

Digital Resources for Worship and Formation



Overview

1. Ideas to keep in mind.
2. Communicating with the congregation.
3. Live Streaming Worship
4. Live Online Discussion and Formation
5. What's Already Available
 - a. Worship
 - b. Prayer
 - c. Formation

Overall Ideas to Keep in Mind

1. Don't try to do everything at once.

A. Insofar as it is possible, bring in one new platform at a time -- for your own sanity AND your community's. Let everyone adjust.

B. Use material created by others to help give you time to adapt.

Example: Discuss the Washington National Cathedral's Sunday sermon in a zoom meeting Sunday afternoon.

C. Work with another church or churches in your area for different online resources? One focuses on online formation, one focuses on online worship, etc.

2. You'll reach more people if you use the online platforms that various people are comfortable with in ways that support each other.

- A. We will talk about which platforms work best for which purposes.
- B. Different groups within your community have different needs. You can use the various platforms to reach out to those groups.

3. Use the Resources PDF on our course Page

- We aren't going to go through everything that's out there because there's too much.
- Most of this session is more designed to direct you to good resources and suggest good practices for using them.
- There's a Resource list on the course page that will give you more sites than we cover here, along with brief descriptions of what you can get at each site.

Reaching Out

1. The Church Website

- Use it as a sign directing people to resources.
- Good way to welcome digital newcomers seeking community.
- Don't use it for communication or worship -- use it to tell people where to FIND communication and worship.

[St. David's Episcopal](#)

2. Social Media

- Facebook -- very accessible to a lot of people, including older people.
- Twitter -- Some people get everything through Twitter.
- Find out what people in your congregation use and go there.
 - If you have active young people, for example, meet them where they are -- if they're on Instagram, for example, go there.

Ways To Engage Using Social Media

1. Ask questions.
2. Give people other opportunities to engage your post.
 - a. E.g. offer a craft suggestion and have families post photos of what they did.

Use Social Media to Support Other Platforms

Examples:

- Want to discuss the sermon from this morning's Washington National Cathedral liturgy? Join our sermon discussion group at this zoom link at 10 am! (add link.)
- Did you miss this morning's live-streamed liturgy? Don't worry -- it's available on YouTube at this link! (add link.)
- At 5:30 today, join the EYC for virtual pizza and discussion: Helping Our Parents Navigate the Interwebs: Practicing Patience (add link.)

3. Other ways to get in touch.

Try a wide variety of approaches to meet people where they are.

- Email the congregation. (E-newsletters through websites like Mailchimp also work.)
- Write snail mail letters telling people how to get in touch.
- Call people. Assign tech-savvy folks to older parishioners so they can answer questions when they call.
- Write personal notes to elderly parishioners.

Live-Streaming Worship

Options

- Facebook Live
- YouTube
- Zoom

*Other resources are listed in the resources document. They are less well known and therefore there are less resources and more barriers to entry for a diverse audience.

Eformation

Community Online

Valuable tutorials on Zoom and Facebook live for churches.

Facebook Live

PRO

- Simplest option, that is accessible by all, including those without a Facebook account.
- Videos can be downloaded to load later
- Able to stream from your profile, in a group, or on a public page
- Can attach to events, so that people have them on their calendar and can access easily

CON

- Comfort level with facebook could lead to some hesitance
- Need to moderate page, which can be time consuming for some

Facebook Live Tips

- Practice with the audience set to “only me” until you feel comfortable.
- Consider using live in events, so that people have live items scheduled
- Include a link with materials file (on Google Drive, Constant Contact or other cloud)

Load FacebookLive Video to Youtube

PRO

- Helpful if you want to edit videos after posting
- Youtube automatically generates Closed Captioning (which you can edit later), if that is valuable for some items.
- Well known platform

CON

- Extra steps
- Have to post the links in places to share, vs already being in FB



Zoom Webinar

- Paid Zoom- Webinars
- [What's the difference between a webinar and a meeting?](#)
- Can stream and list the link in other platforms as well, directing all to the streaming platform.

PRO

- Good if you want to consolidate platforms

Cons

- Has a cost
- Consolidating platforms could leave out those that do not feel comfortable on Zoom

Live Online Discussion and Formation

Options

- Zoom
- Facebook Messenger
- Google Duo
- Teams/Google Hangouts

Zoom

- PRO
- Common usage means there are resources.
- Simple interface
- Works on a variety of devices
- Does not require video, as phone numbers are provided
- Saves video, which you can upload to other platforms later
- Allows breakout groups for larger groups

CON

- Free account is limited to 40 minutes
- Desktop does involves a software download, which may be difficult to facilitate in current situation.

Facebook Messenger

PRO

- Already used by many, so no new download needed- meets them where they are
- Facebook Messenger for Kids allows kids to join groups too, safely, in accounts monitored by parents
- Website and app are separate- good for people who do not want to use Facebook

CON

- Facebook profile is required, but only to make account.

Google Duo

PRO

- As with others, can use on computer and personal devices
- FREE
- Can work with phone number, across various platforms (like facetime, but can work on Android and Apple phone)

CON

- Experience and features are different across platforms
- Not as widely used, so there is a barrier there
- Limited to small groups
- Google regularly changes what features and support are offered, and does not have support pages that are intuitive for non super users.

What do you already have?

Does your church office already use Office 365 Business or Google Suite?

- Both Teams and Google Hangouts Meet do not require the user to download, or to create an account- you can join as a guest.

Tips

- If this is new, or feels to performative without a live audience, focus energy where it will be valuable for your context. For example:
 - Encourage another church stream for the service, but lead formation discussion groups
 - Another church you regularly partner with takes turns leading worship, and streams to both
- Low live engagement doesn't mean no engagement
 - Videos can be viewed later
- For parishioners that do not regularly engage in online contexts, consider calling and discussing- they may not know!

What's Already Out There -- Worship

Thinking Long-Term

While the work you're doing with digital resources right now is in response to the current emergency, you can use the opportunity to open your church to using digital tools for prayer and formation in new, exciting ways.

Some of you have asked about that, so we're going to direct you to a resource to help you do that effectively.

Establishing Lasting Practices

A 21st century approach to faith formation requires that the faith formation leader become a curator - a trusted guide who continually finds, groups, organizes, and connects the best and most relevant content and resources on a specific subject to match the needs of a specific audience. In the new digital world of abundant resources, the role of the faith formation leader is shifting from providing religious content and programming to curating religious content and experiences for all ages. -- *John Roberto -- Vibrant Faith*

Vibrant Faith

- Extremely good resource for helping people reimagine long-term faith formation using digital tools available to us in the 21st century.
- Useful for everyone who's developing digital faith formation in response to Covid-19.
- Particularly useful for people who want to use this opportunity to move into digital formation and resources in more long-term/enriching ways
- <https://vibrantfaith.org/>

Some Good Resources for Worship

Washington National Cathedral webpage. <https://cathedral.org/worship/>



Mission St. Clare

- [List of live-streaming worship services](#) during the Covid-19 crisis, including Sunday worship, morning prayer, evening prayer, compline, and Spanish-language services.

Your Diocesan Webpage

- Many diocesan webpages are listing worship services that churches in the diocese are offering online, either live or on YouTube.
- Some dioceses have the bishops offering online worship as well.
- Your diocesan website may help guide you to online worship options with churches in your area. Might help parishioners keep a sense of community without having to reinvent the wheel.

What's Already Out There -- Prayer

Daily Office Resources

- Saying the Daily Office brings Christians across the world together in spirit. You can agree with others that you will say the Daily Office together at a given time, or you can get on zoom and say it together.
- There are many daily office resources. Two good ones:
- [Mission St. Clare](#) -- in addition to Covid-19 page, this site always offers high-quality morning and evening prayer as well as connecting people with other opportunities -- evensong, compline, etc. The visuals are strong. There's an app. It's free.
- [The Daily Office](#) app comes highly recommended by Kyle Oliver, author of The Digital Cathedral and former digital missionary at Virginia Theological Seminary.

3-Minute Retreats

Loyola Press offering

Terrific resource for
stressed-out people.

- Soothing images
- Quiet music
- Scripture Reading
- Brief Reflection
- Prayer



Pray As You Go

High-quality 10-15 minute prayer sessions based in Ignatian spirituality. Some prayer offerings connected to specific issues people are facing now.



What's Already Out There -- Formation

Lifelong Faith

- Learn how to create online formation resources for both adults and children.
- You can attend their webinar TOMORROW (March 27) at the following link:
<https://vibrant-faith-catalyst.mn.co/feed?autojoin=1>
 - There's pretty high demand for this webinar, so they will probably offer another one next week -- check their website.
 -
- They have a whole page on [Moving Faith Formation online](#), with a recording of their webinar and a PDF on moving faith formation online.
- High-quality [list of digital resources](#) for online Christian formation.

Enter the Bible

This Lutheran-based resource offers some terrific Bible study resources and commentary.

You could use it for pre-made formation opportunities -- e.g., on your Facebook page: “Attend live-streamed worship this morning and then watch this video reflection on the reading this afternoon. ([Link](#)). Then ask a question about it -- engage people to respond.

ChurchNext

- We offer both pre-created online formation opportunities and opportunities to make your own online formation resources.
- The bar for attending the class is low -- you just need to be able to follow prompts.
- The bar for creating classes is a little higher -- best for people who are not nervous about technology.
- Biggest benefit for our current crisis: You can discuss the material **WITHIN** your faith community with a congregational subscription (which is free for a month).

We're offering a free month of ChurchNext for congregations that want to try it during the Covid-19 scare. That way, you can give it a shot and see if it works for you before committing to it.

Important to note: all participating congregations will be charged \$300 for a year's subscription if you don't cancel after the month is up (the sign-up requires a credit card), so make a note on your calendar to cancel before then if you don't want an annual subscription.

Email our school-building genius Christina at christina@churchnext.tv if you'd like to try ChurchNext for a month. (See the resource guide for more information).