

3 Simple Rules for Social Media

Social Media Guidelines for Oregon-Idaho United Methodists*



Social media can be a valuable tool for ministry and building healthy vital congregations. We affirm these guidelines to help utilize social media in a manner that positively represents the church, the Gospel and Jesus Christ.

Oregon-Idaho Ministry Leadership Team ~ 3/7/2012

DO NO HARM

One of the benefits of social media is that it provides the opportunity to share views, thoughts, joys and concerns about all areas of life. Our social media contributions can be very effective tools for ministry if we are careful to apply caution before we post. We will be careful that our posts are not “doing harm” by insulting or damaging the reputation of others. We will make sure our posts are respectful and in good taste. And we remember: Everything we post – status updates, comments, tweets, blogs - becomes public immediately after we click “send” (even if we’re using a limited access setting). We can’t take it back once it’s out there, so we will use discernment with everything we post.

TO THINK ABOUT: Is the post “doing harm” to the reputation of the church, Christ or another person or organization?

Can the post be interpreted as harmful, offensive, rude or distasteful?

If using the post as an outlet to vent, is there a more productive, less public way to do so?

DO GOOD

Social media is one of the most effective methods of church networking and communicating today. When used properly, it can have a significant encouraging influence on our readers and become a powerful tool for delivering the Gospel message to a large audience that extends beyond our contact list. It is a great tool for networking and providing the world with news about our church and ministry. It also is a very useful tool for obtaining feedback and ideas from our audience and can be used to gain insight for sermons, Bible study topics, worship times, needs of the community, etc. The “good” and positive uses of social media are endless.

TO THINK ABOUT: Can the post be described as “good”?

Will it help the Kingdom and fellow believers? How will it be perceived by non-believers? How will the post be received by people with different cultural or faith backgrounds?

Are we communicating effectively by asking questions in addition to providing information?

STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD

Social media is a great way to find meaningful devotional materials, thought provoking blogs, inspiring worship videos and media resources, and current articles and tools for our ministry. Users have reported that their social media usage helps keep them informed and enthusiastic about their ministry on a daily basis. While it can definitely help us “stay in love with God,” it also can be very distracting. We will make sure our use of social media does not occupy so much of our time that we are no longer participating in meaningful Bible study, devotional times, worship and conversations with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Social media can serve as a tool to aid, promote and conduct discussions, studies and devotional times, but should not be our primary source of interaction with the world.

TO THINK ABOUT: How is/can social media helping me to stay in love with God? How is it hindering me?

How am I helping others stay in love with God by my social media contributions?

REMEMBER

Our character and faith are reflected in each post we make, so if we are not sure about something, we won’t post it.

* Originally developed by the Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church. Used with permission.