NYCONF
New York Conference SDA

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Social Media Guidelines

Instituional normative for the usage of: Apps, platforms, websites and streaming environments.

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About the Guidelines

Any institution needs to be involved in overseeing a lot of moving parts, oftentimes from different people. In this case, it is our conference's duty to regulate what is being presented to the community on behalf ot he churches that are part of this territory. To have a successful compliance, local church leaders should get a copy of these guidelines. Many times, local churches embark in internet projects that heavily rely on a well-crafted social media campaign but are lacking ethical standards that are not representing the Church as they should. These guidelines plan to ensure objectives and budgetary needs for these projects. The current proposal is a plan, that if it is formalized and approved by the conference, should be a document which should be used to define project goals, outline local project scope, monitor deliverables, and mitigate risks.

Guidelines' of Social Media Campaigns Implementation at a Glance.

- Activities should start to be promoted at least two weeks before the event's date.
- Resources should be identified in advance.
- There should be a deadline for final budget approval of the project.
- A timeline for the project kick off should be provided to church leaders.
- A timeline for roles and responsibilities should be available at least one month prior to the event.
- After the activity ends, there should be a meeting to evaluate the success of social media usage.
- A clear frequency schedule would be helpful in order to provide a platfrom to review or update information.

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Social Media Developments for Evangelism

The first step to creating an effective project plan is to set a the social media platforms that are going to be used. These platforms are the foundation on which the other project elements will be built on. This must include a scope statement. Start by identifying what needs the project aims to address and how the church will benefit from the project. Then create milestones as appropriate to the size of the project. Next, create a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), breaking up large tasks to smaller ones. Lastly, come up with a team who will keep the plan running.

Target Audience

A product or service is always aimed towards a target market. This initially identifies and narrows down your audience in equal measure. The trick to identifying who your target audience is lies in the nature of your activity or service, and most importantly, the demographics it will appeal to. Surveys are one tool brands use to determine who their target market is. Another way is through Facebook or YouTube which offer demographic analysis that allow concentration in a targeted population. For instance, gathering individuals by gender or age group, to invite to an event or service will elicit various responses, giving you a better idea of who will appreciate it more.
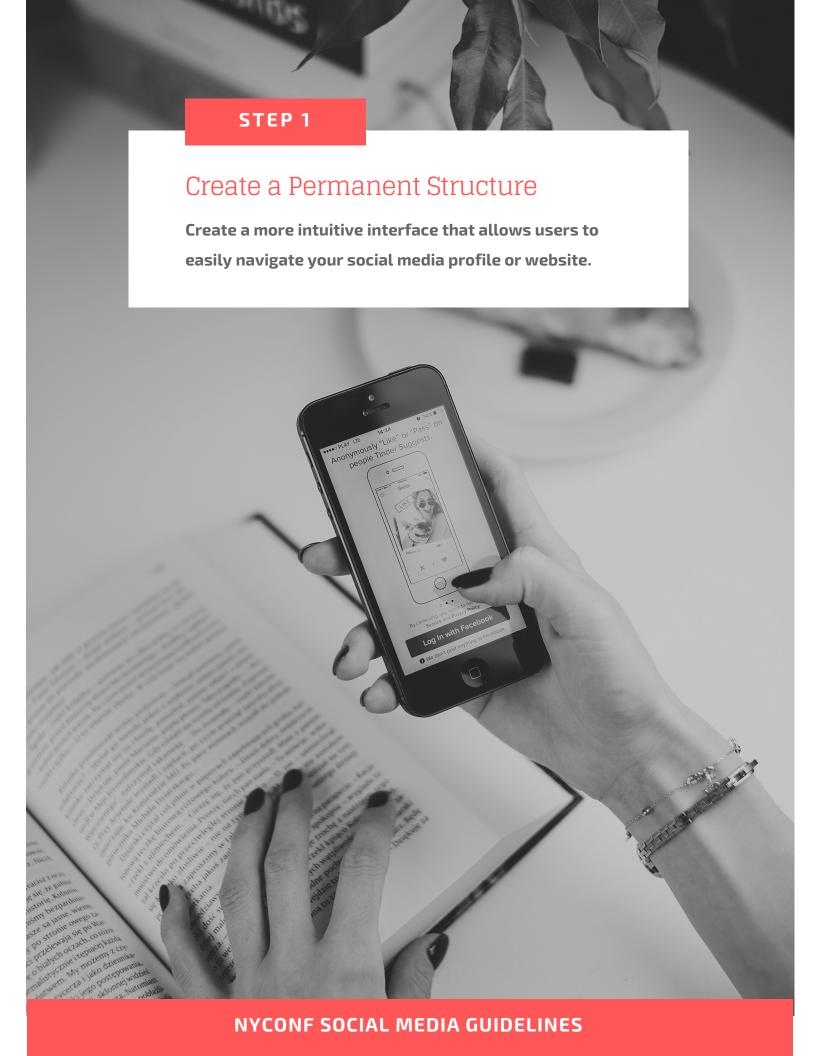
Social Media is the Best Tool for Evangelism

Social Media creates purpose-driven evangelistic and outreach campaigns. It allows you to delimit your campaign based on zip codes, religious interests, and even gender or age. The success rate of evangelism through social media is two times more effective than traditional methods.

- Conceptualize by taking inspiration from culture, your environment, or the existing project at hand.
- Don't forget the importance of writing down your ideas. Aside from documentation, this will keep you on track and help narrow down your options.
- Once you have decided which social media platform to use, separate your goals into short term and long term. Grouping your goals accordingly will be instrumental in setting a timeline and identifying what you'll be needing.
- Stay on schedule by monitoring the progress of each goal and keeping track.

Recommended Social Media Platforms for Churches and Services (Ranked in Preference Order)

• Facebook

• YouTube

• Instagram

• Twitter

• NextDoor

• WhatsApp

• Snapchat

• Pinterest

Create a Permanent Structure

Create a more intuitive interface that allows users to easily navigate your social media profile or website.
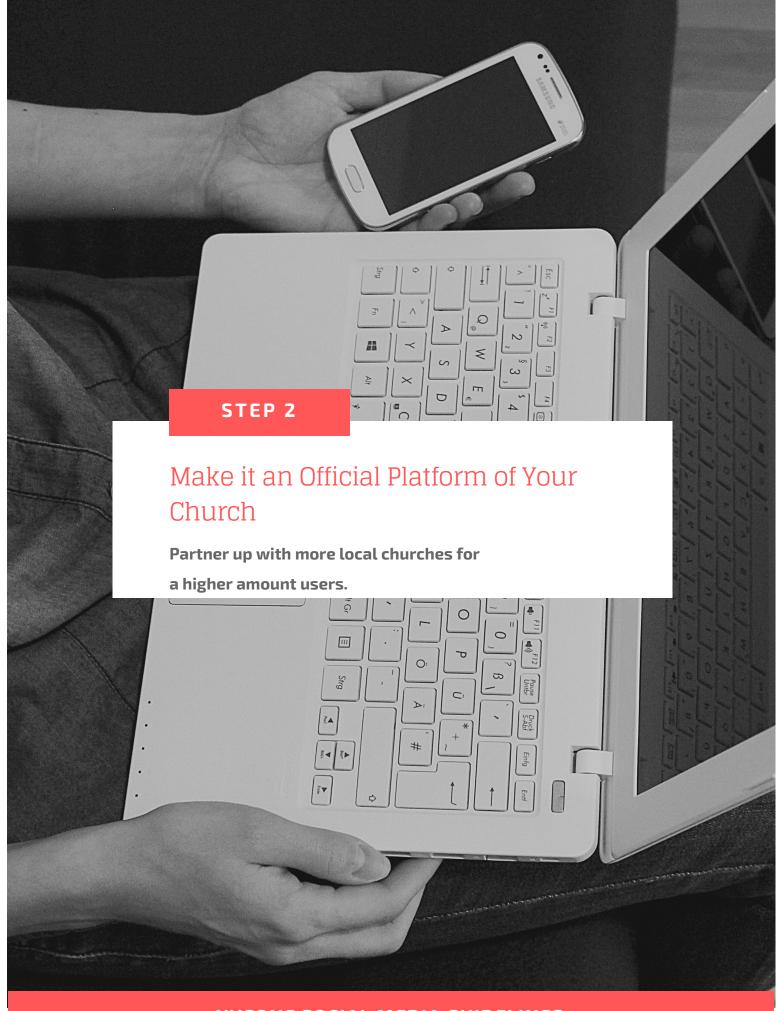
General Guidelines & Best Practices:

- **Name**: Use your church's name whenever possible.
- **Consistency**: Use the same name, profile image, header images and bio on each platform to affirm brand recognition and help members identify official accounts.
- **Contact information**: Provide additional contact information such as phone and email address where relevant in the about section of your social media account profiles.
- **Know your target audience**: Make sure to consider the following criteria when determining the target audience: location, age, gender, race/language, interest(s) and need(s). Frame your strategy, messages, and design accordingly.
- **Set measurable goals**: Have a clear sense of what you are trying to achieve with your social media communications and set measurable goals to evaluate success.
- **Message**: Have a clear sense of your message/mission and understand why it is important to your audience. Christ should be the main character in every story you tell. We want the world to know the Adventist Church by the positive impact and messages we produce. Put yourself in your audience's shoes.
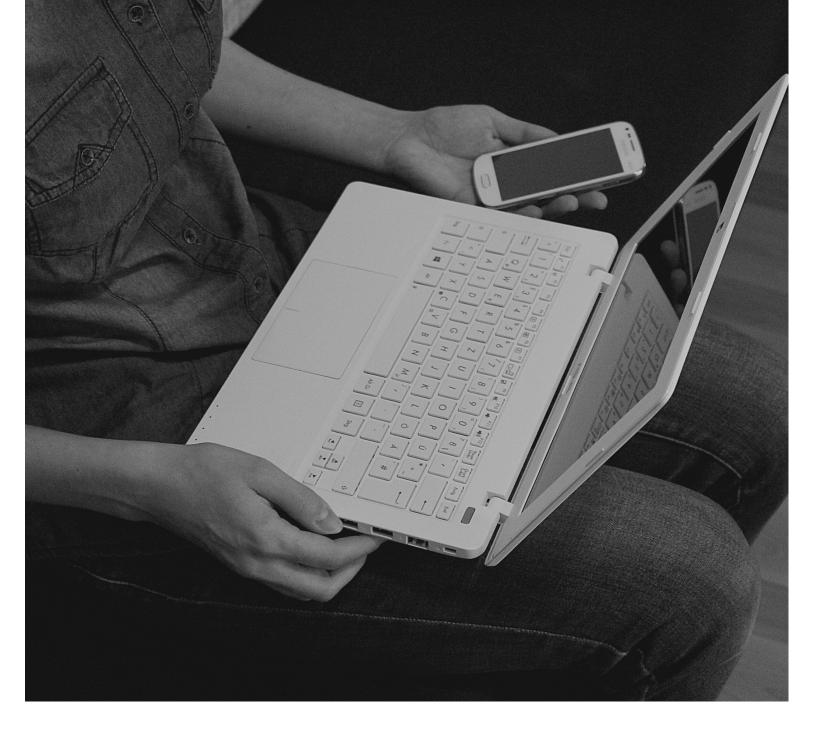
General Guidelines & Best Practices:

- **Write as though you are having a conversation, not talking at someone**. Use straightforward, consistent language. Avoid condescending language. Strive to be open, empathetic and engaging. When dealing with complex or emotional issues, frame posts and comments in a positive way that seeks to create unity and understanding.

- **Be honest and transparent**: Represent the Adventist church with a positive and uplifting tone, but also maintain integrity and honesty to build trust with our members.

- **Confidentially**: Always ask permission before sharing personal or sensitive information about a member. Do not publish, post, or release information that is considered confidential, this includes private medical information, without direct approval from the person or their family. Follow federal requirements such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and theFamily Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Make it an Official Platform of Your Church

Partner up with more local churches for

a higher amount users.

To be relevant you should indicate that your accounts belong to an official organization. You can achieve this by:

- **Ownership:** Posts should appear to come from the official brand of the account, not from individuals. An exception to this rule would be church officials providing a public statement.

- **Organization:** Plan out your regular content and schedule posts in advance whenever possible. Be sure to take advantage of peak post times to maximize reach.

- **Keep it interesting:** Utilize a diversity of content and media to keep your audience engaged and interested with relevant content.

- **20/80 Rule:** Social media is about building relationships and telling your story in such a way that your audience understands the value of your brand and engages with your content. The ideal ratio of posts on an organization's social media should be 80% engagement, 20% sales messages (aka direct appeals). 80% of the content posted by your ministry should engage followers, demonstrate the need your organization fulfills, share what initiatives your ministry is implementing to satisfy this need, The remaining 20% of your content can ask for financial support directly.
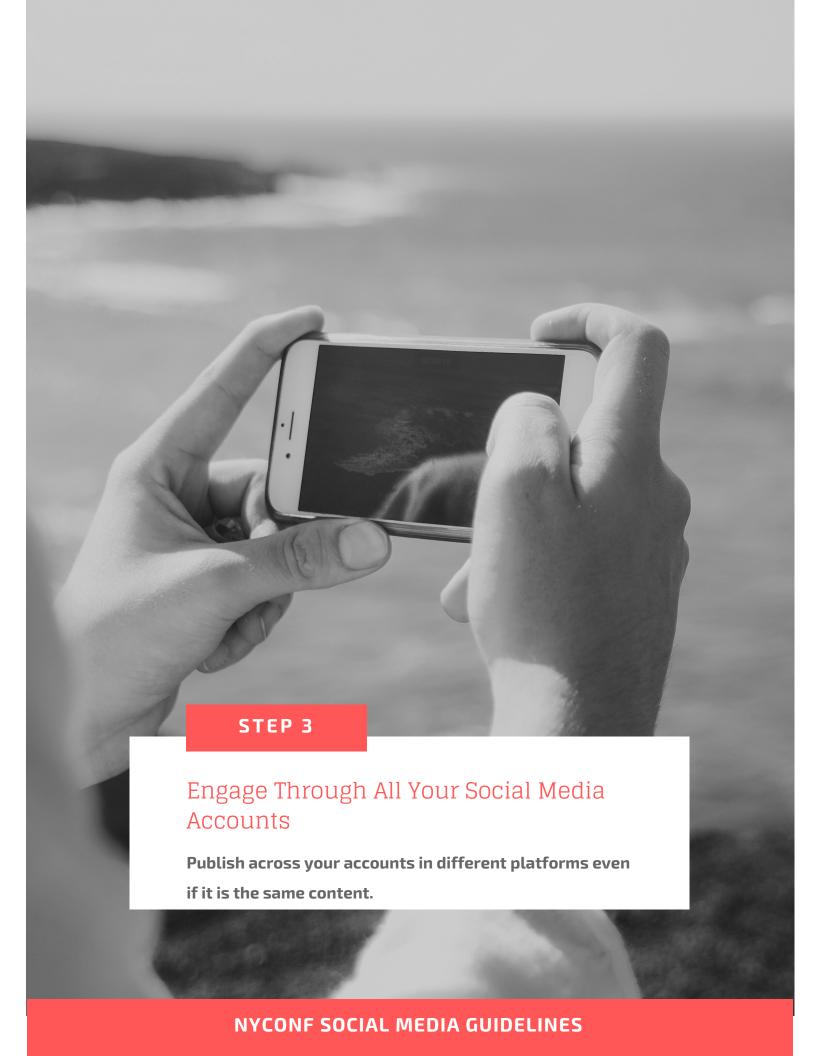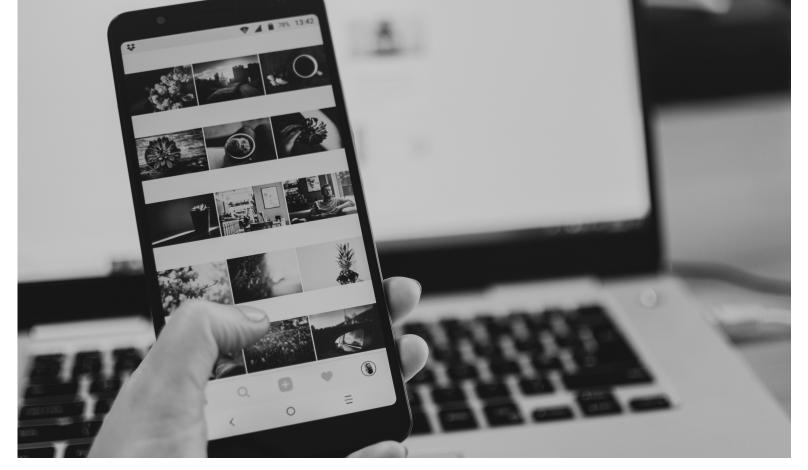
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Social Media Platforms and Frequency of Posts

Facebook	3-5 Posts/week
Instagram	3-5 Posts/week
Twitter	1-5 Posts/day
Pinterest	1-2 posts/day

STEP 3

Engage Through All Your Social Media Accounts

Publish across your accounts in different platforms even if it is the same content.
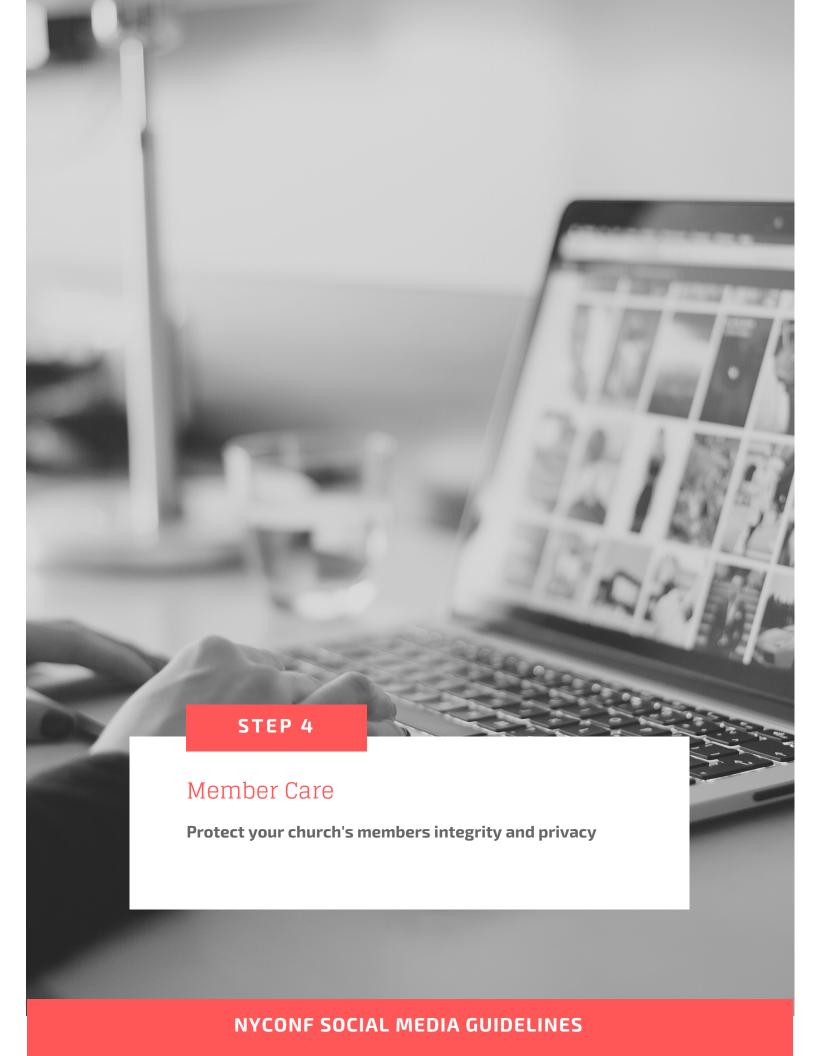
The majority of users follow you on one account and not across several. In order to optimize this, you should do:

- **Cross-platform publishing**: When publishing a post to more than one platform, avoid using terminology that isn't applicable to the other platforms such a Retweet or Share. Avoid tagging people or organizations in posts that will be published on multiple platforms, since usernames don't always align across platforms. Instead, schedule posts separately and edit them to reflect the platform on which they will appear.

- **Reference other accounts**: Partnerships benefit everyone! Be sure to tag other accounts (when appropriate or available) when sharing content about other organizations or ministries. When using another organization's or person's image or article, be sure to reference them and/or link to their account or website.

- **Live coverage of events**: Live-tweeting with a branded hashtag is recommended for important events and key speakers. Be sure to tag or quote the speaker. Post compelling images and quotes on your platforms of choice. During events, have an informed team member dedicated to engaging with your audience live and answering questions on your social media channels.

- **Link back to your website:** Your website is your biggest communications tool.

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Member Care

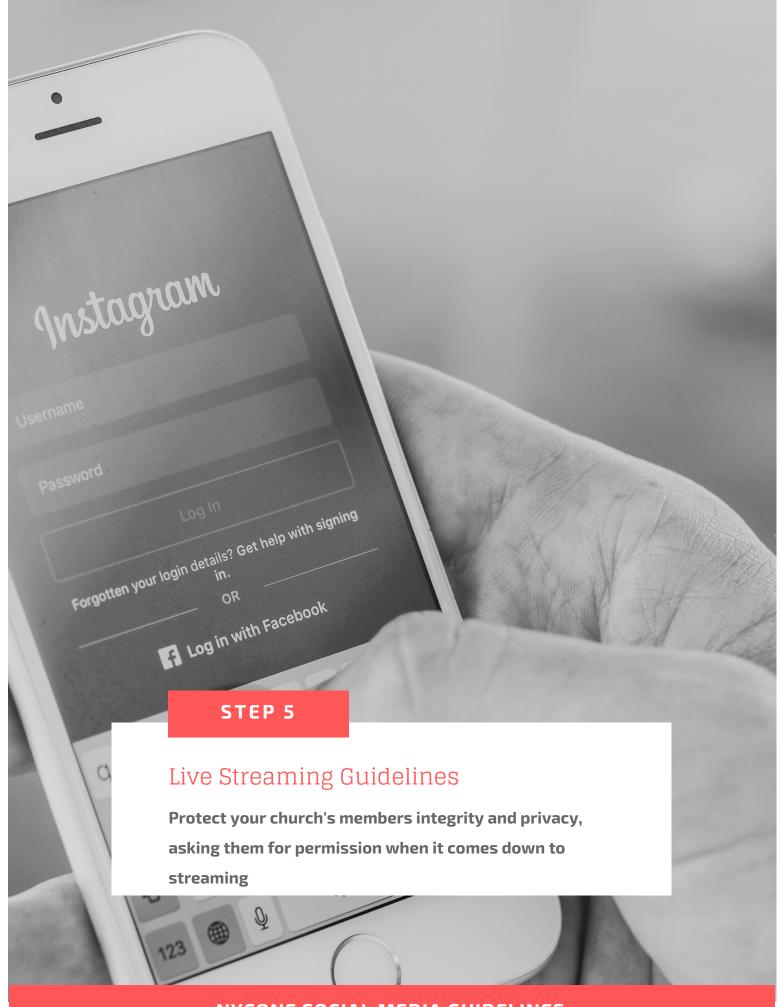**Protect your church's members integrity and privacy**

Member Care:

- Check daily for comments, questions, and messages, and respond in a timely manner. Not every comment needs to be answered, but you are encouraged to 'like' them. Sometimes legitimate inquiries or simple misunderstandings are expressed that can welcome an opportunity to serve the needs of our members and/or provide clarification.

- Comments that are offensive should be deleted immediately. But do not automatically delete negative comments. Again, these are an opportunity to listen to and respond to the needs of our community. Depending on the situation, respond publicly to the person or via direct message. Use your discretion. Remove spam posts accordingly.

- If a person seems volatile, do not respond, and hide the comment. If the person is aggressive, block or mute them if needed.Talk with, not AT your audience. Follow the conversation and actively participate. Seek to understand their needs, and respond in a meaningful way.

- Frame every response with the salvation of others as your number one priority. Be diplomatic, professional, and empathetic. Reflect our values at all times.

- Redirect people to proper resources and or departments when needed.
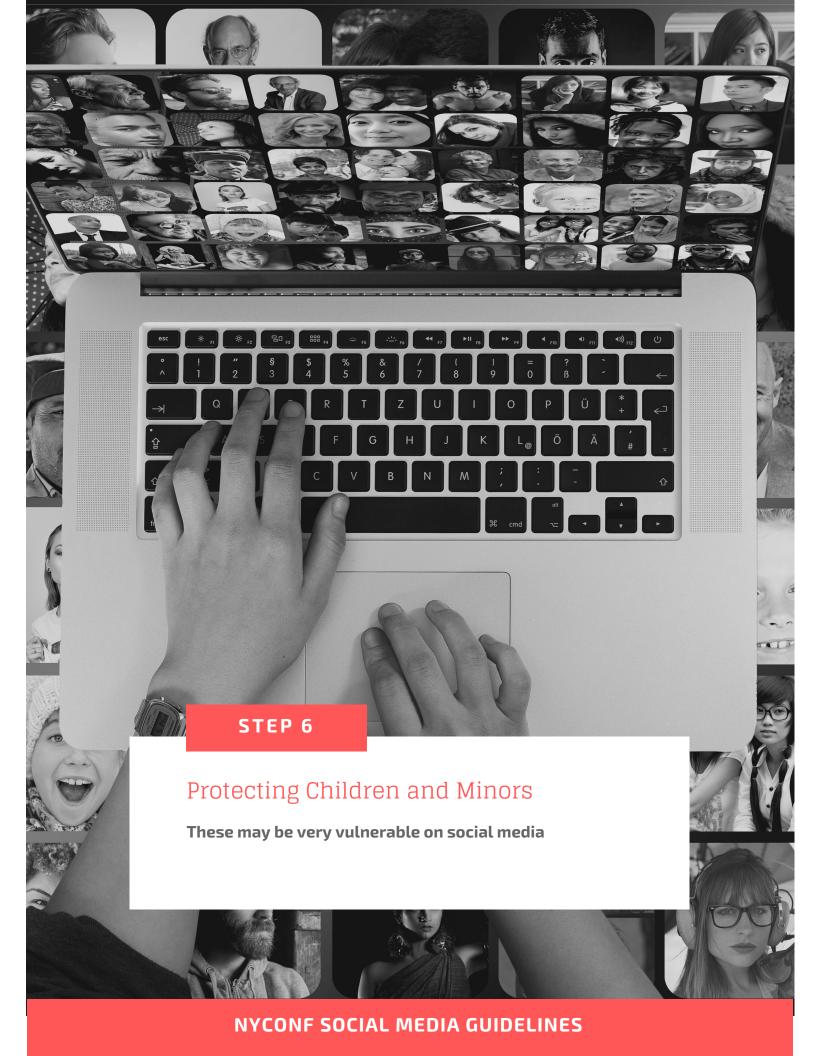
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Member Care:

- When faced with a potentially volatile situation on social media, consult with your communications director immediately for guidance.
- Link to an official statement from the North American Division or your department/ministry leadership.
- Plan to be available to answer questions, as social media users expect immediate answers.
- If a member asks a legitimate question in a crisis situation, alert NAD communications and do notspeculate about possible responses. Ensure the accuracy of any information shared.

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Live Streaming Guidelines

Protect your church's members integrity and privacy, asking them for permission when it comes down to streaming

Make sure everyone is aware of the fact that they are being filmed:

- Use a stand, tripod, or stabilizer.

- Promote before you go live.

- Post with a strong teaser message.

- Prepare and practice to avoid rambling and vocal fillers.

- Check to make sure your connection is strong.

- Keep it short.

- When using your phone camera, forward your calls to avoid distractions.

- Plan when to acknowledge your audience & answer questions.

- Be personable (smile, introduce yourself, explain the purpose of the video).

- Archive the video (Facebook), edit the information, and choose a good thumbnail.

- Make use of high-quality streaming devices and software when possible.

- Ensure that audio is good, and that speakers can be clearly heard. Use a mic if necessary.

STEP 6

Protecting Children and Minors

These may be very vulnerable on social media

Always Remember:

- Ministry social media profiles that are geared towards underage members should be designed to address their specific needs, educate, and provide resources and spiritual guidance while promoting the mission and function of the ministry they reflect.

- Be careful about what personal information you share online about members, especially children. Avoid personally identifiable information including- full name, school, address, age, location, etc.

- Avoid images of underage children's faces unless a photography waiver or release form has been signed by a parent or legal guardian.

- It is permissible to communicate with underage members who are engaging with the official ministry's social media profiles to answer questions, respond to their comments, and meet their needs. If an emergency arises or the child appears to be at risk, contact the proper authorities immediately.

- Avoid communicating with underage members through your personal social media profiles with the exception of when an emergency situation may require such communication.

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