise Threefold Focus

Each LifeWise lesson presents one Bible passage and links to the gospel and the students' character with an intentional focus on three areas:

- ◆ **Head:** We focus first on simply knowing what the Bible says, what happened in the story and what we learn about God, ourselves or the world through each passage.
- ◆ **Heart:** We examine how the Bible story ties into and points to the big picture of the gospel. We consider our failures, sinfulness and need of a savior, as well as Jesus' victory in accomplishing for us what we could not achieve for ourselves.
- ◆ **Hands:** We explore ways students can live out the changed character that the Bible produces. More than sending the students out to merely "try harder to be good," we show how, as the gospel transforms our hearts, Jesus changes our desires, actions and character to be more like His.



# 300 CURRICULUM

*Note: All LifeWise materials and Curriculum are owned by LifeWise and shall be used exclusively in LifeWise classes. Unauthorized use or distribution of these materials is strictly prohibited and may result in legal action as deemed necessary by LifeWise Academy. By accessing and using LifeWise Curriculum and materials, you acknowledge and agree to this statement.*

## 301 Elementary Curriculum

The LifeWise Elementary Curriculum is a five-year chronological journey from Genesis to Revelation. A year of curriculum contains 20-25 Bible lessons. We also have 7 “Special Lessons,” including 1 “Intro to the Bible” lesson, Christmas and Easter lessons and a review lesson for the end of the year. We recommend teaching the Intro lesson at the start of each year.

Below is a brief overview of the stories contained in each year of the curriculum.

- ◆ **Year One:** Creation, the Fall, the Flood, God’s Covenant with Abraham, the Great Famine, God Delivers the Israelites, God’s Law and Covenant with the Israelites
- ◆ **Year Two:** The Wilderness, The Promised Land, Judges and Kings, Divided Kingdom and Prophets
- ◆ **Year Three:** The Prophets, Exile and Return to Jerusalem, Jesus’ Birth, Life and Teaching
- ◆ **Year Four:** The Parables and Miracles of Jesus, Jesus’ Death, Resurrection and Ascension, Pentecost and the Early Church
- ◆ **Year Five:** Paul’s Conversion, Missionary Journeys and Letters to the Churches, Paul’s Trials, John’s Revelation and Christ’s Return

### 301.1 Customization

The five-year curriculum should be used in the classroom when possible, as it provides the most detailed teaching of the Bible. However, there are some situations that may require an abbreviated version of the curriculum. For this reason, LifeWise has created an [Elementary Curriculum Scope and Sequence](#) with guidance to help you choose the lessons to teach with only 4, 3, 2 or 1 year available.

### 301.2 Using LifeWise Elementary Curriculum

Each LifeWise lesson includes multiple activities. This allows each teacher to choose what works best for their classroom. Teachers have the freedom to design a lesson plan and schedule that works best for their students, environment and time constraints. Some programs will need two classes to get through one lesson. Other programs will be able to get through one lesson per class and have extra time. Programs with extra time have the leeway to split larger lessons in half to fill the extra class sessions or add extra review days.

For a more detailed look at our Elementary Curriculum, refer to [Elementary Curriculum Overview](#).

## 302 Middle School Curriculum

In partnership with The Gospel Project, LifeWise Academy provides a high-quality, gospel-centered Middle School Curriculum.

The full Middle School Curriculum is contained in three years, each of which comprises around 35 lessons:

- ◆ **Year One:** The Law and the Prophets (38 lessons)
- ◆ **Year Two:** The Life and Teachings of Jesus (35 lessons)
- ◆ **Year Three:** Living Out Jesus’ Mission (39 lessons)

\*For a more detailed look and access to the middle school lessons, please refer to the [Middle School Curriculum Scope and Sequence](#).

To determine qualifications for passing a Middle School LifeWise class, refer to [Middle School Pass/Fail Course Criteria](#).

## 303 High School Curriculum

### 303.1 Biblical Worldview

In partnership with Summit Ministries, LifeWise provides an excellent, Christ-centered curriculum for high school students on the foundations of the Christian faith. *Foundations* introduces a biblical worldview within the historical truths of creation, the fall, redemption and the restoration of God's people, as well as describing how to develop a personal relationship with Christ.

- ◆ Resource: [Biblical Worldview Course Details](#)

### 303.2 Christianity, Culture, and Worldview (THE 1010)

This 3-credit college course is provided by Ohio Christian University in a fully online format. All LifeWise students are part of LifeWise-only sections of the course.

- ◆ Resource: [Christianity, Culture, and Worldview Course Details](#)

# 400 TEACHING POLICIES AND TIPS

## 401 Interacting With Students

Treat all students as the valuable masterpieces God made them to be:

- ◆ Learn each student's name as quickly as possible. Use their names when they arrive, during the lessons and as you dismiss them each week.
- ◆ Make eye contact. Give the students your full attention during class time.
- ◆ Notice and point out the good in each student.
- ◆ Get to know them as people, not projects. Pay attention to their interests and what they share about their personal lives. Always respond thoughtfully and carefully to any details students share about their homes or families.

Maintain an atmosphere of openness and fun:

- ◆ Have fun while you teach. If you enjoy your time, they will enjoy it too.
- ◆ Prepare your lesson and all activities ahead of time. Have all supplies and handouts ready at the start of class to avoid unnecessary distractions.
- ◆ Most students will rise to the level of your expectations, so don't be afraid to challenge them, especially with Scripture memorization and personal application activities.

Create a safe environment:

- ◆ Follow our **Contact Guidelines** (located in the [Employee Handbook](#))
  - ◇ **General Contact Guidelines:** For any activity sponsored by LifeWise, at least three adults, all of whom have successfully completed the Child Abuse Awareness and Mandated Reporting 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.*
  - ◇ **Physical contact with students:** Physical boundaries must be set that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting students from misunderstandings. Following an explicit code of permitted behavior also assists in protection against false allegations of abuse.
  - ◇ **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.
- ◆ Report any instances of suspected abuse or misconduct to the proper authorities and to the Support Center immediately.
- ◆ Find a [First Aid and/or CPR training provider](#) and encourage all team members to complete the training, if possible

## 402 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.*

## 403 Conduct

As LifeWise employees, we adhere to the [Team Member Conduct](#) policy. It specifically states: "By choosing to serve in ministry, we are entering into a leadership role. Everyone we minister to and interact with (particularly young people) will watch us closely and take what we say seriously. Therefore, we must accept that being a Christ-like leader is all-encompassing. Character and lifestyle are of primary importance to our culture, so who we are during ministry should be consistent with who we are in every other role we find ourselves in the remainder of the week, especially at work and in our homes."

### Conduct Guidelines:

- ◆ Review and put into practice the responsibilities described in the [Team Member Conduct](#) policy
- ◆ Speak and act professionally, as an ambassador of LifeWise in your community
- ◆ Reflect Christ with your attitude inside and outside the LifeWise classroom
- ◆ On social media, do not participate in arguments, debates or "charged" conversations. These interactions are detrimental to the entire organization.

## 404 Dress

The appearance of the LifeWise team should imitate our professional conduct and maintain a positive and respectable image for our programs. It is recommended that volunteers and teachers wear LifeWise apparel while classes are in session. This helps public school personnel, students and families recognize

LifeWise team members. However, specific attire parameters should be decided and communicated by the program director.

LifeWise name badges are highly recommended to be worn while classes are in session for school personnel, students and families to identify LifeWise team members. A customizable [ID Card](#) template is located on the Resource Hub and blank [Name Badges](#) are available on the Storefront.

## 405 Student Confidentiality

Because we promote a relational, safe community within our LifeWise classroom, you may come into contact with personal information about students and their families that could be sensitive and should be kept confidential. Unless it is determined that harm may come to the student or others (see below for information on reporting suspected misconduct or abuse), all information you may encounter through prayer requests, personal conversations or any other way about students' health, behavior, disabilities and related matters, is confidential. Such information may only be disclosed to LifeWise staff members or volunteers who need to know in order to effectively care for the student.

This confidentiality policy is in place to protect and promote trust with the LifeWise families and students we serve.

### 405.1 Reporting Suspected Misconduct or Abuse (section 203.2 in LifeWise Employee Handbook)

Every LifeWise team member, whether paid employee or unpaid volunteer, is a mandated reporter. This means that all LifeWise team members are required by law to report immediately any cases of suspected or observed child abuse to a public children services agency or a law enforcement officer in the county in which the child resides or in which the abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred.

LifeWise is committed to following applicable law regarding reporting allegations or incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct to appropriate law enforcement and child or adult protective service organizations. It is the policy of LifeWise, Inc. not to attempt to investigate or assess the validity or credibility of an allegation of sexual or physical abuse of a minor, or a clearly criminal act, as a condition before reporting the allegation to proper law enforcement authorities or protective services organizations. LifeWise will strive to follow the guidelines as set forth at [childwelfare.gov](http://childwelfare.gov).

**Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect:** Many acts of child abuse are felonies. By law, everyone who knows that a felony has been or is being committed must report that information to law enforcement authorities. Failure to do so is a misdemeanor in many states and can result in prosecution.

All suspected instances of child abuse or neglect should be reported by calling Child Protective Services for the county or city where the LifeWise program resides. The LifeWise Support Center should also be notified of any reports of abuse or neglect. If the alleged child abuser is a LifeWise team member, all such incidents should be reported to the LifeWise Support Center immediately.

If a suspected incident of child abuse or neglect, as defined by applicable state laws, occurs during released time or is revealed to or observed by a LifeWise team member, the team member will:

- ◆ Seek to ensure the child or student's safety
- ◆ Contact the LifeWise program director

The LifeWise program director is responsible to do the following:

- ◆ Immediately alert the proper child protective services authorities or law enforcement when any crime is suspected to have been committed
- ◆ Immediately alert the LifeWise Support Center in order to develop a course of action for the situation

**Reporting Student Disclosures:** LifeWise team members who are not licensed professional counselors are not bound by confidentiality laws. Team members will promptly report any knowledge of the following situations by filling out an [Incident Report](#) and alerting the program director:

- ◆ A student threatening to hurt themselves (suicide, cutting, etc.)
- ◆ A student threatening to hurt someone else
- ◆ A student who reveals a personal crisis/endangerment (pregnancy, drug addiction, criminal activity, etc.)

**Reporting Suspected Misconduct of a LifeWise Team Member:** If you are subjected to any conduct that you believe violates this policy or witness any such conduct, you must immediately contact the LifeWise program director. If the program director is the alleged party committing the acts, report the harassment or activity to other authorities or to the LifeWise Support Center. Any instances of perceived misconduct may be reported via the [Misconduct Report Form](#). Any team member who witnesses sexual harassment or misconduct or abuse or learns of an allegation but does not report it to the program director or one of the contacts listed above is subject to disciplinary action. The program director or the LifeWise Support Center will ensure that a prompt investigation is conducted.

## 406 Preparation Time

LifeWise teachers should expect to spend one hour of prep time for each unique lesson that needs to be prepared. If they are teaching the same lesson multiple times in a week, they should only need one hour to prepare for that lesson total. If they have taught the lesson in previous years, they may need less than one hour to prepare for it, depending on the amount of physical materials that need to be prepared. *\*Note: This is an informal recommendation. Prep time will vary from teacher to teacher.*

## 407 Presenting the Gospel

- ◆ **Be prayerful:** Pray continuously as you prepare, teach and follow up after each lesson.
- ◆ **Be prepared:** Study God's Word on your own so you are fully prepared for teaching each lesson.
- ◆ **Be bold:** It is our joy, responsibility and central ministry goal to share the gospel with students, so count the opportunity as a joy and make every effort to share the Good News with enthusiasm!
- ◆ **Be clear:** Always come back to the central gospel message of Jesus' death for sin, burial and resurrection. Students won't remember everything they are taught, but they will remember what you are most excited about.
- ◆ **Be patient:** The Holy Spirit works in each person's heart differently. Patiently let God work, trusting Him to bring the increase as you faithfully plant and water the seeds of the gospel.
  - ◇ The students will come to class at various levels of spiritual comprehension. Some will be very familiar with the concepts, while others will be hearing them for the first time.
  - ◇ Each student will display different levels of receptiveness, sometimes within the same day. Challenge all students regularly to believe the gospel and relate to God personally, but let them engage voluntarily to the extent they are willing.
- ◆ **Be responsive:** Answer students' questions, keeping in mind that, "I don't know; I'll need to look into that" is often a great response. If the opportunity presents itself, be ready to pray with students who voice needs and willingness to pray.

- ◆ **Practical instruction regarding conversions and the Sinner's Prayer:** Keep in mind the LifeWise Academy Philosophy of Ministry, which states:

*"About Results and Responses: 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.*

- ◆ When a student expresses a desire to believe the gospel and follow Christ, encourage them! Consider also responding through private conversation to discern the student's individual spiritual needs:
  - ◇ Continually remind students that salvation from sin comes through repentance (Mt. 3:1; Mk.1:4-5, 14) and belief (Gen. 15:6). Repentance is the act of turning away from sin and returning to following God.
  - ◇ When students voice a desire to trust in Christ, encourage them that they can pray in their own words, at any time, asking God to forgive them, save them and make them new.
  - ◇ Always remind students that God is faithful to save those who genuinely trust Him. At the same time, be sure to teach students that our changed lives over time will serve as evidence to ourselves and others of the genuineness of our faith. [See more in the section below on assurance.]
  - ◇ Teach students regularly how to grow as a believer: read the Bible, pray, join a local church, share their faith.
  - ◇ Encourage students who express new faith to share it with others, especially their parents.
  - ◇ If possible, go the extra mile to help connect students and their families to local church leaders who can welcome them into a local church body.
- ◆ **What about giving assurance of salvation?**
  - ◇ The Parable of the Soils (Matthew 13:1-23) is told by Jesus with the purpose of helping us understand that there will be various responses when the seed of the gospel is planted in the human heart. Sometimes the seed is immediately snatched up by the enemy. Sometimes the seed is received with enthusiasm but later falls away. Sometimes the seed is received and true belief seems apparent for a while but in time is proven unfruitful. What we're praying for is for the seed to be planted in good soil and to bear good fruit over time.
  - ◇ LifeWise teachers are farmers who prepare soil (hearts), plant seeds (the gospel) and pray for fruitful trees (conversion and transformed lives of faith). If students profess faith in Christ, we should treat them like tender saplings. Students can certainly be born again by the Spirit (John 3). We should believe them when they say they believe in Jesus. However, we should also wait to see fruit over time. We should avoid giving assurances of salvation to students for their profession of faith. Assurance of salvation is an inner conviction that comes from the Holy Spirit as faith matures over time and in the context of the local church. Let the Spirit of God and the Word of God give assurance over time.



## 408 Connecting Students to Churches

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.

*Note: not every local church is in alignment with the LifeWise Vision and Philosophy.*

- ◆ Post a map with local churches marked
  - ◇ Place a pin on local churches that are supportive of LifeWise
  - ◇ Put photos on your map of church buildings, pastors or LifeWise volunteers who attend
- ◆ Encourage volunteers to share where they attend church
- ◆ Share information about programming hosted by churches (send home printed materials or share church Facebook posts to your program's Facebook page)
  - ◇ Summer VBS
  - ◇ Youth or kids camp
  - ◇ Wednesday night programming
  - ◇ Kids' nights, youth events, worship nights
  - ◇ Christmas nativities, performances or special services
  - ◇ *If your local churches aren't hosting any programming for you to share with students, encourage them to try something, knowing they'll have your support in promoting the event!*
- ◆ Create pamphlets or bookmarks (with Support Center design approval) containing names and contact information for churches
- ◆ Generate a list of where LifeWise volunteers and staff attend church and make it available to families
- ◆ Encourage students to bring church flyers or invitations to LifeWise class
- ◆ Introduce pastors to students and families
  - ◇ Invite pastors to visit your program during class
    - Pastors should not teach lessons but should share briefly about their church and youth programs
  - ◇ Invite pastors to attend your open house to meet families
- ◆ Share your program's student survey results with churches
  - ◇ Ask pastors to answer the students' questions in short 1-2 min videos
  - ◇ Use the survey results to ask for prayer or Bibles or other support
- ◆ Have your prayer team leader share prayer requests (without names attached) and praise reports with local churches regularly
- ◆ Have a Christmas party in the evening for students and families at your host church

## 409 Student Discipline Policy

Teachers should strive to create and maintain a safe and positive environment in the classroom where students are recognized for behavior that brings glory to God and emulates His Son. Proactively preventing unwanted behavior should be the focus by building relationships with students to help them feel safe, seen and loved.

Consistently and clearly explain pre-determined LifeWise classroom expectations to each class at the beginning and throughout the year. Confirm that students understand the expectations and are aware of the consequences for not meeting them.

Before possible behavior conflicts arise, determine if there is a school principal, counselor or other personnel who would be willing to receive non-compliant students.

Use the following guidelines:

- ◆ **Remind and Redirect:** Remind the student of the appropriate behavior and redirect her to the appropriate behavior.
- ◆ **Relocate:** If the behavior continues, relocate the student away from other students and near a LifeWise volunteer. The volunteer may serve as a “buddy” throughout the rest of the class to try to help the student adhere to the expectations.
- ◆ **Remove:** If the behavior continues, temporarily remove the student from the classroom. Send the student outside the classroom with a volunteer to take a break (remaining visible with the classroom door open). Talk with the student discreetly when you are able. Affirm that you care about the student and are concerned about his or her behavior. Listen and allow him the chance to explain why he chose not to follow the rules. After talking with the student, bring him back into the classroom, provided that he agrees to adhere to the expectations. The goal is to restore the relationship and allow the student to return to the classroom. If a student is sent outside of the classroom three times (not on the same day), he should be held back from the next LifeWise class. Inform his classroom teacher and/or parent/guardian and explain the situation.
- ◆ **Return:** If a student refuses to follow the rules after being removed from the classroom OR becomes non-compliant, the student should return to school. If time allows, instruct two LifeWise volunteers to walk or transport the student back to the school office. If the student is non-compliant, call the school or parent per predetermined arrangements, and ask for assistance to escort the student back to school. The student should automatically be held back from the next LifeWise class. His or her teacher and parents/guardian should be contacted to explain the situation.
  - ◇ If disruptions continue and the student has already been held back from LifeWise classes multiple times, discuss with the established school contact and parents/guardian if an extended absence from LifeWise classes is needed.
  - ◇ Some challenging situations may require a student to not attend LifeWise until additional or specialized staffing is available in the LifeWise classroom.
  - ◇ No student may be disciplined corporally or corrected with abusive language.

#### 409.1 Challenging Student Situations

1. Ask prayer warriors to pray for students with significant behavioral challenges, for the LifeWise teachers and the student’s public school teacher.
2. If possible, try to find the root of the challenging behavior. Is the student hungry, anxious, scared, going through a difficult situation, etc? Does the student have a diagnosed learning or behavior disorder? Parents, guardians, teachers or counselors (or whoever the established school contact is) may be able to help you understand more about the cause of the difficult behavior.
3. If possible, ask your school contact and/or the student’s parent/guardian if they would be willing to share:
  - ◆ Useful strategies and/or behavior plan
  - ◆ Accommodations (i.e., fidgets, special seating and breaks)
4. Create a plan and policy that first exhausts all preventative strategies to help students be successful and safe while at LifeWise. Communicate the plan with all teachers, volunteers, parents/guardians and the established school contact. Some possible components of a plan

include:

- ◆ Incorporating any strategies or accommodations the school provides
  - ◇ Purchase materials or consider special seating options
- ◆ Recruiting additional staffing (volunteers or teachers)
- ◆ Calling a parent or guardian to pick up a student for non-compliance
  - ◇ This should be used in extreme cases only. The parent should notify the school that they will pick up their student from the LifeWise facility.
- ◆ Asking the student not to return to LifeWise until adequate staffing or support is put into place

*\*Restraining a student by a **trained** teacher or director should be the last resort if a student poses imminent danger and all other preventative strategies have been utilized.*

## 410 Student Attendance

Attendance will be taken at every class. Attendance records will be provided to the public school upon the school's request and will be sent as a list of student names with attendance dates indicated.

Parents who have signed the LifeWise permission form expect that their students will be in LifeWise classes. Thus, students should not be kept from LifeWise classes unless a parent/guardian allows it. If a student remains at school instead of attending LifeWise, parents should be notified.

## 411 Classroom Incentives

When appropriately implemented, incentives can effectively motivate students to engage in desired behaviors, such as memorizing Bible verses, participating in classroom activities and bringing friends to class. Positive incentives, such as praise, rewards, extra privileges or recognition, can reinforce desired behaviors and create an engaging and supportive learning environment. When offering rewards or incentives in class, teachers are urged to opt for non-food incentives. These alternatives may include extra game/activity time, stickers, LifeWise Bucks, verbal praise or special privileges like being a line leader, tech helper, "reader leader" or discussion facilitator. Find more suggestions in the [Student Incentives](#) resource.

## 412 Food in LifeWise Classes

In order to ensure a smooth transition for LifeWise students returning to public school classrooms and to mitigate health concerns related to food, please follow this guidance when considering offering food during LifeWise classes:

- ◆ LifeWise teachers should refrain from distributing candy, treats or food to students, except for rare celebratory occasions such as Christmas, Easter or the last day of LifeWise sessions
- ◆ Prior to distributing any food or candy, teachers must obtain approval from the program director
- ◆ On celebratory occasions, teachers are encouraged to explore healthier alternatives to candy or sugary treats, such as fresh fruits, popcorn, veggie straws, fruit snacks, crackers or non-food items

## 413 Interacting With School Personnel

- ◆ Communicate with teachers and administrators in a respectful tone and with careful wording.
- ◆ Be respectful of the time, material, resources and assistance made available to the LifeWise program by your district's staff and administrators.
- ◆ Make the privacy of students and school district staff a priority. Use discretion when sharing information about the program, the district or the students with another person.
- ◆ Be mindful of written communication with school personnel. Public school officials, such as school

board members and superintendents, are subject to information laws which can require they release records pertaining to their interaction with LifeWise personnel. Therefore, anyone affiliated with LifeWise should only write correspondence they would be comfortable entering into public record.

## 414 Branding Guidelines

The LifeWise brand is our face to the watching world, so we need to demonstrate a high level of excellence and consistency across all locations.

Make every effort to use existing materials and vendors for anything that will display the LifeWise brand. Refer to the [LifeWise Brand Guidelines](#).

Teaching aids and resources being used within the LifeWise classroom do not require branding approval, however, any materials that are sent home or used outside of the LifeWise classroom must be approved via support ticket. Church partnership materials are the only exception to this requirement.

If your program needs materials that are not available through the [Storefront](#), [Template Library](#) or our partnered vendors, please submit a design request ticket.

## 415 Implementing LifeWise Curriculum and Supplementals

Every LifeWise classroom should be marked by clear presentations and creative excellence. To ensure this outcome, LifeWise Academy provides a complete, age-appropriate curriculum, as well as supplemental materials and resource recommendations that are on-brand, on-mission and marked by excellence. ***For this reason, LifeWise requests that programs or teachers purchase and use the official LifeWise Academy curriculum, materials and recommended resources, rather than utilizing the work of outside groups or websites.***

At the same time, LifeWise recognizes that programs must make decisions about curriculum and resources that support their budgets and the needs of their students and community. The criteria in [Implementing LifeWise Curriculum and Supplementals](#) will help program directors and teachers as they make these vital decisions.



# 500 FAITH AND PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOM

## 501 Theological and Denominational Issues

Although LifeWise is not affiliated with a particular denomination of Christianity, we realize during the course of LifeWise classes certain theological or denominational issues may arise. For example:

- ◆ The Age of the Earth
- ◆ The Sacraments/Ordinances
- ◆ The Day of the Sabbath
- ◆ Calvinism/Arminianism
- ◆ Mode of Baptism (Infant, Adult or Total Immersion)
- ◆ Spiritual gifts of prophecy, tongues and healings
- ◆ The Rapture, Millenium and other fine points of eschatology

The LifeWise policy is that we do not teach an official position on any of these theological or denominational issues. If any of these issues come up in class, whether through curriculum or discussion, we will make it clear to students that these are secondary issues which many well-meaning Christians and churches disagree about and that LifeWise, as a program, does not have a particular stance on the issues. Teachers can present a diverse range of views on the subject, delay the topic for future discussion or redirect the class back to the daily lesson plan. Ultimately, students will be encouraged to explore these concepts further in the context of a local church.

In addition, LifeWise leaders should minimize their public connections to theological topics that aren't the core, gospel-centered principles around which LifeWise is unifying. This is a sacrifice we all make, not because these secondary matters aren't important, but because we're choosing to make the choice of setting them aside for unity in the larger mission.

## 502 Cultivating a Biblical Worldview

LifeWise Academy's mission field, the American public school system, exists in a pluralistic, religiously free environment. As a result, LifeWise students have been exposed to various worldviews and have many questions regarding the Bible's perspective on cultural issues, as well as faith and practice. Address each student question with humility and respect.

Share a biblical worldview humbly, remembering that although there is plenty of evidence to give us an idea about how God works in the world, our human minds cannot be certain about how God works in every situation. Treat students as God's image bearers, with great worth and value, regardless of ethnicity, economic status, family structure, religious beliefs, gender identity or their views on these issues. Allow students to discuss their questions when appropriately expressed and as time allows. Remind students that confusion and struggling with these issues does not necessarily equate with sin.

When responding to a question or comment about cultural issues, pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance in sharing God's truth and rest on the authority of Scripture rather than stating your own opinion. If possible, discuss God's character with students in an age-appropriate way and read a Bible verse that answers the question.

For more information, see [Difficult Questions From Students](#).

As difficult topics are discussed, fall back on God's character and continually affirm God's unchanging qualities below:

- ◆ **Loving:** God created us and loves us. He cares for us and helps us by showing us the best way to live (Gen. 1; 1 Jn. 4:9-10).
- ◆ **All-Knowing:** God knows all things and sees our pain, struggles and needs. He has given us boundaries and rules for our good (Ps. 139:1-3).
- ◆ **Holy:** God is perfect and holy. He always does what is right. Therefore, our sin is offensive to Him. God also hates our sin because it draws us away from God and slowly destroys us (Ex.15:11; Isa. 6:3-7; Rom. 1:18-32).
- ◆ **Just:** God is just, and His justice demands that sin and injustice not be ignored or swept under the rug. God sees our sin because nothing is hidden from His sight, and the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).
- ◆ **Gracious:** God sent his only son, Jesus, to die in our place. When we trust in Jesus' sacrifice for sin, we are made right with God. God forgives us, frees us from the punishment of sin and allows us to be close to Him forever (John 3:16; Acts 13:38-39; 2 Cor. 5:21; Tit. 3:4-7; 1 Pet. 3:18).

From the very beginning, God established His created order and standard for identity, relationships and worship. LifeWise affirms the following position on issues that are currently contentious in our culture:

- ◆ **Gender Identity:** God created people male and female—equally and distinctly—as an intentional reflection of His image. One's gender should be celebrated and accepted as part of God's gift and wise design. To reject one's given gender is to misunderstand the goodness of God's blueprint for our lives. However, in a fallen world, people sometimes struggle with confusion about their gender, due to not fitting gender stereotypes or anatomical complications. Individuals wrestling with these questions should be met with compassion and the wisdom fitting their complexity, while not compromising the goodness of God's given design.
- ◆ **Sexual Orientation:** God uniquely designed a man and woman—spiritually, emotionally and physically—to experience sexual intimacy together. God considers other kinds of sexual relations outside of this design to be sin.
- ◆ **Sex Before Marriage:** God created sexual intimacy to be experienced only within a male and female marriage relationship.
- ◆ **Ethnicity:** God Himself created and loves all people, tribes, nations and languages. Each person has been given equal value as God's image bearer, regardless of race and ethnicity.
- ◆ **Other Religions:** God is the one true God. He alone deserves worship. Following other religions will not lead us into God's presence in this life or in the life to come. Jesus tells us in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

#### 502.1 Bible References for Difficult Student Questions:

- ◆ **Gender Identity:** Gen. 1:26-27; Ps. 139:13-16; Mark 10:6
- ◆ **Sexual Orientation:** Rom. 1:24-27; Lev. 18:22; 1 Cor. 6:9-11
- ◆ **Sex Before Marriage:** 1 Cor. 6:17-20, 7:2; Heb. 13:4; 1 Thes. 4:3-5, 7
- ◆ **Marriage:** Gen. 2:21-25; Eph. 5:22-33; Matt. 19:4-6
- ◆ **Divorce:** Mat. 5:32, 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:10-15; Mal. 2:16
- ◆ **Pornography:** 1 Jn. 2:16; Phil. 4:8; 2 Pet. 2:19; Mat. 5:28
- ◆ **Music, Movies and Media:** Col. 3:2; Phil. 4:8; 1 Cor. 10:31
- ◆ **Suicide:** Ex. 20:13; Eph. 1:7

- ◆ **Ethnicity:** Gen. 1:26; Gen. 11:6-8; Rev. 7:9-10
- ◆ **Other Religions:** Ex. 20:3-6; Jn. 14:6; 2 Thes. 2:9-12
- ◆ **The Occult and Witchcraft:** Deu. 18:9-12; 1 Sam. 15:23; Isa. 8:19; Acts 19:18-19; Gal. 5:19-20
- ◆ **Pain and Suffering:** Gen. 3:16-19, 50: 19-21; Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; Rev. 21:4

### 503 Prayer, Praise and Worship

LifeWise exists especially to reach unchurched public school students with the gospel through Bible-based character education. Unchurched students may feel uncomfortable participating in worship-centered activities such as corporate prayer and worship songs.

Whether or not a regular time of prayer is used during class is left up to local leadership boards and teachers. We strongly encourage teachers to clearly explain *what prayer is* before including it as a regular part of class. We also encourage prefacing the prayer with words such as, “I am going to pray now, which is just talking to God. You are welcome to close your eyes and bow your heads with me to focus on God if you’d like.” Additionally, we encourage teachers to ask students for prayer requests but carefully consider whether or not to ask students to pray out loud during class. Further, we discourage asking students to kneel or hold hands during class prayer.

A dedicated praise and worship time should not be a part of LifeWise classes. Teachers are encouraged to use music as a teaching aide. For example, students can be taught to sing a song that helps reinforce class content, like memorizing books of the Bible or a particular verse of Scripture. Additionally, music can be played as students enter the class to set the atmosphere and help prepare the instructor. In general, we consider corporate times of praise, worship and prayer a function of the local church.