



Plan. Launch. Lead. Grow.

Building a Church Community with Facebook Groups



With more than 2 billion users around the world, Facebook is the world's largest social media platform, connecting people to each other and the organizations they care about.

Churches have long recognized the value of having a presence on Facebook to communicate about the organization. Yet, the true value of social media is found in connecting people with shared interests to one another so they can support each other and experience life together.

Churches grow when people feel like they are part of a community, and community happens outside of weekend worship services.

This is the power of Facebook Groups; helping you build a digital church community without walls.

This launch guide is divided into four sections with best practices, tools, tips, and ideas provided in each section:

◆ **Plan.**

Any successful venture begins with a plan to succeed. This section will help you be thoughtful about your Facebook Group's purpose, goals, and content at the outset.

◆ **Launch.**

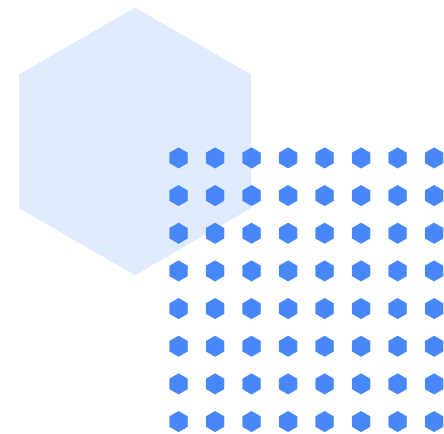
Building excitement about your Facebook Group is critical for driving interest in joining. This section will help you create contagious enthusiasm for your community.

◆ **Lead.**

Leadership is critical for ensuring your community starts and stays healthy. This section will help you build a meaningful, engaging Facebook community.

◆ **Grow.**

Healthy things grow, and a healthy Facebook community is no different. This section will help you expand your community's reach.



Plan.

Use the following template to track your progress on key action items in the lead-up to your community launch. Additional details follow below.

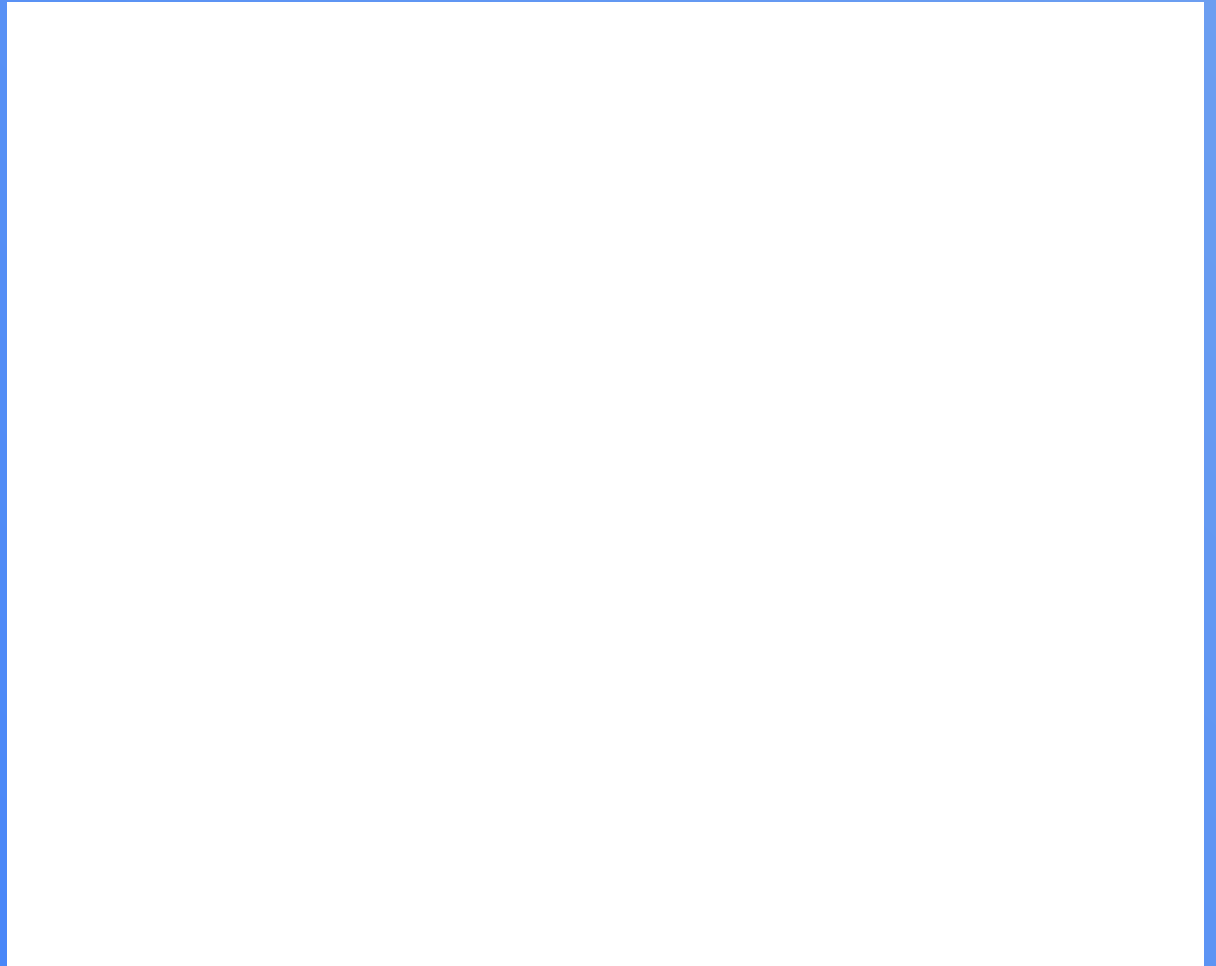
GOALS + OBJECTIVES

GOAL(S)	OBJECTIVE(S)	TARGET	STATUS	SUCCESS METRIC	COMMENTS
Set date for Group launch + create Group	Create church Facebook Group and select Privacy setting for the group	60 days before launch		Group created	
Develop Group vision and discuss with church leadership for finalization	Create shared ownership and buy-in for the role of the Group within the broader church approach to community building	45 days before launch		Key leadership approval of Group vision	
Establish Group leadership team	Appoint a Group leadership team and orient everyone to their role in helping to lead the church Facebook community	30 days before launch		Leadership team appointed and oriented to their roles	
Prepare Group for Launch	Link the Group to the Church Page(s), re-order Page tabs for Group to rank on landing Page, upload Group cover photo, Group description/ church information, Group values/rules, upcoming events, and other relevant information	7 days before launch		Group set up for launch event	
Group launch event	Drive mass in-person Group joins	Day of launch		% of joins vs attendees	

VISION

Before launching your Group, you should spend time getting clear on your vision for the community as it relates to the vision of your church. Ask the question, “what role do I want my Facebook community to play in realizing the overall vision of our church?” The answer to this question should be used to describe the Group for people interested in joining it.

Q. What role do I want my Facebook community to play in realizing the overall vision of our church?



LEADERSHIP

The culture of your Facebook community will strongly hinge on the culture created by its leaders. Identify and appoint community leaders who have a heart for people and genuinely enjoy engaging with them. While there is no stated best practice for leader to Member ratio, you should appoint a large enough team that can drive conversations and connect people with support when needed.

The following roles template can be used to assist:

COMMUNITY LEADER/ GROUP ADMINISTRATOR

Establishes the community's values and works to ensure it lives up to them. Has full access to all Group features and controls.

Name(s):

COMMUNITY ASSISTANTS/ MODERATORS

Helps drive engagement within the community by initiating discussions, monitoring conversations, and ensuring safety.

Name(s):

SUB-GROUP LEADERS

Helps ensure "Parent-Group" values are upheld within any created niche/sub-Groups.

Name(s):

GROUP VALUES TEMPLATE

The following can be used as a general guide to help communicate your values with your group.

Welcome to the _____ Facebook Community! This community was created to connect, support, and celebrate the members and friends connected to our church. Your Community Leadership Team is _____, _____, _____ and we're here to ensure this community lives up to the vision and values of our church. We moderate this community _____, so if you need us, just tag us in a post.

We encourage you to:

- Share uplifting stories with your fellow community members.
- Seek advice, support and prayer on the challenges you encounter in life.
- Celebrate the good things happening in your life and the life of your family and friends.
- Ask questions about your faith or church happenings.

We ask that you:

- Participate in a kind and collaborative way, and exercise respect and consideration while here.
- Avoid making any posts or comments that could offend a brother or sister.
- Avoid private messaging other members to demean, harass, or be unkind.
- Respect the privacy of other members of the group and refrain from sharing screenshots outside the group.

The value of a Group is derived from its ability to engage members through quality content shared by the leaders and members. This suggested calendar should be refined to meet the activities, interests, and culture of your church.

ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR: EXAMPLE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
YouVersion Verse of the Day + Monday Night Live with Pastor	Let's Pray Together: Invite members to post prayer requests + Post article about an area of faith and invite discussion/questions	Welcome Wednesday: Welcome the new Group members since last week	Ministry Spotlight: Feature a church ministry that needs help with volunteers + Thursday Night Live with a Ministry Leader/ Associate Pastor	Funny Friday: Ask "what's the funniest meme you've seen this week?"	Off Day	Post Facebook Live Stream of worship service in the Group

Now that you've seen an example, fill out this engagement calendar with ideas for your own Group.

Tips: Try keeping a consistent schedule on Mon-Weds-Fri and mixing things up on Tues-Thurs. Try doing a webinar or something to boost engagement once a month.

ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR: FILL IT IN

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

Launch.

Successfully launching your Facebook community will accelerate its growth and build enthusiasm within your church. You can capitalize on your weekly gatherings by incorporating a Community Launch Event into the service, or you can choose to launch the Group in conjunction with another convening.

Community Launch Events celebrate the purpose and power of community-building by leveraging the “power of the pulpit” through key leadership endorsements of Facebook Groups.

Use the following template to build your community launch plan and **ensure you host a volunteer briefing meeting at least the week of the event to get everyone oriented.**

DATE	
LOCATION 1 + TIME: SERVICE 1 SERVICE 2	
LOCATION 2 + TIME: SERVICE 1 SERVICE 2	
EXPECTED ATTENDANCE	
ATTIRE	

SETUP

Setup is your chance to kick things off the right way, and ensure a smooth and successful event.

Setup Crew

Location

Fill in the clock with the time of arrival



Notes:

PRE-SERVICE

Greet and welcome people as they arrive. If you have church fans, this is the perfect time to hand those out.

Greeter(s)

Location

Fill in the clock with the time of arrival



Who will distribute fans?

Location

Fill in the clock with the time of arrival



AFTER-SERVICE

Offer swag to guests who sign up to join the Group—you can ask them to show you the join request on their phone, or provide giveaways at the computer kiosk upon signup.

Take photos as requested, using guests' phones. Make sure photos are framed properly, and encourage tagging with #FBCommunities!

Who will work signup stations?

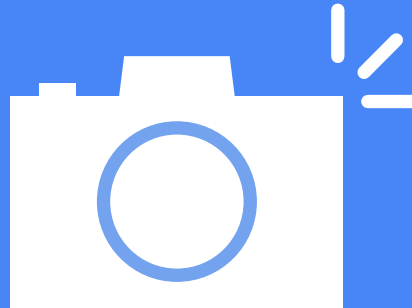
Location

Time

Who will distribute swag?

Location

Time

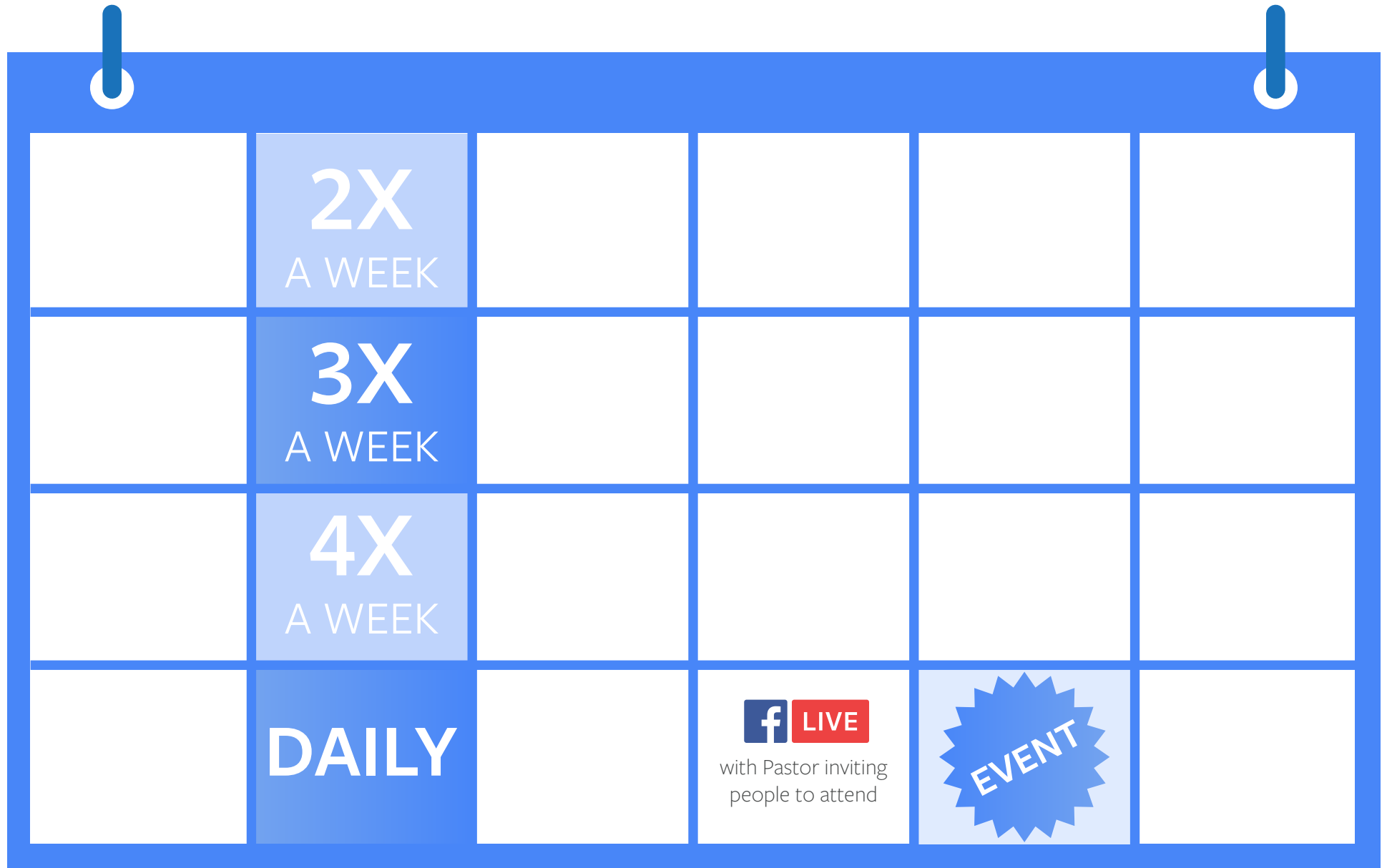


Who will work the photobooth?

Clean-Up Crew

PROMOTIONAL TACTICS

You'll want to post regularly on your Facebook Page in the month leading up to your launch.



Pre-Launch

- Create Event on Facebook Page
- Change Page Cover Photo to announce event (at least 2 weeks out)
- Include in bulletin announcements (weekly)
- Include on website calendar (30 days out)
- Website article/blog post about importance of being part of community

During Event

- Call-to-Action Slides/Visuals with Group Name and web address
- Stream event through Facebook Page
- Moderators approve join requests real-time

Post-Launch

- Celebrate the # of people who joined on Facebook Page and include link to join Group
- Promote Group on Facebook Page:
 - 1 week post-event; daily
 - 2 weeks post-event; 4 x per week
 - 3 weeks post-event; 3 x per week
 - 4 weeks post-event; 2 x per week
- Advertise Group in church publications/newsletters
- Update church website with link to Group

RUN-OF-SHOW TEMPLATE

TIME	DURATION	DESCRIPTION	OWNER
T-Minus 30 mins	25 minutes	Guests Park + Enter Building Greet Guests + Facilitate Photos	Parking Attendants Ushers/Greeters
T-minus 5 mins	5 minutes	Countdown Timer	Media/Tech Arts
T-minus 0 mins	2 minutes	Welcome	MC
0:02 Minutes	17 minutes	Praise + Worship	Praise Team
0:19 Minutes	6 minutes	Greet Visitors + Prayer <div data-bbox="730 982 1010 1052" style="background-color: #007bff; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; border-radius: 5px;"> Example greeting </div>	Pastor

“Welcome to Facebook Community Sunday! In my many years of Pastoring, I’ve seen people come and go and I’ve come to discover that the answer to one question determines whether or not someone will stay; “are you connected to our church community?”

God told Adam that it isn’t good for man to be alone. Notice, he didn’t say it’s impossible; he just said it isn’t good.

And in the Hebrew translation, that word “good” means “best.” We will never experience God’s best for us by doing life alone because God created us to do life together in community with one another.

If you miss Sunday Morning Worship or your weekly small Group, you can begin to feel disconnected from our church community. People often equate being a member of a church with attending events at the church building. But our church is not this building. This building is the place where our church GATHERS; our church is the community of people who are connected to our purpose... AND to each other.”

RUN-OF-SHOW TEMPLATE

TIME	DURATION	DESCRIPTION	OWNER
0:25 minutes	40 minutes	Message <div data-bbox="730 326 1010 716" style="border: 1px solid blue; background-color: #007bff; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> “I’m going to tell you more about how to connect with our new Facebook community a little later and our friends at Facebook are here with some cool gifts for joining” </div>	Pastor
1:05 h/min	10 minutes	Altar Call + Offering	Pastor
1:15 h/min	4 minutes	Community Day Announcement	
		Join Groups <div data-bbox="730 1029 1010 1094" style="border: 1px solid blue; background-color: #007bff; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> Example speech </div>	Pastor
1:19 h/min	2 minutes	Dismissal	Pastor
1:21 h/min	30 minutes	Groups Sign-ups, Giveaways and photos in the foyer	Volunteers

“How many of you are on Facebook? How many of you spend at least 10 minutes a day or 30 minutes a week on Facebook?”

Facebook is the world’s largest social network, connecting more than 2 billion members to one another; that’s a quarter of the earth’s population. It’s our goal to build a church community that can always access the support you need to grow spiritually and face life’s challenges with your church family by your side. So, today, I’m excited to announce that we are Partnering with Facebook to build our church community online so you can always stay connected to each other and our leaders.

Our Facebook community is an important companion to our physical gatherings because, even if you can’t attend, you can still be present with us as your church family.

All you need to do is search The Bethel Church Page and Click on “Groups” on the lefthand side, then request to join the Group. If you need help, just stop and see one of our volunteers in the lobby as you leave today. I want everyone to get connected.”

KEY MESSAGING

We are more than a building filled with people; we are a community of people filling a building and Facebook is the platform where we can connect our community beyond these four walls.

Here are a few ideas of things you can say to motivate people involved in your community to join your Group:

“In my many years of Pastoring, I’ve seen people come and go and I’ve come to discover that the answer to one question determines whether or not someone will stay; “are you connected to our church community?” God told Adam that it isn’t good for man to be alone. Notice, he didn’t say it’s impossible; he just said it isn’t good. And in the Hebrew translation, that word “good” means “best.” We will never experience God’s best for us by doing life alone because God created us to do life together in community with one another.”

“If you miss Sunday Morning Worship or your weekly small Group, you can begin to feel disconnected from our church community. People often equate being a member of a church with attending events at the church building. But our church is not this building. This building is the place where our church GATHERS; our church is the community of people who are connected to our purpose... AND to each other.”

KEY MESSAGING

Additional things you can say to motivate people involved in your community to join your Group:

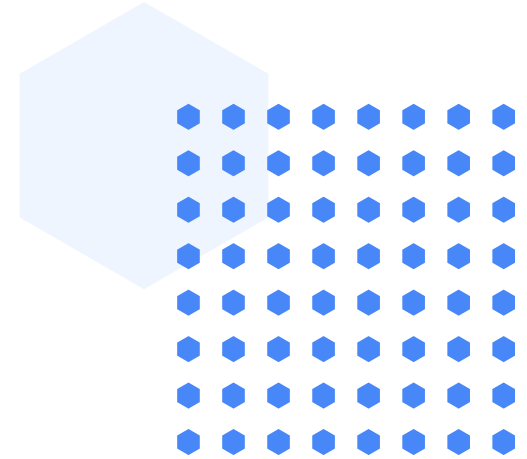
“Facebook is the world’s largest social network, connecting more than 2 billion members to one another; that’s a quarter of the earth’s population. It’s our goal to build a church community that can always access the support you need to grow spiritually and face life’s challenges with your church family by your side. So, today, I’m excited to announce that we are Partnering with Facebook to build our church community online so you can always stay connected to each other and our leaders.”

“Our Facebook community is an important companion to our physical gatherings because, even if you can’t attend, you can still be present with us as your church family. So, here’s what I want you to do; take out your internet enabled device; cell phone, tablet, whatever you have, and visit Facebook. All you need to do is search GROUP NAME, and request to join the Group (visual on screen with Group Name). If you need help, just stop and see one of our volunteers in the lobby as you leave today. I want everyone to get connected.”

GIVEAWAYS

Giveaways are another great way to motivate people. Here are a few ideas:

- Facebook “Like” signs with Group join instructions, web address/Page, name/Group name, etc.
- Church branded shopping bags
- Church branded T-shirts
- Church branded wallet cards



Lead.

MAKING IT MEANINGFUL

Once your Group is launched and members are joining, it's time to lead the community and get people involved. Below are a few strategies that will help you and your team get people engaged.

◆ **Welcome people when they join.**

Ask new members a question or invite them to introduce themselves. By engaging with them directly, you put them at ease that they're in the right place and create a sense of community from the first interaction.

◆ **Help members understand what the Group is for.**

A short post that gives some examples of what people can share and discuss helps new members get acclimated.

◆ **Encourage members to invite friends.**

Grow your community through your existing members. Encourage them to add friends with a post that lets them know who among their friends to invite.

◆ **Ask questions.**

Questions are a fun, direct way to invite conversation. Simply asking what people are up to or asking for advice can help start a conversation and involve members.

◆ **Tag people in posts.**

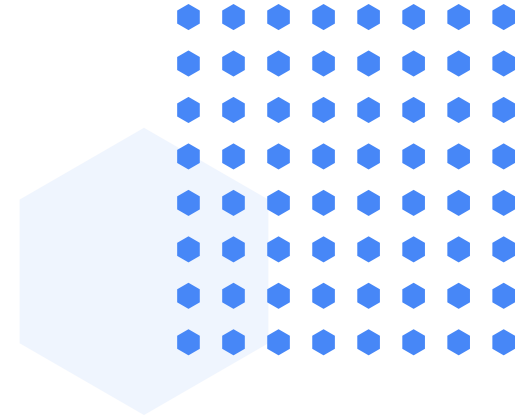
If you want to hear from someone, tag them in your post using the '@' symbol. It's a direct way to ask members what they think about a topic or just to check in and let them know you're thinking of them.

◆ **Comment on posts by members.**

Let people know you're paying attention! Commenting on posts, even just to acknowledge you're happy they posted, encourages members to post again.

◆ **Collaborate with Polls, Docs, Events, Facebook Live, and Chat.**

Get input from your members with a poll, work together in a shared document, help organize activities with Events, or discuss things in real time with chat.



SAFETY TOOLS

A community is only healthy when it's safe. As the community leader, you will be critical to ensuring the community stays healthy.

Turn on post approval feature which allows screening of posts before they go live.

If you'd like more control over your membership, **turn on Membership Approval** and all new members will require approval by an admin or moderator.

If a conversation is headed in the wrong direction, **turn off post commenting** to help cool things down.

Members can **report objectionable posts and comments** to you for you to take action on. Create a post encouraging them to help you keep the group safe.

Grow.

OFFLINE GROWTH

Just as growing your church requires strategic thought and planning, growing your organization's Group requires strategic thought and planning. The following tactics can be used to help grow your Facebook community offline:



Call-to-action

Leverage the “power of the pulpit” to invite people to join your Facebook community during weekend worship services.



Printed bulletins

Include the web-address to join your Facebook community.



Posters

Raise awareness about your Facebook community through strategically placed posters throughout your property.



Text-blasts

If you have permission to text your members, send a text blast to all members with a link to join your Facebook community.



Sign-up stations

Have your Facebook Community as the home page at church computer stations in high-traffic areas.

ONLINE GROWTH

The following tactics can be used to help grow your Facebook community online:



Email invite

If you have permission to text your members, upload an excel or .csv file of email addresses to your Group Member invitation form to send a bulk email invitation to join your Group.



Facebook campaign

Boost Page posts inviting people to join your Facebook Group.



Encourage invitations

Ask Group members to invite missing church members or supporters.



Link Group to Page

Create a Groups tab on your Facebook Page(s) and link the Group to your Page.



Link Group to website

Link your Facebook Group to your website so people can find it.