



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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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 - IMPORTANT INFORMATION

101 RELEASED TIME RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION (RT)

LifeWise is a RT program which teaches the Bible to public school students at all grade levels. RT 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 RT 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

RT 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 RT program is conducted by a private entity off school district property.
- The student's parent or guardian gives written consent.
- The RT program maintains attendance records and makes them available to the partnering school(s).
- The RT 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 RT program. While attending a RT program, students are not considered absent from school.

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 on 3/12/2019.

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

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. All background screening will be done through Protect My Ministry (PMM). Mandatory rechecks will be done every three years for all team members. Additionally, LifeWise may periodically reassess current team members.

Background screenings through PMM 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
- Employee and Volunteer level Child Safety Training

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 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.

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 story-line 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, 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 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

"To reach unchurched public school students with the gospel through a replicable Released Time Religious Instruction program."

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 the 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.

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