THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA



Best Practices in Social Media

Samantha Smith

Goals for Today's Workshop

1. **Empower** you to use social media as a tool for evangelization.

1. **Take inventory** of your social media platforms and practices. Learn areas where you need more help and make a social media goal for July.

1. **Share resources and best practices** to help you with your social media strategy.

EMPOWERMENT

“It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves.”
Edmund Hillary

Challenges of Social Media

1. Social media makes people feel lonely, isolated and dissatisfied with life.
2. It can exacerbate mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression.
3. A space for cyberbullying - people share negative comments, harass other users
4. Social media is not the real world - does not replace face to face human connection
5. Can be addicting - tools are needed to create boundaries for all ages

Benefits of Social Media

1. Ability to reach more than 4.4 billion people worldwide (about 52% of the world's population).
2. A platform to connect with family and friends
3. Find community and network with others who share similar interests
4. Get news quickly and learn new information
5. Seek and offer emotional support to others during difficult times
6. Establish authority in your field/industry

Why the Catholic Church Should Be On Social Media

- “Meet people where they are”
- Teach about the faith
- Build community in the digital space
- A platform for us to tell our story



INVENTORY

“You can’t really know where you are going until you know where you have been.”

Maya Angelou

Definition of **social media**

Social media are forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content. (Merriam Webster Dictionary)

Name That Social Media Platform!












Take Inventory of Your Parish Social Media Accounts



1. What is your parish doing well when it comes to social media?
2. What does your parish need to improve in its social media efforts?
3. What is one thing you can do by the end of this month to improve your social media management?

Follow On Social Media

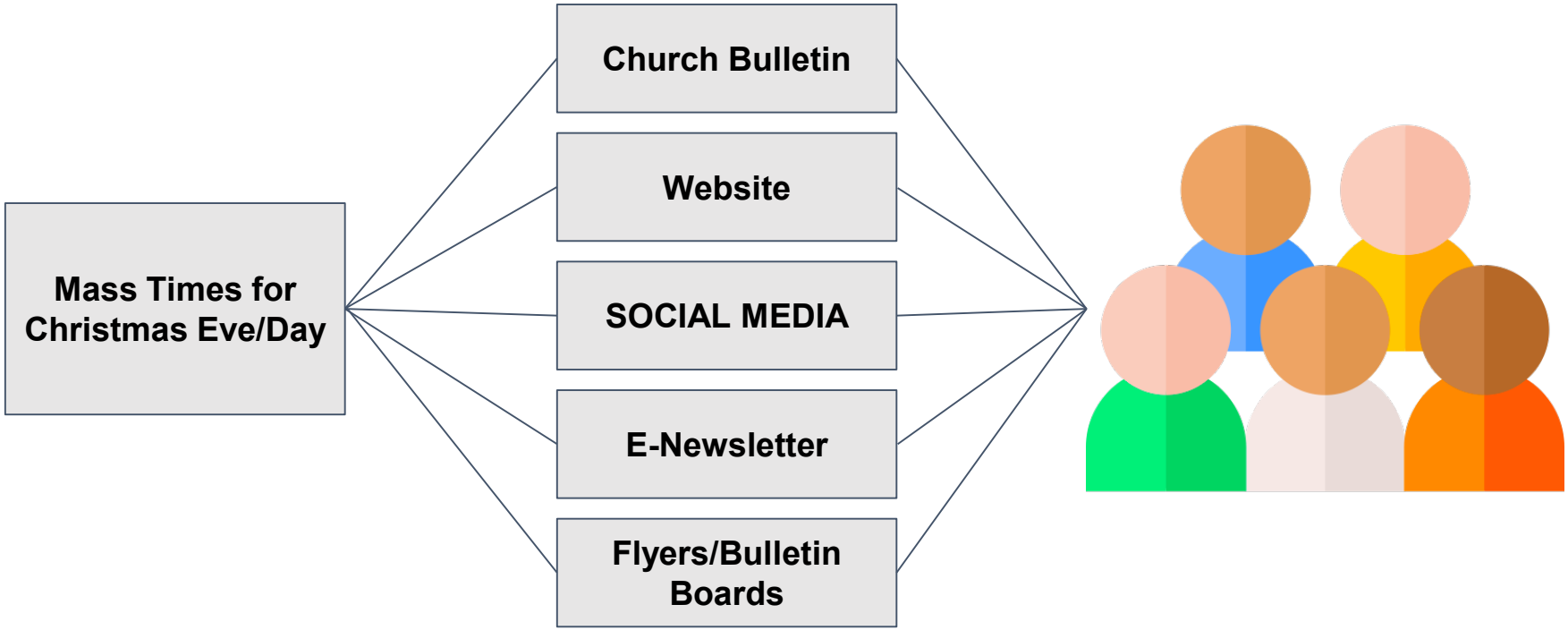
Platform	Archdiocese of Atlanta	Georgia Bulletin	USCCB	Vatican
Facebook	@archatl	@GeorgiaBulletin	@usccb	@vaticannews
Twitter	@archatl	@georgiabulletin	@usccb	@vaticannews
Instagram	@archatlanta	@georgiabulletin	@usccb	@vaticannews
YouTube	@archdioceseatlanta	N/A	@usccb	@VaticanNewsEN
Vimeo	@archatl	N/A	N/A	N/A
LinkedIn	@archdiocese-of-atlanta	N/A	@usccb	N/A

Resources and Tips

"The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning."

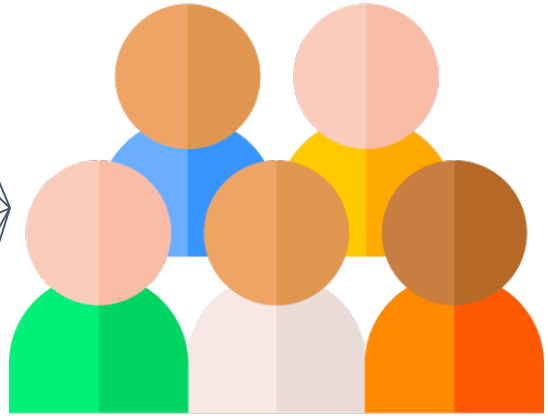
Jiddu Krishnamurti

Add Social Media to Your Marketing Plan



Your Marketing Strategy Gets People to the Church Doors

- Church Bulletin
- Website
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- E-Newsletter
- Flyers/Bulletin Boards





What Content Should I Post On Social Media?

- Catholic holy days
- Saint feast days
- Upcoming parish events
- Staff birthdays
- Religious anniversaries
- Catholic prayers
- Spiritual encouragement
- Sacraments of the church
- Bulletin announcements
- Corporal and spiritual works of mercy
- Bible verses
- Mass times

Where Do I Find Content for Social Media?

- Parish events
- Archdiocese of Atlanta
- The Georgia Bulletin
- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
- OSV News
- Vatican News



Create a Social Media Content Calendar



- Build on Excel, Google Sheets or another social media management tool
- Add all Catholic holy days to your calendar
- Plan your posts ahead of time - schedule social media posts as part of your work schedule
- Create a list of content/campaigns you want to do to keep track of progress

Social Media Content for August 2023



- Pope's Prayer Intention
- Holy Days/Feast Days
- Parish Events (religious education registration, etc.)
- Evergreen Content (join our email list, parts of the Mass, sacraments, etc.)

Evergreen Content

Content that is continually relevant and stays “fresh” for a long period of time.

- Saints, sacraments, works of mercy, info about Mass
- Join email list, parish Mass/adoration times

Reshare content from archdiocese, The Georgia Bulletin, Pope Francis, etc.



Managing Your Social Media Account



- Engage with audience - like and respond to comments
- Share your community guidelines to keep yourself and users safe
- Look at data to determine best days and times to post for your page

Follow Your Data

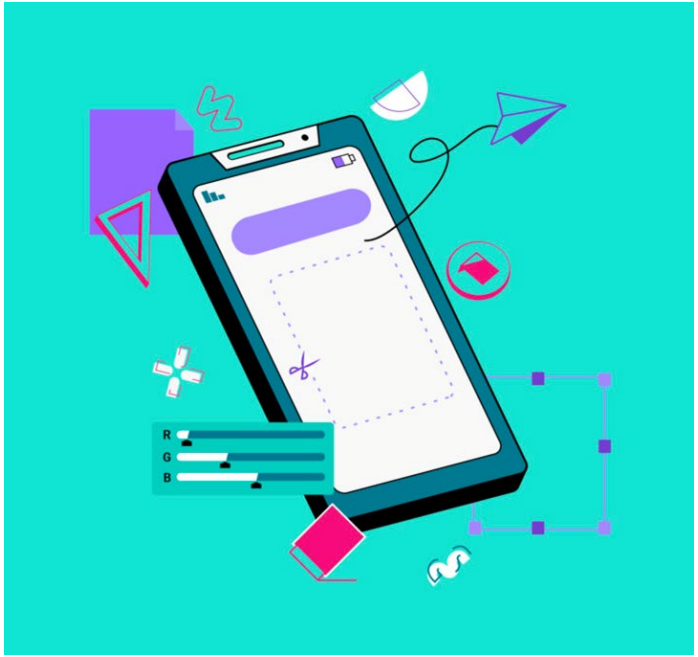
1. **Check your social media data every month**
2. Know the best days of the week/times to post
3. Track your followers.
    a. Are you losing followers or gaining them? Which platform are you performing the best if you have more than one?
4. Make note of your top 3-5 posts of each month and how much engagement, likes, shares and comments they received. By tracking each month, you will notice a pattern of what content your audience likes the most.

Parish/Ministry Photos

1. **YOU MUST HAVE PERMISSION FROM PARENTS/GUARDIANS TO SHARE PHOTOS/VIDEOS ON SOCIAL MEDIA THAT INCLUDE MINORS.**
    a. Religious education usually collects this via the Annual Media Release Form every year. You can get the form online at atlyouth.org.
2. When taking photos at events/large gathering, post a written notice upon entrance that you plan to take photos/video of the event. The person/family needs to inform you or a designated party if they don't want to be included.

General Photos/Graphics

1. Use royalty-free images and stock photos to create graphics on social media
2. Use websites like pixabay.com to find images, pay for professional photos
3. Create a nonprofit Canva account for FREE access to business access
4. Use AI image generators for commercially free photos



How to Handle Nasty Comments

Constructive vs. Deconstructive Criticism (LinkedIn)

- **Constructive Criticism:** communicates on the basis of dialogue and discussion; content is logical, useful and calm; can be both positive and negative
- **Deconstructive Criticism:** nourished by selfishness and hatred; content is malicious, usually posted by a troll (online bully) or spammer, violent or threatening

How to Handle Nasty Comments

- Remove comments that are violent and threatening **immediately**.
- If deconstructive comments are repeatedly posted by a user, block the user from your page.
- Take screenshots of deconstructive comments to be used as evidence if you are reported by a user.
- Periodically remind your audience of your page's guidelines
- DO NOT delete constructive criticism - thank people for their feedback.

Don’t Be Afraid to Ask for Help!



- Reach out to your parish and the archdiocese
- Attend free webinars/read blog posts on social media management
- Designate someone to be certified in social media marketing that can teach tips to your team

A Prayer for Sharing the Faith Online

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for the gift of the Internet - a space where we can glorify you and spread your Good News. Help us to share your word as we navigate the digital space and all its complexities. Keep us steadfast in your will as we face its many challenges and help us to overcome our fears about what we do not know or understand. May our online presence be a reflection of you and a source of good for all we encounter. Amen.

Questions?

Thank You!

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