

(Your Ministry Name Here)
Social Media Policy and Guidelines Agreement

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by employees and volunteers of (_Your Ministry Name Here_) and its related ministries. In areas where this policy does not provide a direct answer for how members of our community should engage social media, members should use their best judgment and take the most thoughtful and prudent action possible, bearing in mind the need to preserve accountability for the use of (_Your Ministry Name Here_)’s name in all social media and the core values of this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wiki's, podcasts, short message services, image and video sharing sites, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, and YouTube; and other methods of real-time information sharing among users. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, email and the internet.

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that (_Your Ministry Name Here_) employees and volunteers have otherwise agreed to follow.

Official Name and Logo

Any use of the (_Your Ministry Name Here_) or Unity Worldwide Ministries names or logos for branding or titling pages, blogs, or other similar elements of social media must be approved in writing prior to use. Requests for prior consent to use such names or logos should be made to the leadership. Permission to use the name or logo of (_Your Ministry Name Here_) may be revoked at any time at the sole discretion of (_Your Ministry Name Here_). This policy, however, preserves free expression. It should not, for example, be interpreted to limit the ability of members of (_Your Ministry Name Here_) from using the name to identify themselves in profiles, discuss matters relating to (_Your Ministry Name Here_), or other similar uses.

Publicity and Promotion

Staff and volunteers will coordinate the publicity and promotion of events in an effort to avoid the challenges of premature announcement of events, releasing unconfirmed or incorrect information, publicizing information that should not be posted via social media. Staff and volunteers will take special precautions when posting about Youth Ministry activities, avoiding release of specific locations and full names of youth. Staff

and volunteers are personally responsible for the content they publish. Official statements of (_Your Ministry Name Here_) may only be made by the Senior Minister, Board President, or designee.

Privacy, Privilege, and Power

Most social media platforms provide some measure of privacy settings that can be utilized to manage accessibility and activity. Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the (_Your Ministry Name Here_) website. Personal contact information should not be published without written consent. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit access. Tags or identifying information should only be made with permission- take advantage of the many social media platforms that allow followers to tag themselves. Privacy settings can also be used to prevent unwanted content from appearing on your site.

When community members connect with a ministry online, a privilege is given in terms of access to a personal expression of individual lives via social media. Members are seeking spiritual guidance from ministry leaders, staff, and volunteers of (_Your Ministry Name Here_) and this relationship creates a power inequality. Adults (staff or volunteer) should not submit “friend” requests to or initiate video chats with youth. Likewise, leadership should not submit “friend” requests to adult community members. This allows the youth or community member to initiate online connection by invitation, rather than feeling pressured into accepting such a connection.

Transparency

We value transparency and honesty. Use your real name or a username registered to you, be clear who you are, and identify that you work for (_Your Ministry Name Here_). In accordance with our ethics standards, post honestly and with good judgment in sharing only public information. Be clear when views expressed are your own opinions, remembering that while you speak for yourself, you also represent (_Your Ministry Name Here_).

We value sacred trust offline as well as online. Be sure that any posts about congregants are not made without permission. It is especially important to keep this in mind when announcing good news, situations that might call for extra prayer support, and anything you might have good intentions for sharing- share only with permission. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and be cautious about disclosing personal details about self or others.

Any use of social media by staff or volunteers that does not comply with this policy should be brought to the attention of the leadership.

Copyright Laws

It is the policy of (_Your Ministry Name Here_) to be in compliance with the laws

governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including (_Your Ministry Name Here_) copyrights and branding. Only short excerpts of someone else's work will be quoted, and always attributed to the original author and/or source in accordance with U.S. Copyright standards. Images and other materials from (_Your Ministry Name Here_) websites and social media accounts will not be copied or uploaded to other forums without written consent of leadership. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it. This policy should not be construed to limit discussion of matters using (_Your Ministry Name Here_) name and should not be interpreted to limit users' ability to link to (_Your Ministry Name Here_) sites.

Mission, Vision, Values

Social media activity will reflect the mission, vision, and values of (_Your Ministry Name Here_). In addition to our written statements of Mission, Vision, and Values, we value and welcome diversity. As a Unity community, we recognize our oneness and honor that there is a variety of personal beliefs represented by our community members. Be sure to create social media posts that are consistent with the (_Your Ministry Name Here_) website and written materials in terms of what we teach and value. If there is a question, seek support from a staff member or ministry leader.

Controversial Issues

When sensitive issues arise, it is best to consult the social media team or ministry leadership for support. Seek guidance to know when it is time to pick up the phone or meet in person to take a conversation offline. Just as in person, online disagreements will occur and can be uncomfortable. Being direct and attending to controversial issues sooner rather than later can prevent hurt feelings and strained relationships. These situations will be addressed on a case by case basis. Sometimes deleting posts or comments can give an appearance of a cover up, while other times it can protect individuals. Leadership will help determine if and when any posts need to be deleted and how the issues will be handled. All posts by staff and volunteers will reflect the values of (_Your Ministry Name Here_) which include harmony, love, and unity. We are spiritual beings having a digital experience.

Agreement

When I am representing the congregation on any social networking site such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, or similar sites, I understand and agree to comply with the following:

- I will use my own name or a username registered to me;
- I understand I represent (_Your Ministry Name Here_) and my postings will be appropriate to the mission, vision, and values;
- I will keep all confidential and sensitive information private and will not post such information;
- I have read the congregation's policies on use of social media and if I have a question, uncertainty or concern about the proper nature of a posting, I will

consult with my supervisor and leadership before posting.

Signature by employee or volunteer

Date

Printed name

Social Media Tips

The following tips will contribute to successful use of social media:

- Be social! Like, comment, or share posts made by like-minded organizations (Unity Worldwide Ministries, Silent Unity, Daily Word, Daily Fillmore, other ministries, regions, iYOU, etc). The more you engage on other user accounts, the more engaging your account will become.
- Social media can extend the community that gathers on Sunday morning and integrate “church life” into daily life. Create posts that speak to newcomers and posts that will speak to longtime community members.
- Quality matters. Use a spell-checker, post photos that are in focus with good lighting, if you need to create design elements, seek a professional or skilled hobbyist. Ask for feedback from congregants about how easily information is accessed on your website, how appealing your posts are, and watch your metrics to better inform posting habits.
- The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it, or ask someone else to look at it first. Remember, the internet is a public space that keeps permanent record of all activity. Hold awareness that posts are easily shared, copied, linked, and printed and allow that to guide you in how you craft your activity.
- Consider creating separate personal and professional accounts to maintain appropriate boundaries with members of congregations.
- Private groups can be created for board members, youth ministry, classes, support groups, or any group that can utilize a private space for discussion.
- Create a social media team that will share the responsibility for managing social media posts and discussion. This team can schedule posts, create and implement a strategy, and maintain a social media flow for your ministry.

- Create different types of posts: informative, reflective, celebratory, etc.

Document prepared by Unity Worldwide Ministries

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