

Higher Things Media

CONTENT GUIDELINES

Our Mission

The mission of Higher Things is to assist parents, pastors, and congregations in cultivating a distinctly Lutheran identity among their youth and young adults.

Tone

The tone of Higher Things writing is friendly, approachable, and educational—without being patronizing or resorting to juvenile antics for attention.

As a contributor to Higher Things, you will work to communicate in an engaging and relaxed, yet authoritative way. Your article is a “teaching moment.” Most importantly, you understand that your content must clearly point your audience to the comfort and freedom of the Gospel.

Shared Vocabulary

While many Higher Things youth are generally well-catechized...a lot aren't. Regardless, they are part of a generation that has little-to-no frame of reference for religious ideas or language.

To connect with our youth audience, it's important to minimize (or at least explain) insider language and theological terminology. You should certainly teach theological concepts, but avoid using a lot of language that is likely to cause your audience to divert their attention toward something more easily consumable.

Know Your Audience

Our goal in Higher Things Media is to provide resources for youth that teach them our Lutheran doctrine and practices. At the same time, we have a related goal of helping their pastors, parents, and youth leaders further that instruction through stand-alone or supplemental materials. We produce materials for youth, but keep things simple enough for adults to use and understand.

This means that all of our materials should be easily grasped by teenagers and college students. Some may have an interest in theology and church vocations already, but most are just regular kids who want to be faithful in a world where that is a difficult thing to do. At the same time, all of our resources should be able to serve as a launching point for further conversation and study for any age group. In other words, leave your audience wanting more.

Content

Most of the resources HT Media produces will fall into three general categories:

- **Theology (*Exegetical, Historical, Systematic, Pastoral, and Practical - Liturgy/Worship*)**
We've said for 20 years, kids can learn theology. We just have to teach it to them. When young people (or people in general) understand why we believe and practice as we do and the history behind it, they develop a greater appreciation for it. Don't shy away from challenging topics in theology.

- **Using our Basic Lutheran Resources (*the Bible, Catechism, and Hymnal*)**
All that a young person needs to know to learn and talk about their faith can be found in these resources. (Incidentally, these are the primary sources that should be referenced for the other categories as well.) Sadly, most people don't know what treasures they are!
- **Culture/Timely Topics (*news, pop culture, trends, fashions, music, movies, shows, etc.*)**
The world is changing faster than anyone can keep up with. Tragedies and celebrations happen on a daily basis. Celebrity gossip is pretty much the same thing as news. Resources in this category will help a teenager to sort through the complexities and gain a Lutheran perspective on various topics.

Approach

What to look for in your writing:

- The proclamation of the Gospel "for you."
- Interesting and articulate writing with a conversational and educational tone.
- Thoughtful explanation of Lutheran doctrine and practice, in language that any teenager could understand.
- No more than 1,500 words and no fewer than 800 words.
- Proper citation: are you making a claim about what Scripture says? Add in that reference! (FYI, when quoting the Bible, we use the ESV translation.) Making a statement about the way the world is? Back that up with some research!

What to avoid in your writing:

- "Us vs. Them" mentality: avoid making straw-man arguments of ideas you disagree with.
- Use of vocabulary (especially theological) that is difficult for unchurched people to understand. If you have to use it, make sure to explain it!
- Discussions on church politics. Talk about the theology—not synods, groups, or individuals.

Process

When submitting an article, please:

- Review through your material first. It is not our job to fill in the blanks for you. Use spell check and tools like Grammarly before submitting. Written articles filled with substantial grammatical errors will be rejected.
- Check your word count (no less than 800 words, no more than 1,500)
- Unless otherwise instructed, email to your document in Pages, Word, or GoogleDoc format to submissions@higherthings.org

Editing Procedure:

1. Higher Things uses GoogleDocs to track the edits made to a written submission.
2. If accepted, you will receive an email notification once these edits have been made and a simple contract that lays out the timeline, process details, and grants Higher Things copyright on the final product.
3. Please look through all edits and accept. If you have a question or objections to any of the edits, please write them in the comments on the side before rejecting an edit. This allows the editor to keep track of the changes (and to learn what you disagreed with).
4. Please try to return edits within 5 days of receiving them. We know this isn't always possible, but it helps if you can stick to this guideline as much as possible.

We reserve the right to change the title of your submission and make edits as we see fit, including doctrinal review. We always do our best to notify you of any changes throughout the editing process.

Higher Things

2019-20 TOPIC IDEAS

Church

- Adiaphora
- Stewardship
- Most influential Lutheran in your life
- Evangelism
- Apologetics
- Missions
- Meditation
- Prayer/personal devotions
- Church Music
- Hero in the faith

School

- Social
- Bullying
- Post-Modernism
- Defending your faith
- Choosing a college
- Transition to college

Culture

- LGBTQ Topics
- Social media
- Environmentalism
- Cloning
- Philosophy
- Music
- Atheism

Life

- Body image
- Adoption
- Ethics
- Vocation
- Being a man/woman
- Humor
- Suicide
- Addiction
- Depression/Mental Illness

Theology

- Apologetics
- Small Catechism
- Modern heresies vs ancient heresies
- Pietism
- OT type/fulfillment
- Faith and science
- End times

Relationships

- Loneliness
- Dating
- Getting along with difficult people
- What is true friendship?
- Marriage
- Sexuality
- Pornography

Other Religions/Denominations

- Mormonism
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Cults
- Scientology
- Islam
- Christian Denominations
- Talking with non-Lutheran friends

Church and State

- Elections
- Presidency
- Constitution
- Separation of Church and State
- Are we a Christian Nation?
- Respect for leaders