

Digital Apps 101: Summary and Links to How-To Information

General Rules:

- If you're not comfortable with an app, don't feel pressured to use it.
- VIRTUS rules still apply (See new Documents about virtual spaces under Extranet → Safe Environment as well as the 9th Edition of *Called to Work in Harmony*, section VIII. F: Social Media Guidelines)
- Safety first! (Think through access, sharing and discussion board features. Do not share links and codes to classes in public spaces/monitor all conversations and discussion boards/make sure app settings match what you are comfortable sharing).
- If there's a free and paid version of an app, make sure you test all functionality.
- Digital is not the end-all be-all. No one app will solve all your problems.
- Check in with parents and schools to be consistent. Public schools may be using the same apps, which will ease the burden on the parents.
- Quality over quantity. You cannot successfully launch many new apps at one time and have successful engagement.

Communication Tools:

- “OLD-FASHIONED” can still work! Postcards with personal handwriting are an effective way of communicating with parishioners. When digital messages disappear, a postcard remains.
- **Remind** (Free account for up to 10 classes, 150 per class)
Site: <https://www.remind.com/>
How-To Tutorial: <https://youtu.be/vRMrNE4eDCw>
Main purpose: Simple text communication functionality to make announcements.
- **Bloomz** (Free account (with lots of functionality in free version), premium version is \$4.99 per month)
Site: <https://www.bloomz.net/>
How-To Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiafXhOxQRs>
Main purpose: Communication app with the possibility of sending visual content and organizing class conversations
- **Classting** (Free—Must sign up under a school. Use school “Diocese of Richmond Faith Formation.”)
Site: <https://en.classting.com/>
How-To Tutorial: <https://youtu.be/8IBmPII9H2k>

Main purpose: Safe communication between members of a group

- **Flocknote** (Entire parish package has various costs depending on size. Christian Formation tab included)

Site: <https://flocknote.com/>

Tips for using Flocknote for specific ministries: <https://flocknote.com/blog/16-creative-ways-use-email-texting-church>

Main Purpose: Using email communication to parishioners and tracking response/engagement

Classroom Experience Tools

- **Zoom** (For most functionality, \$14.99 per month, various price options available)

Site: <http://zoom.us>

How-To Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMUxzrgZvZQ>

Additional PDFs with how-to information: <http://support.zoom.us>

Video Tip: A common question is how to share a video during a Zoom call and have the audio be heard. Here are the steps: Open your **Zoom** meeting.

1. Ensure that you are logged **in** as the Host.
2. Click on the green "**Share** Screen" icon.
3. You will see a pop-up window where you select your desktop or application.
4. Click the check box **in** the lower left that says "**Share** computer sound"

Main Purpose: Host live sessions with breakout rooms for small group discussion and screen sharing

- **Google Classroom** (Free)

Site: <https://classroom.google.com>

How-to PDF: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9-fxdvI2-LYVzhFcVUtd05NNGc/view>

How-to Tutorial: <https://youtu.be/rCNlmsWUxZA>

Other Tips: <https://www.bookwidgets.com/blog/2017/05/the-beginners-guide-to-google-classroom>

Main Purpose: Collect self-paced content and playlists with activity options for parents/students.

- **FlipGrid** (Free)

Site: <https://info.flipgrid.com/>

How-To Information: <https://help.flipgrid.com/hc/en-us/articles/360007460474-Getting-Started-Educators>

How-To Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJOoloQ7k5Q>

Main Purpose: Create video announcements and assignments and have participants respond with visuals as well as words. Self-paced and private sharing.

- **Eliademy** (Many pricing options, begins at \$5 per student user)

Site: <http://eliademy.com>

How-To Information: <http://helpdesk.eliademy.com/>

Main Purpose: Full-fledge online learning platform integrating live conferencing, discussion boards, announcements and other assignments.

Supplemental Digital Tools

- **Social Media Spectrum** (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- **Kahoot!** (Free) Digital app for creating quizzes, trivia nights, polls and games. You set the questions through either a document, a Facebook live event, or a Zoom event, and participants can use the app to submit their answers. Competition mode and poll mode available.
 - Site: <https://kahoot.com>
 - Tutorial: <https://youtu.be/pAfnia7-rMk>
- **Facebook Live** (Free) In addition to streaming Mass, this is a great platform for reaching children via a Children's liturgy, story time, or other short prayer video. For adults, it can be used to pray a daily prayer consistently with your community.
- **Ziteboard + Screencastify:** (Free for most use) This combination can help you create a video if you are not having success with Zoom. Ziteboard serves as an enhanced whiteboard, and Screencastify is a browser extension that allows you to record anything on your computer, from video of you to any screen.

Sites:

 - <http://ziteboard.com>
 - <http://www.screencastify.com>
 - Tutorial for Ziteboard: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QgCtwjBzuE>
 - Tutorial for Screencastify: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2ieATZ5fwk>
- **Animoto:** (Free version has watermark and a few limits to features, paid version is \$33/month. Most needs can be done with free version) Animoto is a way to create videos that add graphics, sounds, and screens in addition to the "talking head" of a general recording.
 - Site: www.animoto.com

- Tutorial: <https://animoto.com/blog/guides/getting-started-animoto>
- **Piktochart:** (Free and paid versions; most functionality is free) Piktochart functions similar to publisher with templates for flyers, flowcharts, and other visual needs. Makes sharing to online platforms easy and more visually-pleasing than a word document.
 - Site: <http://create.piktochart.com>
 - Tutorial: <https://piktochart.com/video-tutorials/>
- **Unsplash.com:** This is a site for free, public domain images to enhance any of your digital content. Photos are grouped by searchable category and no copyright is needed.
 - Site: www.unsplash.com

Reminders:

- **Give yourself “quiet time.”** Most apps, as well as your phone in general, have “do not disturb” or “quiet” settings where you can disable notifications at certain times of the day to help create boundaries between work and home life.
- **You may need more than one fit for your parish.** Think about the various sub-communities within your parish and the needs they face. For example, English and Spanish-speaking communities may have different needs. Older and younger parishioners may also communicate differently.
- **Be realistic with engagement.** 100% engagement in the digital world is unrealistic. Do the best you can!
- **Start small and build.** Advertise and release one new digital ministry at a time. Do not overwhelm your parishioners (and you!) with everything at once.
- **“Digital Burnout” is real (for you and them!).** There are still creative, non-digital ways to engage with your parishioners, and it’s okay to take a break from the computer and use them! Outside spaces, socially distanced gatherings, and take-home activities are all viable options!

Questions? Contact Megan Cottam, Associate Director of Christian Formation,
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