

Spirit & Truth Publishing Theological Guidelines

At Spirit & Truth Publishing, we produce high-quality, easy-to-use, and theologically solid faith formation materials for congregations, schools, and other ministries from a wide variety of denominations and faith traditions. This document is intended to describe what we mean when we say our resources are “theologically solid.”

Bible and Interpretation

- The Bible is a library of ancient Jewish texts from different cultures and times.
- It is important to learn the cultural and other contexts of a biblical text to help us interpret it. Translation and reading are acts of interpretation. The limits of human knowledge mean that we cannot reach an absolute and certain interpretation. And that’s okay!
- We do not believe that the Bible is inerrant or literal, but it is unique and inspired by God.

Creeds

- We accept the Nicene Creed and Apostles’ Creed as important summaries of faith. This includes the traditional understanding of the Triune God and the two natures of Christ as fully human and fully divine.

Theological Neutrality

- We strive to avoid the primary theological arguments that cause division within the main body of Christianity and focus on what unites us as followers of Jesus.
- We seek to create resources that people from many Christian traditions can use in their faith formation ministries. It is, however, not possible to remove all theological biases.

God’s Kingdom: Love, Peace, Service, and Justice

- The core of our theology is that God loves all people unconditionally, and in return, God calls us to love God with acts of worship and others with acts of service and justice.
- God’s kingdom is defined by peace (shalom), a reality when all people have what they need to thrive, not just survive. This includes loving relationships with God and others.
- We work toward God’s kingdom with acts of service and justice. Service is our actions that bring God’s love into the lives of others. Justice is specifically the work of changing the larger systems of our communities and world to bring about shalom.

Faith Formation

- Christian faith formation is every action, experience, or relationship that nurtures a transformative relationship of trust with the Triune God and shapes the way we see and interact with God’s world.
- Faith formation is the very mission of God’s church—to equip followers of Jesus Christ so that they may be sent out into the world to spread God’s kingdom.
- Faith and doubt are not opposites. Doubts and uncertainty are inevitable in a life of faith and it is critical to faith formation that every person be encouraged to share and even embrace their doubts within an accepting community of faith.

Equality & Inclusion

- God is far beyond our understanding and language. Therefore, all language we use in relation to God describes only aspects of God. God is also beyond our understanding of gender, so we work to avoid gendered language when referring to God.
- In our resources, we strive to use inclusive language regarding race, disability, gender identity, family diversity, socio-economic conditions, and more.
- All people inherently possess God-given dignity and equality. For the sake of justice, we must especially emphasize the dignity and equality of those populations that have historically and currently experience inequality based on race, ethnicity, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

Please note that, as we are a small company with limited resources (and fallible humans), our materials might not always match these theological guidelines, especially in terms of inclusion. We always strive to improve, so if you notice any specific instances that do not meet our standards, please tell the publisher, Gregory Rawn (g.rawn@spiritandtruthpublishing.com).

Note: These theological guidelines apply to all our faith formation resources with the partial exception of our Spirit & Truth: Teaching Kids the Heart of Worship curricula for PK-2nd and 3rd-6th. As our earliest product, it does not follow our guideline for gender-neutral language and is written for the common liturgy and basic theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and is thus not theologically neutral.