

In this blog, we'll explore some tips and features to help you engage with your audience on this platform.

## Instagram has evolved: From image sharing to multi-media platform

Originally, Instagram was a simple platform for sharing photos among friends and family. However, its acquisition by Facebook, now Meta, accelerated its evolution into a multifaceted platform. Today, Instagram has not only images but also videos, offering you opportunities to share a diverse range of content.

Despite continued changes, Instagram remains a popular platform in the UK. According to recent statistics, Instagram had 33.10 million users in the United Kingdom in early 2024, an increase of 4.4 million from January 2023.

As the platform continues to grow, this makes it a great place to spread your message far and wide.

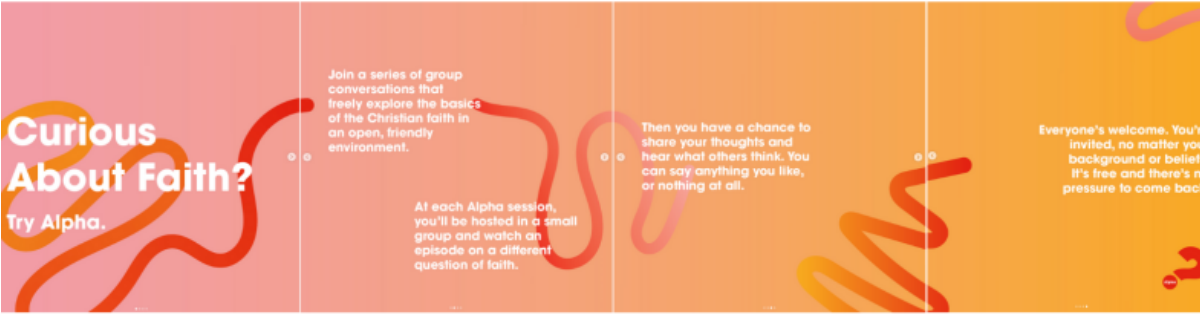
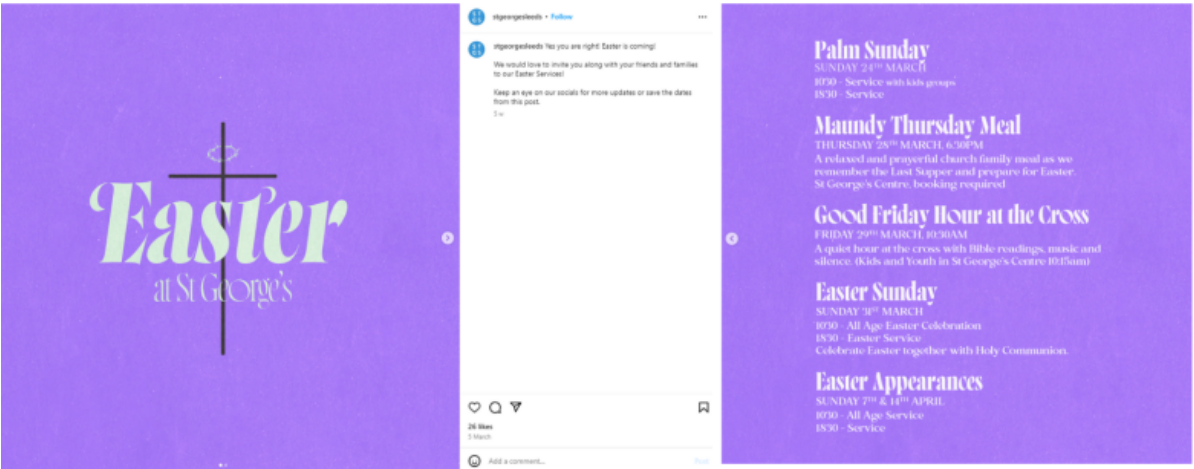
### Key Features and Strategies for Engagement

Posts: Originally limited to 1:1 image sharing, posts on Instagram have evolved to include long or short-form videos and multiple photo 'slides'.

Instagram has increased the ability to edit images in response to the rise of content curation platforms like [CapCut](#), [Lensa AI](#) and [Canva](#), external platforms that creators can use to edit their images and videos.

Instagram (under Meta) aims to become the one stop shop for all the needs of the creator (anyone who is publishing content on Instagram or any social media platform), making it ideal for showcasing church events, buildings, prayers, Bible verses, words of encouragement, and quotes.

**Example:** Sharing images of recent church events or inspirational quotes overlaid on captivating visuals.



Stories:

Stories provide a space to engage with audiences who may not see your posts due to algorithm inefficiencies.

They're perfect for sharing behind-the-scenes content and giving shout-outs to individuals or other churches.

**Example:** Sharing snippets of Sunday service preparations or highlighting community outreach efforts.



# Creating Compelling Content:

There is a misconception that you have to spend hours and hours creating content and often when you are starting out, this can take longer than desired. Here are a few things that can give you a good starting point for creating content for Instagram.

Regularly share Scripture and words of encouragement to anchor your audience in faith

Highlight testimonials to inspire others with real-life stories of transformation

Provide educational content that adds value to your audience's lives and addresses their needs

**Example:** Why not share personal testimonies of people who have found purpose and community within your church?

## It's all about COMMUNITY

In an era where people seek belonging, the church can offer this through the transformative power of the Gospel. Instagram provides a platform to add value to people who may be spending their time online seeking connection and meaning.

**Example:** Engage with your followers through interactive Q&A sessions or by sharing uplifting content during challenging times.

## Top tips for growing your audience on Instagram:

- Remember, it's about quality over quantity. While you want to be posting regularly, don't feel pressured to post every day if that's not realistic for you
- Pictures can be taken on your smartphone, but check the quality of them. Avoid posting any blurry or pixelated photos
- Take time to follow likeminded accounts, and then engage with their photos and videos when you're next scrolling through your timeline. If you like their picture, they're more likely to like yours!
- Think about your caption – describe what's happening in the photo and ask questions of your followers to encourage conversation
- Use hashtags on your posts – have a look at the kind of hashtags other churches are using, and also ones used by your local community. It's a great way of making your account easy to find. Research suggests posts with 11 hashtags perform the best!
- Tag your photos – both the people who are in them and the location – again, this makes them easier to find
- Use [Canva](#) to design graphics to use on Instagram to promote upcoming events. If you have a colour scheme for your logo and your website, try to stick to this branding. Come along to one of our free [Canva introduction webinars](#) to learn more about how to use the tool
- If you get a comment or question on your post, try to reply to show you value your followers
- Use the editing tools & audio within the platform to increase your reach
- When possible, experiment with different features

If you'd like to learn more about how to use Instagram for your church and ask questions about using the social media platform, come along to one of our [Instagram webinars](#).

In 2024, Instagram remains a powerful tool for church leaders to connect with their communities, share the Gospel, and transform lives. By embracing its diverse features and creating compelling content, you can effectively reach and engage with your audience, spreading the message of hope and love.

- Digital Team

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