

Organizing Social Media Presence

This week's parish engagement tips focus on parish engagement through how to manage and organize your social media presence. For many, it is difficult to post on social media. Many don't know where to start, what to say, or who to connect with online. So, instead of saying anything, they tend to say nothing at all. If you struggle with figuring out what to say, then you need a social media calendar. We know this can sound daunting, but it doesn't have to be. You don't need an advanced degree, secret digital marketing knowledge, or a high-level of proficiency in social media marketing. Below, we're going to walk you through five steps to help you create a social media calendar that will help you to connect with people in your community, share the gospel, and lead people to your services or weekly activities.

HOW TO MANAGE AND ORGANIZE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

1. Know what you're going to say

Knowing what you want to say is the first step you need to take in creating a social media strategy. In this step, you don't need to worry about the nitty-gritty details of what you're going to say. You need to focus on the big topics you're going to cover throughout the week.

Clarifying what you're going to share on social media will help you to focus and keep you from chasing multiple rabbit trails or sharing the same thing every single day.

For your church, there are many ideas to consider sharing:

- Scripture
- Quotes from pastors
- Homilies
- Clips from your homilies
- Volunteer stories
- Articles
- Book recommendations
- Prayer requests
- Upcoming events
- And more...

Action Step: Identify 3–5 specific topics you're going to share on social media.

2. Know who you're talking to

There's one thing people do on social media: Be social. People from your church and within your community are spending time on social media socializing with each other. They're sharing photos, letting people know what they're getting into during the day, and on and on and on.

As a church, you are talking to your members and people in your community. Unless you turn your settings to private, whatever you post on social media can be seen by anyone in your community and around the world.

When you create your social media calendar, you need to create content that will connect with your parishioners and parish groups/ ministries. At times, what you post will connect with all parishioners. However, on other occasions, it's important to share something specifically for certain ministries or groups within your parish.

Action Step: Keep in mind the people in your church and community when you post on social media.

3. Figure out how much you can (realistically) share

As a pastor, your life is busy.

Before creating a social media calendar, you need to take a step back and assess how much time you can realistically devote to social media.

Whether you can squeeze in a few minutes during the day or you only have time for 15–30 minutes per week, then that's okay. Scheduling a portion of time will help you to take control of your church's social media calendar.

Action Step: Look at your week and month. Now, schedule a few minutes each day, 15–30 minutes per week, or 1 or more hours to curate and create content.

4. Choose a social media sharing service

The great thing about managing your church's social media accounts is that you don't have to share updates throughout the day. You can set it and forget it with a social media sharing service.

The two services we recommend are Buffer and Hootsuite. Both services have great free options, and they're easy to use. However, there are multiple options you can choose from. If you don't like these choices, no hard feelings. Research some different options and find one that works best for you.

Action Step: Pick a social media sharing service.

5. Create a schedule

Alright, now it's time to create your social media calendar.

By now, you know what you're going to say, who you're talking to, how much time you can spend, and the social media sharing service you're going to use. Armed with this information, you need to determine how often you're going to post during the week.

Before we provide suggestions, hear us loud and clear: **You don't have to post frequently, just consistently.**

If you are just getting started, then here are two social media platforms we suggest focusing on at first:

- Facebook
- Instagram

For now, don't worry about LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, or Google+. Facebook and Instagram have the largest audiences, and many of the people in your community use them.

Action Step: Spend 15–30 minutes and schedule your posts for the week.

I hope this helps. As always, we are here to help you through this time. If there is anything we can do, please let me know.

