



Enrollment Management & Marketing TOOLKIT

Social Media & e-Newsletters

The Internet is one of the foremost communication channels today. Unlike any other media, it provides limitless opportunities for interaction without geographic boundaries, particularly on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. More and more Catholic institutions and agencies (even Pope Francis, @Pontifex, is on Twitter!) are engaging in this new media as part of the *New Evangelization*, and Catholic elementary schools should not be the exception.

Why a Facebook Page Can Benefit Your School

- A **Facebook** page (see "How to" below) that current school families can “Like” and “Share” is similar to “word of mouth” marketing for the digital age. Many parents are connected with their friends and family members on **Facebook**, and a school page creates additional potential to reach a larger, more targeted audience.
- **Facebook** is probably the most popular, and potentially most useful social media platform for schools. By using photos and events tools, schools can generate interest in what’s happening at the school, and at the same time, further engage current families in their school community.
- **Facebook** status updates can be anything from a quick sentence acknowledging a special day at the school, an upcoming event, a photo of a classroom activity, (only if subjects in photo have a signed media-release on file) a link to other information on the school’s website, or anything on the Internet that might be of interest to your school’s current and/or potential parents. (A photo release form can be found in the **Toolkit**.)



- Teachers who are comfortable with social media can use **Facebook** or **Twitter** to share with parents what is happening in their classrooms in a general way (not mentioning specific students, etc.) by sharing topics currently being studied in social studies, links to tutorials on various skills, etc.

Setting Up a Facebook Page for your School

A Facebook page should be set up and controlled by a school staff member or trusted volunteer (i.e. school board or **Enrollment Management Core Team** member) and adhere to the policies and procedures on ***Internet and Electronic Communications Conduct*** in the School Administrator's Manual, and at the local parish and school. Another resource is the Archdiocese's *Social Media Policy and Best Practices*.

To setup a school *Facebook* page:

- 1) Log on to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create/>
- 2) Select "Company/Organization/Institution" - choose a category (i.e. Church/Religious Organization or Education) and enter the name of the school.
- 3) Agree to *Facebook* "terms and conditions" and then click on "Get Started."
- 4) Follow the step-by-step setup process that *Facebook* provides.
- 5) Begin sharing the schools' "Good News" with the *Facebook* world.
- 6) Encourage school parents, teachers and parishioners to "Like" the school's *Facebook* page and share it with their friends.
- 7) Monitor the *Facebook* page and post updates regularly. Make this a part of the marketing plan timeline!

Catholic Schools should also use *Facebook* and other social media tools as opportunities for evangelization. Share prayers, links to information about patron saints, etc.



Beyond Facebook...

Other social media platforms such as *YouTube*, *Twitter* and *Pinterest* can also be useful for schools wanting to get their message out to their community. Of course, it takes time and effort to set up and monitor these tools, so a school should consider if it makes sense to delve in to a broader social media presence based on its local target market (i.e. parents looking for a school for their children).

A few brief notes about other social media outlets:

YouTube

- Video is a popular way to share online, and many clever videos have gone "viral" and reached thousands of viewers
- A YouTube channel can feature a series of short videos that capture moments that differentiate a school's community
- Contact the Director of Marketing and Community Relations for videographer recommendations.

Twitter

- A Twitter account allows schools to share short, 140-character "tweets" that can be categorized using "#hashtags." Use the **#catholicstl** hashtag to connect your tweets with the St. Louis Catholic community on Twitter.
- It's possible to set up a Twitter account that connects with Facebook and simply posts the same status updates that are shared on Facebook to a Twitter feed.



Pinterest

- This social media site is user-generated content that involves “pinning” items of interest that typically link to content on other websites.
- Teachers may find creative classroom activities, lesson plans, etc.
- Or, a teacher or group of teachers might host a *Pinterest* page where they post ideas they are using, or plan to use, in their classrooms, or resources that parents might find useful in their roles as first educators of their children.
- Pinterest for Businesses is available to create a presence for an organization (such as a Catholic elementary school) - learn more at <http://business.pinterest.com/>

E-mail Newsletters

Schools can reach parents, parishioners and potential new families with an e-mail newsletter that can be tailored to specific, targeted audiences. Most schools already obtain e-mail addresses from parents, they can also have an inquiry form set up on their website to welcome new parents to connect with them during the inquiry and admissions process. ([The e-Vangelizer](#) is an example of an electronically distributed newsletter or magazine.)

Several inexpensive and user-friendly e-mail distribution services are available, including:

- **Vertical Response** - an e-mail marketing service that offers free or reduced pricing to non-profit organizations:
<http://www.verticalresponse.com/non-profit/pricing>
- **Mailchimp** <http://mailchimp.com/pricing/free/>
- **Constant Contact** <http://www.constantcontact.com>
- **iContact** <http://www.icontact.com>
- **FlockNote** - this service incorporates e-mail and text messaging and allows schools and parishes to segment their list easily and members to interact without having to log in to anything
<http://www.flocknote.com/>

