

Social Media Sit-Ins: The What, the Why, and the How

The What:

Social Media Sit-Ins are a time to:

- Intentionally strategize social media practices for ministry areas,
- Get into the habit of using social media as a ministry,
- Learn more about social media tools, and
- Collaborate with other ministry areas like congregational and mid-council committees.

It is informal and “unsourced”, predicated on the philosophy that best practices emerge not by deferring to a few select experts but by sharing our collective wisdom and experience.

The Why:

- 1) *Social Media Sit-Ins* offer a time to discuss the uses and purposes of social media from a theological and biblical perspective. They enable us to reexamine our own church history. For instance, some have argued that that Jesus and Paul had a “virtual” ministry. Jesus sent messages ahead of himself, and Paul sent epistles when he could not be physically present with communities. Social media can be a 21st century extension of Christ’s ministry.
- 2) Utilizing social media is essential for connecting with young adults. Not only is it second nature to many, it is also often preferred because it is grassroots, participatory, and decentralized—principles valued by many young adults.
- 3) Collaboration helps us learn from one another, share experiences and ideas, and network. Social media does not reach out to a larger audience if we don’t connect, share, and “like” one another’s posts.
- 4) The *Social Media Sit-In* model can be replicated in congregations, mid-councils, and the Presbyterian Mission Agency.
- 5) *Social Media Sit-Ins* integrate cyber space with physical space. Social media communication is thus a complement, not a substitute, to face-to-face interaction.

The How:

- 1) The first session should be chiefly about listening and identifying the needs, concerns, experience, and interests of the participants. It should also encourage them to develop a strategy before diving into social media practice:
 - a. What are your goals?
 - b. What resources (e.g. staff, time) do you have to meet those goals through social media?
 - c. What social media is used now?
 - d. How can social media contribute to your goals?

- 2) Learn more about social media tools (the power of google) and share what you know and learn (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, blogs, Hootsuite, Google Hangout, etc.).
- 3) Practice using social media together—in the same place.
- 4) Extend your outreach. Try organizing and practicing around issues, and beyond the place for sit-ins (talking about social media on social media).
- 5) Have patience. It takes time, and there is no one-way to do this. Do what works best for you!