
Didaktikos

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

DidaktikosJournal.com

Writing for Didaktikos^{1.0}

In many ways, *Didaktikos* is a hybrid between an academic journal and a trade magazine. We have a unique peer-reviewed model coupled with full-color images and engaging essays intended to inform and encourage theological faculty. Suggestions herein are to assist you to write a great essay that really connects with our readers.

Audience

Remember your audience: Professors, instructors and faculty of Bible, theology, and related disciplines. Do not write for pastors or students.

Remember your audience: A diverse group of professional educators with a wide range of theological and related ideological commitments. Write with a diverse audience in mind.

Even though you are writing to professors, make sure to define/explain technical terms that are rare outside of your field.

Columns

Unlike many academic journals, *Didaktikos* is organized by column. If you want to write for *Didaktikos*, your idea should fit within a column. For more details on our columns, see our document, “Didaktikos, Opportunities to Contribute.”

Essays We Love

Didaktikos is meant to help theological faculty teach well, and we see ourselves accomplishing this through a professor-to-professor platform for publishing essays that inform and encourage. The best essays we receive are informing, thoughtful, encouraging, and chock full of concrete examples that we can apply in our classroom/lives.

Here are the types of questions our editors and reviewers ask as they are reviewing your contribution:

- “Does this essay help other faculty teach well?”
- “Will this essay inform and encourage our readers?”
- “Does this essay strike a helpful or encouraging tone?”
- “Is this essay well-written?”
- “Are critical assertions in this essay supported with relevant research?”

- “Does this essay fit the column well? And fall close to the expected word count?”
- “Are the essay’s arguments fresh and relevant for educators today?”

Essays that answer these questions with a “yes” are the ones we love to publish.

Essays We Won’t Publish

Because we are a peer-reviewed journal, we do receive essays that are not accepted (almost always for the reasons below). When we receive an essay that is close, we work with the contributor on revisions. But, here are the types of essays we do not accept:

- Provocations for the sake of provocation (pot-stirrers)
- “Everyone else has this wrong except me” arguments
- Essays with sectarian slants or group-exclusivist claims
- Essays without a scholarly or research basis
- Essays that fall outside our columnar structure
- Essays without practical takeaway (except “Currents”)
- “To-do” lists or broad surveys
- Essays that miss our audience (i.e. essays for students, ministry leaders, etc.)
- Simultaneous submissions
- Essays that have been previously published elsewhere
- (For “Currents”): Essays built on dated research or arguments (i.e., not current)
- Fiction, poetry, or cookbook recipes

If an essay comes in that we can’t use, and is under contract, and revisions are either not possible or desired by the contributor, typically we’ll issue you a “kill fee” for your work, and wish you the best in publishing the essay elsewhere.

Abstract

The abstract for your essay need not be long (2–3 sentences is usually sufficient, but if you need 4–5 that is fine, too). There are several things we look for in the abstract. First, is it too similar to a topic we have covered recently? Second, for pedagogical essays, does it set up the problem that you see, and the solution that you propose? And for “Currents” essays, does it delineate clearly enough the critical insight you want to draw your colleagues’ attention to?

Didaktikos

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

DidaktikosJournal.com

We know that as you research, discover, and write, your topic may drift a little from the original abstract. That's fine. If you find that your original abstract is fully unworkable, feel free to check in with the editor about moving in a new direction.

Title

Please include a short, working title for your essay. For longer essays (>1000 words), please include 2–3 section titles as well.

Essay Outline

Since *Didaktikos* uses short essays (most are 550–1200 words total), much goes into making the maximum impact in a short space.

Columns except "Currents": The best writing for these columns comes in the form of one point that you are passionate about and want to explore in your essay. Sometimes we receive essays with three subpoints; that number is fine, but please no more than that. Better to focus on the most important of the three and offer stronger examples or rationales for implementation. We prefer deep, thoughtful pieces that explore one idea; not shallow pieces that try to cover as much ground as possible (you can't cover much ground in ~1000 words). We recommend that in readying to write that you have a clear thesis as well as a clear premise: a) the problem, b) the solution, and c) concrete example(s).

Since each topic will be different, we won't suggest what order you place a), b), and c). But we know the best essays will have all three (problem, solution, and concrete example) clearly identifiable in the essay.

Due to the brevity of your essay, avoid long illustrations at the beginning to 'hook the reader'; a sentence or two should suffice, and if it is part of an example you want to develop, weave the illustration through your essay.

Finally, to paraphrase Aristotle, your essay needs to have a beginning, middle, and end. It needs to go from point A to point B, by way of your problem, solution, and concrete example. Whether you start at the beginning or the middle, let your topic be your guide.

Footnotes

Yes, please! Essays in *Didaktikos* should have a research basis. To some degree, this depends on the column you are writing for. On the one end of the research spectrum,

Didaktikos

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

DidaktikosJournal.com

columns such as “I, Professor” and “Around the World” tend toward the biographical, and footnotes are not required (though it is helpful when you support your primary assertions). In the middle are columns such as “Lights On” and “R&D” where brief critical interaction (i.e., a couple footnotes) becomes more important. On the other end, with most of the pedagogical columns, and especially “Currents,” you’ll want to support your arguments with research—we expect critical interaction here.

Especially with “Currents” essays, contributors should be judicious about the quantity of footnotes. Only include those that help advance your argument or are mission-critical to refer readers to.

Style

For references and general issues of style, follow the *SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd edition.

Special Instructions for “Currents” Essays

Essays for the “Currents” column are the most research-oriented (and therefore, most like other academic journals). As a starting point, a “Current” is exactly that: it is based on the most recent discussion and research into a narrow subfield. If most of the footnotes in your “Current” are from sources that are more than 5 years old, it is *not* a “Current.”

A “Current” is an essay about one recent, critical insight that has developed in your field of expertise. You could ask yourself this question: “What one thing do I wish my colleagues in other theological fields would know about my field?” For example, if several important essays have been published in the last few years discussing an issue, and that issue was the subject of a roundtable at an annual conference, that issue could make a good “Current.”

“Currents” fill an important lacuna in the academy—we all are too busy to stay ‘current’ on every theological subfield. Our journal wants to help remedy this by providing an outlet whereby we call all quickly get up to speed with what our colleagues in other fields are up to.

Thank you for writing for *Didaktikos*!