# Voice and Tone Guide

## Introduction

This guide exists to create clear, consistent and understandable content across all ministries and channels of Cru. It is meant to be a starting point for all content produced on behalf of Cru with the goal of creating consistency, not uniformity.

What's the difference between voice and tone? Think of it this way – you have one voice but your tone changes all the time. The way you speak to your coworkers is different than your closest friends, which is different than how you would talk to a small child.

Your tone also changes depending on the emotional state of the person you're addressing. You wouldn't use the same tone with someone who's upset as you would with someone who's laughing.

The same is true for Cru. Our voice doesn't change much from day to day, but our tone changes depending on the situation. Consistency helps those who engage with Cru know and trust who we are as an organization, and how we can help them.

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# Voice

Cru's voice is natural, friendly and approachable. In everything we do, our priority is to engage people in the Great Commission and what we talk about should reflect that. We want to normalize the work of evangelism and discipleship – helping our readers see that anyone can do the things we're talking about, not just full-time missionaries.

One way to think of our voice is to compare what it is to what it isn't. Cru's voice is:

- Professional but not formal.
- Passionate but not exaggerated.
- Caring but not phony.
- Missional but not pushy.
- Relational but not casual.
- Full of faith but not high and mighty.
- Trusted but not authoritarian.
- Open and transparent but not petty.

# Tone

In general, Cru's tone is personal, but it's always more important to be clear than entertaining or inspirational. When creating content, consider the reader's state of mind and objectives over ministry priorities.

Our content should be about our readers and their needs, not focused on Cru and what we are doing (think "*You can do it, we can help*").

We have created Personas to help understand and empathize with Cru's digital audience. Create content for these personas (or ones you've created for your own ministry context) rather than try to write to broad/vague categories (e.g. all Christians, millennials, unchurched students, etc).

# Style Tips

Here are a few key elements of writing Cru's voice.
- Use language of everyday speech, not that of a preacher, marketer or spokesperson.
- Use an active voice, not passive.
- Avoid jargon, Christianese and all internal "Cru-isms."
- Focus is on our audience and how they can be engaged, not about Cru and what we're doing. Avoid being self-promotional – talk about "you" more than "I" or "we."
- Write from an outside-in perspective. Don't assume our readers know much about Cru, being a multiplying disciple or Christian faith.