

How can your church communicate well? Once you've thought about your message and audience – see our first blog in the series if you haven't done that yet – you can plan what you will create and when. Here are some great tips to help your parish plan effective communications.

A photo of 'How Village Churches Thrive.'

This is the second blog in a series drawn from the new book, '[How Village Churches Thrive](#).' Read the first blog, '[Communicating effectively: Laying the groundwork](#)'.

All communications activity falls into one of two categories:

- 1) Regular communication. Ongoing day-to-day updates to keep in touch with those who are already involved.
- 2) Less regular communication. Special projects, events, appeals and initiatives that you hope will reach a wider audience.

Regular communication

Your day-to-day communication relies on the right platforms to deliver routine information to the regular congregation and those who already take an interest in church life.

The following are among the tools, which are good for keeping in touch with these groups:

- Email newsletter
- Text or private messaging services such as WhatsApp
- Local notice boards
- Website articles
- Monthly parish magazine
- Printed pew news leaflet
- Special timely announcements
- Public social media channels
- Closed Facebook groups (where membership must be approved)

Regular communication should be engaging and regularly refreshed. Try to keep a steady and predictable pattern and volume, as this helps to build habit and trust, and encourages everyone to sign up so they don't miss out.

Less regular communication

This might be a one-off event such as a fete, concert or a good news story.

Or it could be a series of communications for a project like setting up a youth initiative, reaching out to a new housing development in the parish, or building links with local businesses.

In all these cases, this is where you need to consider tactics beyond the ordinary, including engaging local media.Â

Finding your voice

Life is much easier if more than one person can compose emails, social posts and web content while speaking with a unified voice. To assist this, you should agree some ground rules for house style.

- Be familiar â use âweâ â e.g. weâre very excited to share news about this yearâs Lent seriesâ!
- Adopt a friendly, informal, welcoming tone.
- Write assuming no prior knowledge of events or people to be as inclusive as possible.
- Decide on how you will refer to buildings and venues for consistency.
- Illustrate posts with photos of smiling people wherever possible.

Finding skills

It is worth putting the word around to find what skill you have lurking in the parish, be they photographers, web editors, writers or social media gurus. You may even wish to convene a communications group to draw together creative discussions and keep everyone âon messageâ. Â

Donât limit your search to the church congregation. Seek volunteers as widely as possible across the benefice, ecumenical links, and within the wider community.Â

By Nick Edmonds

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