



GETTING STARTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA: Choosing the right social media platform for your congregation

Want to get started on social media? This guide will help your congregation choose the right social media platform.

By answering these three questions, you will have a better idea which platform best suits your needs.

1. Why do you want to be on social media?

- We want to use social media to connect our congregation members together – *use Facebook.*
- We want to share and comment on current political and social justice issues – *use Twitter or Facebook*
- We want to share photo galleries and videos of church events – *use Facebook (for photo galleries and videos), Instagram (photos and short videos)*
- We want to reach out to our youth members – *use Instagram or Snapchat*
- We want a space where church members can have private conversations with one another – *set up a private Facebook group*

2. Who is your target audience?

You've identified the purpose of your social media. Now let's work out where you can find your target audience.

- If you want to focus on **children and teenagers** – Instagram and Snapchat are used by many children under 18
- If you want to reach out to **young adults** (18 to 35) – use Instagram or Facebook
- If your audience is mainly **parents** – use Facebook
- If you want to talk to people/groups who are primarily interested in **politics** and **social justice** issues – use Twitter



Tip: if you want to know what social media channels your audience uses, ask them directly. For example, if you want to target young people in your congregation, conduct a survey to see which platforms they want to use to connect with your church.

3. What type of content do you want to share?

Once you've established your purpose and target audience, it's time to work out what platform best suits the content you want to produce.

- We want to share **photos only**: if you want to share photos, Instagram and Facebook are the way to go. If you want to upload a large photo album, choose Facebook. But if you want to share quick snaps, Instagram and Snapchat are good options too, particularly if you want to reach teenagers and young adults. You can take photos with your phone and upload them directly to social media platform or upload a photo saved on your computer or camera.

Note: Make sure your photos are not copyright protected and if you publish photos of children you should have written permission from the parent/legal guardian.

- We want to follow and share **breaking news** – Twitter is the place to go to keep up with breaking news, especially in the political and social justice space. It's also a good network to join in conversations about topical issues by using hashtags.
- We want to post **videos** – Facebook is the ideal platform to host short and long videos. You can also live stream your church services or post video sermons on Facebook for people who can't attend on Sundays. Instagram and Twitter can also host videos, but they are limited to one minute and two minutes 20 seconds respectively.
- We want to share links to our **church website** – links to your church news bulletin/sermons/website are best shared on Facebook, either on your church Facebook page or in a private Facebook group.
- We want to share **private information** for congregation members only – if you want conversations to be visible to only approved members, post them in a [private Facebook group](#).



Tips:

- Choose one or two platforms at most, especially at the start – don't overstretch yourself!
- Once you have decided what social media platforms to use, you can create a social media strategy using our template supplied in this toolkit.
- Post once a day – if you post regularly, your audience is more likely to engage with your content. Don't post too much in one day, social media platforms don't like it.
- If you are using multiple platforms, make sure you have a clearly defined audience and purpose for each platform. For example, you may want to use Instagram to reach out to young people and Facebook to share video sermons with older members. You might want to change your style of writing to suit your audience.
- Feature your social media icons prominently on your church website so people can find them and link through to your social media account easily.
- Promote your social media accounts using your own social networks and in your church newsletter.
- Tag the Uniting Church Victoria and Tasmania Facebook page if you want us to share your photos or events with the wider church.

If you want more advice on which social media platforms to use, the synod's communications team is happy to help. Send an email to tim.lam@victas.uca.org.au or message us on:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ucavictas/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ucavictas>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ucavictas/>