



THE BIG PICTURE

LIFEWISE ACADEMY



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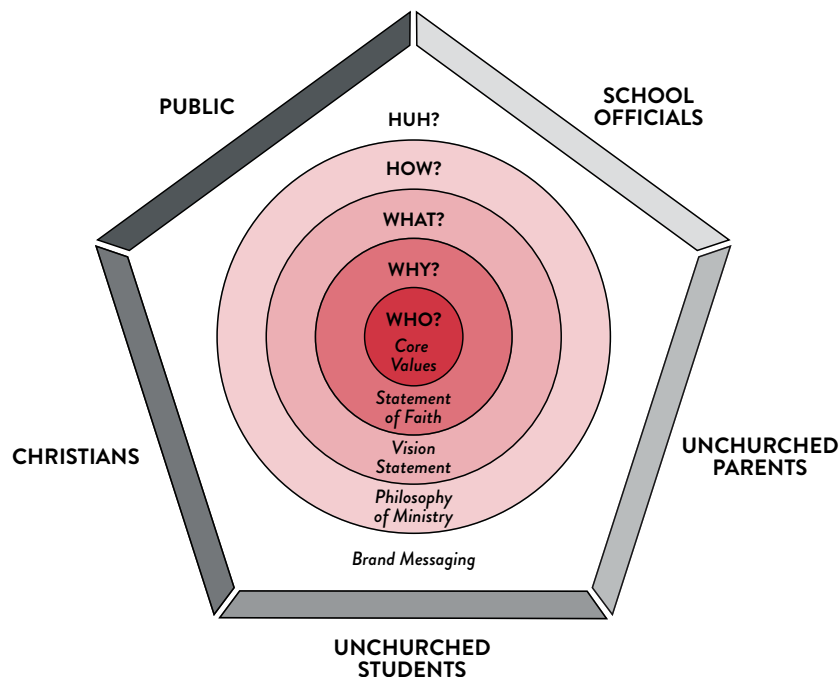
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BIG PICTURE Q&A INTRODUCTION

Human nature, the tides of culture and the unique demands of ministry are constant forces that threaten to pull every Christian organization off course. Without a firm grasp of its foundational “big picture” concepts, a ministry will unavoidably divorce its day to day tasks from their purpose resulting in either loss of motivation or drift from its mission. However, a clear and unified understanding of the big picture among team members will keep a ministry on course and give purpose to every role and every task no matter how seemingly mundane.

The LifeWise Academy Big Picture Questions are Who?, Why?, What?, How? and Huh?

- ★ **WHO** asks, “Who are we?” Our *Core Values* define us and give us a target to strive toward individually and collectively. We start here because before we came together, God, by his grace, laid the groundwork by instilling these qualities in us.
- ★ **WHY** asks, “Why have we come together as an organization?” It is our *Statement of Faith*, our shared understanding of reality which compels us to take action. In light of our beliefs, we’ve been driven to form and serve in this organization.
- ★ **WHAT** asks, “What are we seeking to do?” Our *Vision Statement* defines our objective as an organization.
- ★ **HOW** asks, “How are we doing it?” Our *Philosophy of Ministry* lays out our approach to accomplishing the vision.
- ★ **HUH** asks, “What will those outside our organization see and hear from us?” Our *Brand Messaging Plan* spells out how we will communicate with the public.



WHO? – CORE VALUES

As LifeWise team members we seek to hold together two qualities which, by observation, can seem mutually exclusive: *Commitment* and *Competence*. *Commitment* is a matter of the heart. It speaks to one's attitudes and motivations. *Competence* is a matter of the head and hands. It speaks to one's skills and productivity. By God's grace and with His help, we are and seek to increasingly be ...

Committed

★ Vision Centric

- We will be fully committed to the LifeWise Academy vision to reach unchurched students with the gospel. Our focus will be to achieve this vision with every activity, avoiding distraction. This gospel we proclaim was accomplished by our King, Jesus Christ, and we will seek to glorify Him in this ministry.

★ Servant Minded

- We will have the heart of Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve. We will embody this attitude in every interaction with students, customers, donors and fellow team members.

★ Growth Oriented

- We will never be complacent. We know there is always room for improvement. We will continually strive to move forward and pursue both personal and organizational growth.

★ Hard Working

- We will do what it takes to get the job done, period. We will have the internal grit and self-motivation necessary to go the extra mile to accomplish our goal.

Competent

★ Strategic

- We will consider all angles and make the best decision possible in every situation to help achieve our short term goals. We will also think “big picture”, and make carefully calculated decisions now that set us up to achieve the long-term objectives of the ministry.

★ Innovative

- We will continually look for new and better ways to achieve our vision. We will do what it takes to turn our ideas into reality, even if our solutions seem unconventional.

★ Problem Solving

- We will figure it out. We will strive to never be the victim of our circumstances. We will always find a way.

★ Excellent

- Being attentive to every detail, we will maintain the highest standard of excellence in all we do.

WHY? – 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.



WHAT? – VISION STATEMENT

“To reach unchurched students in public schools 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.

HOW? – PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

About Our Mission Field

Our vision to reach unchurched students in public schools requires that we interface with four groups who may or may not be sympathetic to our gospel-centered objective. Those groups are 1-school officials, 2-unchurched parents, 3-unchurched students, 4-the public. Therefore we will be hyper 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

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, academic performance and student retention. 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

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

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

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.

HUH? – BRAND MESSAGING

While we will be careful to tailor our message to the specific group in each situation, our most public messaging will appeal to a broad audience.

Our Mission

LifeWise Academy exists to positively impact students, schools and communities through a Bible-based, character-focused Released Time Religious Instruction program.

Our Philosophy

For The Good Of Students

LifeWise Academy serves students by offering practical Bible-based education for the betterment of students' academic performance, character development and mental health. We believe all students can benefit from the message of the Bible and take great care to make all instruction relatable and helpful to those without a church or Christian background.

For The Good Of Public Schools

LifeWise Academy serves alongside educators by reinforcing and complementing their efforts. In addition to seeing improved behavior and academic performance, public schools with a local RTRI program can attract families who may otherwise opt out of public education for lack of religious instruction. LifeWise Academy is careful in adhering to federal, state and district policies and flexible in coordinating with school officials, remembering that we are serving them, not vice versa.

For The Good Of Communities

LifeWise Academy serves communities by providing a practical way for community members to positively impact rising generations. We seek out partnership with like minded individuals and organizations who desire to invest in the future of the community.

Our Method

We Keep It Legal

LifeWise is keenly aware of the need to keep public and religious institutions separate. We are diligent to adhere to relevant laws and policies, namely the maintenance of a program that is (1) privately funded, (2) off school property and (3) inclusive of only students with parental permission.

We Keep It Simple

LifeWise focuses on the central message of the Bible. We avoid getting bogged down in the finer points of religious doctrine. Instead, we focus on the most foundational themes that speak to the issues common to all people.

We Keep It Practical

LifeWise seeks to create real and lasting change for students, schools and communities. We continually look for ways to make instruction not only conceptual, but also actionable.