Author Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in writing for the Springs in the Desert blog, which as of 2027 will be published on Substack! Our writers have found that writing about the experience of infertility is healing and edifying—both for the writer and reader. We hope that you will find the process similarly beneficial in your own walk with Christ.

Phrasing

We strive to offer a place of respite and solidarity, where couples can come to know God's love for them and discover that He is transforming their suffering into fruitfulness. Because of the intensely personal nature of this cross, we strive to be gentle and compassionate in the way we speak about infertility and loss. Please see the below for preferred phraseology.

Instead of…	*We prefer…*
Infertile	Carrying the cross of infertility, on the path of infertility, in a season of infertility
Deserve a child	Recognize the gift of a child
You should	I invite you
The wife's fault OR the husband's fault	The fertility of a married couple is shared, just as all things in their life. Whether or not one spouse is facing medical concerns that may affect their shared fertility, it is better not to label one spouse as "the problem."
Journey	Path. The idea of path allows for more movement and nuance, and connotes a way toward a destination as opposed to meandering wandering. The path of infertility is certainly a cross, but it's also a way we're mysteriously being asked to follow both with and toward Christ and the fruitfulness He desires for our marriages.

Style

It is our joy to walk with women and couples wherever they are on the path of infertility. To that end, we strive to be compassionate and Christ-centered companions on this path and suggest the following guidelines:

- Focus on Christ as opposed to conception. While a child is a great gift, our relationship with Jesus is foundational. We avoid overly detailed accounts of treatment in favor of a more pastoral approach.
- While understanding how deeply painful and isolating the cross of infertility and loss can be, we invite our readers to unite their suffering to Jesus and find new meaning and hope in their cross as opposed to complaining or indulging in self pity.
- Recognizing that there is more work for the Church to do in her ministry to those in a season of infertility or loss, strive to focus on positive ways the Church can continue to grow instead of criticizing her for her weak points.
- Share your own perspective while being sensitive to others' experiences and how they may differ from yours.
- We encourage you to share your story with authenticity and honesty while offering some hope or your perspective on how you're seeking Christ and His peace within this cross. To that end, we try to avoid comparing our crosses.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

In order to increase the likelihood of Google listing our posts on the first page of search results, we encourage you to implement the following best practices in your piece. We want to help others find Springs and your story!

- Sentences should be 20 words or less.
- The piece should be written as though you are talking to a friend.
- Please avoid using second person POV/"you" (judgmental/preachy language).
- The piece can be read aloud easily.
- The piece has been edited using a word processor.
- The title of the post includes keywords related to the monthly theme.
- Keywords are included in the first paragraph.
- Keywords are sprinkled throughout the article (at least 5 times).

AI Policy

Please refrain from the use of generative AI when writing blog posts or creating other content for Springs in the Desert. Our (human) editor will review your posts for grammar before publishing.

Nitty-Gritty

Below you'll find some details to help you with the composition of your post and give you some ideas of what to expect during the editing process. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Blog Manager or email us at info@springsinthedesert.org.

- Posts should be between 700–1,000 words. If you have more to share, we'd love to discuss the possibility of a series.
- Please be sure to include the following: (you can view an example post here.)
    - Title
    - Subtitle
    - Subheadings between sections
    - Suggested pull quotes
- When showing emphasis, we prefer *italics* as opposed to bold or all caps.
- Please include a one-to-three sentence author bio (for information on anonymous posts, please see the FAQ). Some examples:
    - *Allie has been married to her husband James for six years and writes from Texas.*
    - *Katie Summers and her husband Matthew were married on the eve of Divine Mercy Sunday in 2019 and live in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. She enjoys early morning Holy Hours, weightlifting, and trying (and sometimes failing) to live the Little Way.*
    - *Caroline Gindhart is a nurse practitioner at Divine Mercy Women's Health in Camp Hill/Carlisle, Pennsylvania. She received her nursing degrees from Penn State University. In her professional work, she diagnoses the root causes of infertility and treats in a way that cooperates with the woman's cycle using her training in the Creighton Model and NaPro Technology.*
- Please send your blog post draft in a shared Google Doc to the Blog Manager at least 7 days ahead of the scheduled publish date (e.g. January 5 for a January 12 scheduled post date), if applicable.
- You will receive the post back within three business days with proposed edits for your approval and/or revision. Once you receive the edited post, please make any final changes and/or approve the proposed edits as soon as possible, or within two days. Your timely response is much appreciated!

FAQ

We've compiled some questions below that our writers and contributors have asked us over the years. If you have any questions or concerns that aren't addressed here, please reach out to the Blog Manager.

Do I need to have an English degree/writing experience/published a book to contribute?

Absolutely not! We welcome all writing skill levels! If it's been a while, there's no need to fear; we are happy to help you dust off the cobwebs through our editing process.

Can I submit a post with a unique format (e.g. a poem, song lyrics, etc.)?

We welcome unique and different types of blog posts such as poems or song lyrics, reflections on the life of a saint, or stream-of-consciousness-style "journal entries." If you plan to contribute something unique, we just ask that you include an introductory statement that describes the nature of the post. If you are interested in submitting an audio or video piece, please reach out to the Blog Manager.

How should I handle medical information that is part of my story?

This is such an important question! Many of our stories include medications, surgeries, tests, side effects, etc., and we recognize those as integral to our experience. We welcome you to share the outlines or a few specific instances of your medical experiences that are essential to the story you're telling, but ask you to avoid a "play-by-play" description and in-depth account of every procedure you've experienced. If you have any questions about what is appropriate, feel free to reach out to the Blog Manager anytime.

Are there additional ways I can become more involved with Springs?

Yes! The needs of our ministry are evolving, so we invite you to get in touch with us if you have specific skills and talents you would like to contribute. You can view our current volunteer opportunities at https://springsinthedesert.org/get-involved/. If any of the opportunities listed there speak to your heart, or you have a specific talent you'd like to share with us, please contact us at info@springsinthedesert.org.

Can the blog post be anonymous and/or use a pen name?

Absolutely! Please just let us know your preference for anonymity or a pen name when you submit your draft post. The post will appear as written by a "Springs in the Desert Author," if you prefer to be anonymous, or as your desired pen name.

Can I link to my personal website in the post?

We would love to learn more about the ministries and organizations close to your heart. Feel free to include a link to your personal blog, website, or ministry. We will be happy to link to it if it fits within

Springs in the Desert's values and mission. If you have a Substack, please let the Blog Manager know so that we can link your Substack in the byline of your blog post!

Do I have to be Catholic to submit a post?

No, it's not necessary that you are Catholic—we welcome all members of our community to contribute to our blog. However (and this applies to both Catholics and non-Catholics), please be aware that our ministry is faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church; therefore, we will not publish any content that supports or advocates for practices which violate Church teaching.

My spouse wants to write something. Can he/she contribute too? Or can we co-write something together?

Yes, absolutely—we love posts from the perspectives of husbands, wives, and couples!

Do you accept submissions from professionals with experience working with couples experiencing infertility?

Yes, we do. We have previously published blog posts from healthcare professionals and counselors who work with individuals or couples experiencing infertility.

Can I submit my own image to be included with the post?

Yes, please send it with your draft post. Please make sure the image is in landscape orientation and that it is non-copyright. You can find free photos at http://www.pixabay.com and http://www.unsplash.com. If you have no preference, we will be happy to choose a photo for you.

What do I need to know about Substack?

Springs in the Desert's blog is now published on Substack. If you have an account, please follow us! On this platform, Springs' weekly blog posts are available to subscribers (free and paid) for a set period of time (currently three months), after which they go into archive and are available only to paid subscribers. Bonus content, such as additional podcast content, will also be available to paid subscribers (as of 2027). If you have any questions, please reach out to the Blog Manager.

Where else will my content be used?

By submitting content to Springs in the Desert, writers agree that Springs can publish that content on its blog/Substack, and that pull quotes (sometimes edited) can be used in other Springs media, such as in social media posts, on our website, and more.

Thank you so much for sharing your writing with us!