

Writing First Person Stories
Diane Stark
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How to Reach Me:

For Guideposts-related questions/submissions: Dstark@guideposts.org

For other questions: DianeStark19@yahoo.com

A first-person story is an “I” story. You are the narrator and you are telling your own story. In Christian magazines, a first-person story often tells what God has done in your life or what you are learning about Him. Although you are telling a true story, you want to use fiction techniques to make your story interesting. These include show-don’t tell, incorporating the five senses, and using emotion in your story.

There are straight forward first-person stories where you are telling your own story from your point of view. There is also ghost writing, where you are telling someone else’s story in the first-person as though you are that person. A third option is “as told to” stories. “As told to” stories are someone else’s story that are written in the first-person, but the writer does receive a byline.

Common themes for faith-based first-person stories:

- Trusting God with our families, our finances, our time, our health, etc.
- How our faith helped us through a challenging time
- Ways we’ve learned to develop a closer relationship with God
- Marriage and Parenting
- Learning to not worry

What It’s Not:

- A sermon- don’t preach to readers – tell the story as though you are talking to a friend – the takeaway for the reader should usually be implied, rather than stated explicitly
- Always centered on a life changing event – it can be, but does not need to be – everyday, relatable problems and solutions often work better – I’ve written stories about every aspect of parenting – lessons our kids teach us work well

Where and How to Send Your First-Person Stories:

Adult Sunday School Papers:

LIVE – a weekly adult Sunday School paper printed by the Assembly of God Church

Editor: Wade Quick

Email Address: wquick@ag.org

What He’s Looking For: Faith-based first-person stories that range from 500 – 1100 words

How to Submit: Send the story AS AN ATTACHMENT with your contact info in the top left corner and the word count and rights offered in the top right corner

THE LUTHERAN DIGEST – a quarterly magazine printed by the Lutheran Church

Editor: Samantha Berry

Email Address: editor@lutherandigest.com

What She's Looking For: Faith-based first-person stories from 400-1000 words

How to Submit: Send the story AS AN ATTACHMENT with your contact info in the top left corner and the word count and rights offered in the top right corner

Sample Submission to LIVE:

Hi Wade! I hope this finds you well! Please consider the attached story for publication in Live. It describes an experience my son and I had that helped us remember how special each one of us is to God. It runs 900 words and is a reprint.

Thanks so much!

Diane Stark

Focus on the Family Anecdotes:

Website: [Call for Submissions - Focus on the Family](#)

Editor: Marianne Hering

What She's Looking For: Short anecdotes (between 50 and 200 words) about parenting that fit in with the specific topics requested on their website. Topics change about once a month so check back often.

Sample Submission:

Dear Marianne,

Please consider the following anecdote for the "Healthy Eating" section in Focus on the Family Magazine.

Thanks so much!

Diane Stark

Address, Phone number, email address

I drew the outline of a rainbow on a piece of paper and put it on fridge. After each meal and snack, my son used crayons to color the lines on the rainbow that corresponded to the colors of the foods he ate. Our goal was to fill in as many colors each day as possible. He loved searching the grocery store's produce department for colorful new foods to try.

—Diane Stark

Guideposts and Angels on Earth:

If your first-person story contains anything about an act of kindness, I may be able to use it in one of the departments I manage in Guideposts and Angels on Earth. I prefer queries to full-length stories. In other words, if you have a first-person story about an act of kindness, please

send me an email with a few sentences describing your idea. If I think it will work, I'll ask you to write the story then. This is a time saver for both of us!

Like Marianne with Focus on the Family, I occasionally send out story call-outs for specific things I need for the magazines. If you'd like to be added to this list, please sign up here at the conference or email me directly to be added to the list.

Magazines for Kids:

Cheat Alert! 😊

For years, anytime I wrote a first-person story about parenting for an adult Sunday school paper, I would edit the story to tell it from my child's point of view. The story still used the first-person. It was as though my child was now telling it. Obviously, this requires simplifying the spiritual lesson and some of the dialogue, but it was a great way to get an extra publication from the same idea.

Note about Rights: Always tell the editor in your cover letter that this story was previously published in another magazine told from the adult's point of view. I've never had an editor reject a story for this reason.

Kids' Magazines I've Written For:

GUIDE MAGAZINE – Christian stories for kids ages 10-14
[Writers Guideline – Guide Magazine](#)

PRIMARY TREASURE MAGAZINE – Christian stories for kids ages 5-9
<http://primarytreasure.com/for-writers/>

*There are many more magazines – both for adults and kids - that accept first-person stories listed in the Writer's Market or the Christian Writer's Market. These books are annuals (come out every year) and are available at most book retailers for about \$30.