

# LUTHERAN SCHOOLS COMMUNICATOR



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## TIPS FOR COVID-19

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Consistency is key to cultivating a social media presence. Updating and adding posts to your school's social media accounts is always important, but even more so during a global pandemic. Now, more than ever, people are spending a lot of their time online, trying to find community, entertainment, and reliable information. It is easy to either over-publish content or fall silent at this time. Setting up a posting schedule can solve both of these problems. Establishing a routine will help create a smooth transition to when we no longer have to shelter in place. If you're unsure of what to post during this time, we've provided some examples.

### Posting Ideas:

- Prayers for students, parents, church workers, medical workers, and others
- Hymn or song lyrics
- Announcements from your school leadership
- Encouraging videos
- Video messages from school staff members
- Examples of a job well done on students' work (with parental permission)
- Photographs of your campus
- Teachers reading children's books
- Screenshots of Zoom calls
- Reposting memories (e.g., "On this day in 2014")
- A day in the life of the principal
- Any milestone events that are happening virtually (e.g., graduation)
- School chapel
- Daily devotions from your pastor

## CROSS-POSTING

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Before we talk about how to cross-post, let's define the term. Cross-posting is creating content and then posting it across several different social media platforms. For example, creating an advertisement or a photograph and posting it on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

### The Benefits of Cross-Posting

Cross-posting allows you to take a piece of content and share it across different social media platforms, keeping all your accounts active at once. Cross-posting makes it easier to maintain a regular presence on social media. Active social media accounts send a regular stream of content, thus reaching more people. A lack of social media activity can lead to a loss of engagement. Remember, engagement is the number of people who are liking, commenting, retweeting, and sharing your posts. An active account will help you maintain your existing audience of school families while also broadening your reach to prospective school families.

### The Biggest Misconception about Cross-Posting

I read an article that suggested cross-posting is like putting a text through Google Translate; there is a risk that the end result will come out oddly, looking careless and unintentional. It can be very tempting to try to save time by creating and using one post on all your social media platforms, but the long-term disadvantages of doing so will outweigh the short-term advantages. Instead of repeating messages word-for-word, write a new post for the different platforms each time. Crafting a unique post each time may sound like a lot of work, but you don't need to start from scratch for each social media outlet. You can still create one post but adjust it to ensure there are differences.

Some people may follow you on all of your social media accounts. If they see the same post and photo appear across multiple platforms, they may feel less inclined to engage with your posts. They may think that your accounts are automated and lack personality. Your posts should not give the impression that each social media outlet is just another platform to repost your content.

### An Example of Cross-Posting

Let's say your school is hosting a fundraiser at the end of the school year. On Instagram, you can share a photo of a fundraiser from a previous year with a caption announcing the date and time; include a link in your bio on how to sign up for the event. On Facebook, you can promote the fundraiser by creating an event with a virtual RSVP so families can see who is attending and read about what activities their children can participate in while they are there. On Twitter, you can share a link to the school website, where people can read more about what the event looks like. Using this cross-posting strategy allows for school families to hear about the fundraiser on three different platforms in three different ways.



# TAKING EFFECTIVE PHOTOS

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Whether you use an actual camera or the camera on your smart phone, you can capture moments that help portray what a day in the life of your school would look like to prospective families. Photos are an essential component of social media, if not the most important part. Photos are the first impression, the image that people will keep in mind, and the way parents can imagine their child in your school. If you do not have a high-quality camera or the budget for a photographer, here is a guide to taking clear and clean photos for your social media accounts.

## Attire

While many of your photos can be candid of a pep rally in the gym or a field day, including posed photos of students can be valuable to your accounts (perhaps for use as a Facebook cover photo) and even helpful for marketing brochures. If you have a designated day where students are in uniform or spirit wear, that would be an excellent opportunity to take photos for your accounts.

## Backdrop

Look for a spot that not only has great light but also provides a distraction-free setting. For example, a blank wall might serve as a good backdrop. Other options could include the church sanctuary, a mural, a banner, or a clean and bright open hallway. A clutter-free background combined with natural light will let the subject stand out as the main focus of the photograph.

## Lighting

Plenty of the right kind of lighting is crucial for creating appealing images, no matter what kind of camera you are using. I recommend using as much natural light as possible. Outside is your best option to guarantee great lighting, but if you are inside, position subjects near a window with their faces toward the light.

## Editing

When editing, the key is to enhance the photos that you already have. Less is more, and the images should be bright and clean. Smartphones allow you to edit the brightness, contrast, and clarity of your photos. If you are more advanced, you can download the free Adobe Lightroom mobile app.

## Posing

The best way to showcase what your school has to offer is keeping students as the main focus—but positioning students doesn't need to be complicated! Remember, you can have a variety of candid and posed photos and use them both. Here are some ideas for posed photos:

- A teacher helping a student at the student's desk
- An older student walking with a younger student
- Students sitting in chapel
- Two students on either side of your school sign
- A group of older students in a row and younger students standing in front of them
- Students with their backpacks on the first day of school
- Students sitting on steps
- A teacher giving a student a high five
- Students at a pep rally

## BUCKETS, BATCHING, AND SCHEDULING

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In Issue 3, we talked about Tailwind, a platform that helps you visually plan and schedule your content. It allows you to schedule weeks of social media posts to save for later, which will help you save time. This is also how to think about your content in terms of buckets or batching. Batching is dedicating time to a specific task. Think of it like lesson planning: during the week or on the weekend, you dedicate a set number of hours to lesson planning for the days ahead. Similarly, social media batching is creating and scheduling a set of social media content in advance.

As a reminder, Tailwind increases your engagement because it allows you to drag and drop photos into a calendar, which automatically schedules your Instagram post, stories, and videos to the times when your audience is most active. One of the biggest advantages of batching is that you can ensure consistency of the image your school is trying to portray throughout your content. As previously stated, all social media accounts for your school should look and feel cohesive. Although you are not cross-posting the exact same posts, you are creating an image with clear communication. Planning your weekly or monthly content at one designated time will automatically help you visualize consistency with each post and help the accounts to flow seamlessly.

### Tips for Keeping It Easy

#### **1. Write a List**

As an educator, you wear many hats and juggle many tasks, so creating social media content in addition to all of that might feel daunting. You may experience creative blocks, so it might be helpful to brainstorm as a social media team. Write a list of all the events that happen at your school during the year. This will allow each month to have some ideas in place for when the time comes to create content in batches, and it might just make the task a little less overwhelming!

#### **2. Choose Quality over Quantity**

As you designate time for creating content, set realistic goals to ensure your content is of high quality and remains effective. Don't simply post something because you feel like you have to. Skip pixelated, low-quality images and take the time to build a gallery of good photos you can post. This will take some time, especially in the beginning, but it will pay off.

#### **3. Make It Concise**

Although it can be tempting to write long posts, keep them short. Since you are posting regularly, you do not want a reputation for wordy content that most people will gloss over. Keep things short and sweet.

## POSTING GUIDELINES

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In Issue 2, we focused on policies and posting guidelines. Now that you have walked through creating an account, scheduling posts, creating content, and maintaining consistency, it's a great time for your social media team to review posting guidelines.

- Choose a strong image that flows with your feed
- Write a caption
- Add hashtags to your post
- Tag the location
- Engage with the comments on your post

## TEASER FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

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### **Issue 5: What to Do When School Is Out**

- Ideas for User-Generated Content
- CPH Reads Program
- Summer Is a Great Time for Fall Planning
- Content Ideas





# MONICA KEGLEY

My name is Monica Kegley, and I am married to my wonderful husband, Noah. I am a Lutheran educator, a photographer, and a new mom. I attended Concordia University Wisconsin, graduating in 2016 with a degree in Lutheran early childhood education. I am originally from San Francisco, California—I loved growing up in the Bay Area! Noah and I were married in San Francisco in 2016, moved to Florida for Noah's vicarage, and moved back to St. Louis in 2017 for Noah to finish seminary. In 2018, Noah was called to St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School in West Allis, Wisconsin, to serve as the associate pastor.

My husband and I have had a long journey to starting a family; we lost four precious babies to miscarriages. I enjoy supporting women who are going through similar journeys, and sharing how the Lord was faithful through our heartache. We are now parents to sweet baby girl named Lylah! For fun, I enjoy photography, calligraphy, trying new things around Milwaukee, creating a cozy home, and spending time with our mini goldendoodle puppy, Cali!

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