

Social Media As A Ministry Instead of a Time Suck

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GOAL: Who do I want to reach with my online ministry?

GOAL: What do I hope to gain in reaching them?

GOAL: Which social media are right for me?

CONTENT: What is something useful I can share with people that relates to my mission/values?

CONTENT: What do I already have?

CONTENT: What stories can I tell?

CONTENT: Who can I ask for help?

What makes my program unique?

What is my program's personality?

For your consideration: Social Media Breakdown

Platform	Who's on it	What it's good for	Things you need to know
Facebook	Everyone. It is the most popular with 67% of adults on it.	Creating conversations.	You need to make a PAGE, not a PROFILE (people should "like"/"follow" you, not "friend" you). You may want to pay to promote your page or post.
Twitter	27% aged 18-29. African-Americans. Urban Residents	Sharing news and updates as a story develops. (Live tweet an event)	Even though you can use up to 140 characters, you should aim for only 120. Save on characters with link shrinkers like in Hootsuite.
Pinterest	84% women. Rural residents. Whites.	Sharing inspiring images and ideas for recipes, travel, crafts, and more.	Its image-driven so you need good photos or graphics (photo quotes/memes). Link YOUR pins to website or blog. Repinning is good to build content and connect with other people and organizations.
Instagram	68% women. African-Americans. Hispanics. Urban residents.	Sharing pictures of volunteers, projects, beautiful things, cool things	Ask people to share pictures with a #hashtag (ex: #CVN, #volunteer).
Google+	70% men.	Connecting to your Google Places. Increasing your Search Engine Optimization	There is a cool feature called "Hangouts" which facilitate a video chat between 10 people (aka fancy Skype). There are also "communities." It is allegedly fast-growing.
LinkedIn	Professionals.	Engaging in discussions that relate to your program (ie: social justice).	It costs money to post official position openings, but you can always share links to your website, blog, CVN page, etc. At least having a landing page.

The highest engagement of social media for all platforms is from adults ages 18-29. They are most active in the evenings. Don't forget about the weekends! Facebook engagement is highest on Thursday and Friday, and Saturday is big for sharing. Thursday is a popular for blogs too. Mornings are good for blogs but slow for Twitter.

Check out this article by Fast Company for more on times/days to post: <http://ow.ly/qyy0i>

Free Tools For Your Social Media

1. Hootsuite - Use it to schedule social media posts, shrink links, and keep track of clicks.

<https://hootsuite.com/dashboard>

2. Pixlr - Pixlr Editor is basically a free online version of Photoshop that you could use to crop photos, add text, etc. The "Express" and "O-Matic" versions might be all you need.

<http://pixlr.com/>

3. Google Alerts - Set up alerts for keywords/topics that relate to your ministry.

<http://www.google.com/alerts>

5. Photo Snack - Make free photo slideshows (for blogs, etc.)

<http://www.photosnack.com/>

6. Meme* Generator - Add your own text to popular memes. Use with caution: Make sure you understand the nuance of the meme you're using.

<http://memegenerator.net/memes/top/alltime>

Examples: <http://www.catholicmemes.com/>

* **What is a meme?** Great article answers the question:

[http://netforbeginners.about.com/od/weirdwebculture/f/](http://netforbeginners.about.com/od/weirdwebculture/f/What-Is-an-Internet-Meme.htm)

[What-Is-an-Internet-Meme.htm](http://netforbeginners.about.com/od/weirdwebculture/f/What-Is-an-Internet-Meme.htm)

Experts and Resources

- **Network for Good.** Free webinars, weekly email tips, and regular blog posts on social media and other topics nonprofits care about.

<http://www.nonprofitmarketingblog.com/site/tools/>

- **Nonprofit Marketing Guide** by Kivi Leroux Miller. Kivi is a consultant who has published books, hosts webinars and more. Search her free blog archive for articles on social media, newsletter, time-saving tips and more.

<http://www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com/blog/blog-archive/>

- **Networked Nonprofit** by Beth Kanter. This nonprofit guru is all about why nonprofits/social media users need to look at and manage their data. Check out her awesome webinar "**Is the time you spend on social media worth it?**"

- <http://youtu.be/f0CgXaAIPrM>

- <http://bethkanter.wikispaces.com/Gift+Works+Webinar>

- <http://www.bethkanter.org/>

Remember to be...

Brief. 1) There are often character limits. 2) People don't like to read a lot online and sometimes have short attention spans.

Clear. Don't try to cram too much into one post - have just one call to action and make it good.

Useful. What can you offer people that will help them?

Fun. You don't always have to be serious. Reflect the personality of your program.

Relevant/Timely. How can you tie into the season, upcoming holidays, liturgical calendar, etc.?

Friendly. Respond to comments. Engage with other organizations. Create opportunities for conversation.

A Storyteller. People love stories. Stories are a great way to convey information, plus they stick in people's minds.

True to yourself. It can be easy to get swept up in things. Stay anchored to your goals, branding, and mission. Stay focused.