

CONTRIBUTOR

STYLE GUIDE



INSTITUTE
for FAITH & CULTURE

ADVANCING THE KINGDOM OF GOD,
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN



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for FAITH & CULTURE

IFC BLOG STYLE GUIDE

The Institute for Faith & Culture™ (IFC) is a Christian, nonprofit organization that exists to equip Christians for this cultural moment to be salt and light in their sphere of influence, through the creation and curation of Biblical worldview resources, practical and leadership training, and by connecting the body of Christ for the advancement of the Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven.

IFC's educational resources start with the belief that the Bible, as the inerrant Word of God, provides the authoritative and intellectual foundation for a proper understanding of how individuals and communities can flourish.

This guide is designed to help contributors craft content that fits within the IFC mission, vision, and style. Included are the following materials and topics:

- I. General Formatting
- II. Tone & Style
- III. Content
- IV. Citations
- V. Religious Referencing
- VI. Tips

I. GENERAL FORMATTING

- Blog posts should be between 800–1,000 words in length
- Keep paragraphs short. Break long sentences into numbered lists or bullet points when appropriate.
- Use sub-headers in the body of the post
- The ampersand symbol (&) is used in place of the word "and" in titles and sub-headers
- Anything not specifically addressed in this guide will default to use of the Chicago Manual of Style

II. TONE & STYLE

Our audience is primarily well-read evangelicals of all ages and backgrounds. The level of writing should be equivalent to other publications they may be reading, such as The Wall Street Journal, and WORLD magazine. Also,

- Explain jargon
- Briefly teach about or “unpack” any complex concept or theology
- Blog posts that read like press releases or op-eds will not be accepted

III. CONTENT

Subject matter should be related to the Christian faith, worldview issues, and the public square and provide substantive value to the reader. Sample topics include, but are not limited to:

- Reviewing a recent book on a cultural or worldview theme
- Addressing current cultural or social challenges from a biblical perspective
- Biblical and economic ideas that lead to a flourishing society
- Exegeting a passage of scripture with application to reader's lives and vocations

In addition:

- All posts need to incorporate a biblical perspective on the topic being presented
- Back up your argument with credible sources
- Engage with IFC ideas and quote from other IFC blogs where possible

IV. CITATIONS

All citations should appear within the text of the post. Do not footnote or use parenthetical citations. Instead, include a hyperlink to the original source of the content on the verb of the sentence in which the source is utilized. For example:

Marvin Olasky, editor-in-chief of WORLD magazine, [challenges](#) Christians to “show what in Rand they agree with and what they spurn.”

Citations for books should include a hyperlink to the book online, preferably on the publisher or author's website, but Amazon is acceptable if that is the only listing of the title. For works in the public domain (i.e., Augustine's City of God), include a hyperlink to an online source. Page numbers are not necessary.

Include hyperlinks to BibleGateway.com for any scripture. Default to use of ESV, unless there is a compelling reason to use a different translation. In which case, note the translation.

If a source does not exist online, it is acceptable to simply name the title (if applicable) and author. Some examples of this may include out of print books, a sermon or talk that you heard but is not online, or a personal conversation you had.

V. RELIGIOUS REFERENCING

General rules:

- Names of deities, and their alternative names, are capitalized
- Group references (i.e., “the apostles,” or “the patriarchs”) are not capitalized
- Pronouns referring to religious figures are not capitalized
- Deity pronouns are lowercase (he/him) when referring to members of the Trinity, however proper nouns are capitalized (i.e., the One, Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, etc.)
- Names of major religions, denominations, sects, orders, and movements are capitalized
- “Church” is only capitalized when used as part of the formal name of a denomination
- Official names of religious jurisdictions are capitalized; generic terms are

- lowercased (i.e., the Archdiocese of Chicago vs. the archdiocese)
- Specific names of religious buildings are capitalized; generic names are lowercased
- Historic councils and their modern counterparts are capitalized

Religious writings:

- “Bible” is capitalized, while “biblical” is lowercased in all uses
- “scripture” and “scriptures” are lowercased
- “godly” is lowercased
- “gospel” is lowercase, unless using a title (i.e., Gospel of John) or referring to the four Gospels
- “heaven” and “kingdom” are lowercase, except when referring to the Kingdom, meaning the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Books of the Bible are capitalized, but not italicized unless part of the title of a published work. The full names are used in-text and abbreviated only in parenthetical references.
- Sections of the Bible are capitalized (i.e., the Hebrew scriptures, the Old Testament)
- The names of prayers and creeds are usually capitalized
- Specific religious events and concepts, such as the crucifixion and redemption, are not-capitalized, except when used in a larger framework, such as “Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration”
- Also, “the Fall” is always capitalized
- Doctrines, services, and rites are lowercased
- Sacraments are traditionally capitalized

VI. TIPS

- Sharing from your own personal experience helps to draw readers in.
- Numbered lists and bullet points make content easily digestible for readers. It helps them identify the important, take-away points.
- Pay attention to keywords in your article and try to use them throughout your post and in your title.
- Titles that plainly state what the post is about garner higher traffic. Titles posed in the form of a question also stoke curiosity.



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