

Teaching the Bible Writers' Guidelines

8/09

Teaching the Bible (http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/media/TBv1_i1.htm) is a monthly e-publication geared to high school teachers of Bible electives and their students. The goal is to deliver scholarly content about the Bible and its world through easy-to-grasp writing, visuals, activities, and audio segments that can be readily used in the high school classroom.

The primary audience includes teachers in public schools, where certain legal issues around the first amendment apply; a secondary audience includes teachers at religious private schools where legal concerns may not arise but where there is an interest in teaching the Bible from academic perspectives.

For background on the legal issues, you can read the SBL guide on “Bible Electives in Public Schools” at: <http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/SchoolsGuide.pdf>

Deadlines: *Teaching the Bible* goes out the first week of every month, except for the summer when it takes a break from June through August. Copy should be submitted in a Word document file at least two weeks prior to the first of the following month.

FEATURE

1,000-1,500 words

The Feature is a general piece about some aspect of biblical scholarship—either a text or context. We include one to two features per issue. Other departments or resources in the issue may tie in or connect thematically with the Feature. See the link above for examples from the first issue.

Aim to write at high school reading level or slightly lower. (for online writing analysis, see <http://www.writingtester.com/>). Use simple, active language, and avoid passive constructions and convoluted sentences.

Type discipline-specific terms that may be new to a student in boldface. Examples include: scribe, eschatology, epigraphy, testament, gospel, Torah, Pentateuch, etc. Define bolded terms briefly at the end of the piece in a glossary section.

Open with a general introductory paragraph and finish with a concluding paragraph. Answer the “So what?” question: Why is this information important, interesting, or helpful to the student?

Include your title and affiliation in a two-sentence (or less) byline at the end of the piece.

Please include a “for further reading” section and recommend at least 3 titles that would be good resources for teachers and students who want to know more about your subject.

These titles may be written at a higher than high school reading level but should not be technical tomes.

Feature writers may write an activity, timeline, or web resources to tie in with their piece. (See below.)

DEPARTMENTS

Book Reviews

500-750 words

We request books to review that may be of interest to high school teachers. These tend to be general interest books but on occasion include scholarly books written for the undergraduate classroom. The review should not focus so much on whether the book is good or not, but rather on its usefulness to the high school teacher. For example, does it have a great map section while the rest of the text may be overly technical? Does the introduction give a helpful overview about how to approach the Bible from an academic perspective?

Activity

250-300 words

A one-page detailed description of a focused “active learning” exercise that students can do in a 20-30 minute period within their class. It is helpful if the activity ties in to and reinforces one idea in a Feature.

Web Resources

250-300 words

This section provides recommended links to Internet sites that could enhance student learning on a specific topic. For example, in an issue we did on textual transmission and translation, we provided links and a brief description to the Codex Sinaiticus project and to a site about the Aleppo Codex. It's a plus if these tie in to the Feature, but it's not necessary.

Approaches to the Bible

750-1,000 words

This section introduces readers to one of the many “lenses” or “-isms” that bible scholars use to look at a specific aspect of the text: form criticism, source criticism, feminist criticism, and the like.

Timeline

250-500 words

The timeline consists of key dates (or date ranges), key events, and key people connected to a particular place or geographic region. Timelines are connected to the main feature

topic but do not run in each issue. The information is turned into a flash-animated timeline, keyed to maps.

Digging the Past

1,000 – 1,500 words

These essays explain some facet of archaeology or its related areas, making ample use of drawings and/or photographs. This article can be connected to a timeline or run as a Feature. Boldfaced key terms and a glossary are helpful.

Legal Issues

500-750 words

These sections are usually written by someone with legal background or experience in dealing with the Bible/religion in public schools. The tone or message of the piece should be realistic but not discouraging to teachers.