

78 FaceBook Tips For Your Youth Ministry

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1. Signing up

Your own name

You should use your own name or your nickname if people use it more commonly, to sign up. It's important to ensure that your friends, family and colleagues can find you easily.

2. Your email

Facebook sends out a lot of notifications once you start signing up with various groups and fan pages, apps and even comments. But people can also find you by your email, so you should probably use a personal email account. Check it frequently for friend requests and more. It has to be real though, because Facebook uses it and sometimes your mobile number to verify who you are.

3. Read the terms and conditions

You should always read the terms and conditions on any site, and Facebook is no exception, though, it should be noted that Facebook frequently updates it's TOS causing a lot of outrage in the community. Know where your rights are and read their documentation.

reduce, and it'll be hard getting them back.

4. Search your email

In some cases when you sign up for Facebook, especially if you use a 'free' email system such as hotmail or Gmail, Facebook can search your email addresses and see if anyone in your address book is already on Facebook.

5. Profile information – school, university, company

The first piece of profile information Facebook asks for is your School (leaving year), University (leaving year) and Company – this starts the first basic groups links so you can find Alumni and colleagues from work – if you don't want to find anyone there, leave it empty and click skip.

6. Profile information – picture

your photo or avatar doesn't need to be of you, but it's usually a good idea to use a shot of yourself so that people that aren't sure they've found you can add you. Many people change their profile photos weekly though, so you can use just about any image you hold copyright to.

7. Profile information – basic information

Once you've gotten into Facebook, you can fill in any or all personal information on the basic information box, and depending on your security settings, people will be able to see this – it's sometimes the difference between knowing whether it's you or another person that they'll friend, so this information can be useful.

8. Profile information – is Facebook a dating site?

One of the core pieces of information that Facebook asks about on signup is what you're 'looking' for on the site, along with your religious standing. Don't be afraid to mark 'friendship' in that box, even if you are actively seeking a relationship – it makes little difference to people adding you. Facebook is not a dating site, though there are groups on there for finding partners.

9. Profile information – personal information

Many people don't list all of their hobbies- instead list the ones you're interested in attracting friends for. If you've got a 'guilty pleasure' remember that people may be able to access your information, even before you add them, so you may not want to publish that. The boxes in this section are entirely optional.

10. Contact information

One of the boxes you can fill in is 'contact information'. Be aware that depending on your security settings (see security and privacy) you may then place your ID out in the 'open' which can open you up to spam or bot contact.

11. Profile information – Network

If you're interested in chatting with, or meeting up with people in your region, you can add where you live and join that 'uber-group'. Some require email addresses or other information that 'proves' affiliation, but Facebook has recently improved that interface, so it works very well. Your network affiliation is listed on your profile, unless you change the security settings (see security and privacy)

12. Profile information – friends

As we'll explain later, you can keep those that you've added from appearing in your search, but your friends list is always visible. Be careful when adding 'controversial' people in your life, as it's very easy for other friends to use your list to find others to add – the only exception to this is if you add someone with extremely tight security settings

13. Profile information – relationships

Facebook allows the listing of relationships in your profile –

but until the person you're in a relationship confirms it; you will only be listed as in a relationship. Otherwise you will be tagged as 'in a relationship' but not with whom.

14. Fill as much of it in as possible

Remember, you can always come back and add, or subtract information. It's usually something people don't do often though, so spending those extra few minutes at sign up to create a proper profile is well worth it.

15. Security from the outset

We talk more about security later, but some people join Facebook simply to keep up with a tiny group of friends – if you're one of these people, then you will want to ensure your security is as tight as can be (see security and privacy)

16. Finding friends, colleagues and 'fan' pages

Facebook has made it fairly easy to find people and add them, but in the mix with the people you can find are fan pages – which are like mini profiles (we talk about these more in section) and groups. It's important to remember that people, such as authors or local personalities may have multiple listings in search results, so you may need to contact them and ask which to add. You also have to take one extra step to make sure people can find you. You can currently have 5,000 friends total.

17. Searches

Searching by name may bring back dozens of results, so if you know the person well enough, find out what email they use and add them via that. Adding people via email is often easier than searches too because it means you're certain you've got the right person, without opening yourself up to

unwanted attention. If you add someone that isn't actually the person you wanted to add, they can see your profile.

18. Adding people via friends

If you're a close knit group of friends, or a new group that met through University or similar pursuit, it's normally ok to go through another friend's list and find those that you know, but don't abuse this – adding everyone from every friend's list can get you flagged as a spammer by Facebook.

19. More than one profile?

Be careful not to create more than one Facebook page – it's against their TOS and can lead to confusion when people add you. It is possible to create a main account and make the rest of your 'accounts' as pages, but again be careful – Facebook has a policy about fake pages, fake names or abusing that facility.

20. Fan pages too much for you?

You can hide fan page (and app, and even 'friend' updates) from view easily by setting your feed up (we talk more about this in the feed management section). Hiding fan pages, even temporarily, can let you get your Facebook reading back under control, and let you decide whether you want to follow them long term.

21. Removing friends, or pages

Removing friends is easy – you just go into your friends list and click the x beside their name. You can find your friend list by looking at the left column of your main feed based Facebook page. Or you can go to 'Account' and then 'edit Friends'

You can remove pages in a similar way, in 'Edit friends' then scrolling down to around the middle of the page and clicking on 'pages' (it has an orange flag next to it).

22. Using friends lists to organize your reading

Facebook introduced a concept called 'friends lists' recently, allowing people to sort their friends into groups, sorting them onto groups of your choosing. Have workmates, best friends, limited profile – the choice is yours. You can also edit en masse by selecting 'Account' then 'edit friends' – your whole list will appear there with drop down arrow lists, including your pages. Simply filter them onto a list you're comfortable with and then you can control your feed.

Posting using groups – Your friends list doesn't just allow you to filter your reading - these groups can simply control what you're reading or allow you to customize who sees what. If you don't want your Granny seeing your wild nights out, simply filter her into a group and then, when you post, click on the little light blue padlock. Enter your level of access, and exclude using the bottom box. You can set this as your 'custom' privacy build for your posts, or a one off. (see more in security and privacy)

23. Been Blocked?

Facebook is hard to contact in case of problems, but you can sometimes email them at whatever published email contact they currently have, and ask them to review your case – if you've done nothing wrong you should be reinstated. If you were hacked, you should contact support urgently and follow their instructions to regain control and become unblocked.

24. Got badge?

One of Facebook's nicest widgets is the ability to create badges and display them on your webpage or site. If you've got a reasonably public profile, you can use these easily – if your profile is highly protected and privacy locked, you may want to consider whether you want to use it at all.

25. Looking for more?

If you have just recently joined Facebook, instead of searching for everyone by name, go to another friend's profile and find the people you're looking for by checking their 'friends' box, on the left hand side, below information. Be careful not to add too many people though – it can be seen as spamming and may be picked up by Facebook.

26. Security and privacy

There's a lot of options in Facebook that you have to pay attention to, especially if you don't want to put your information in public. There are options to protect everything that you have on Facebook, creating a stripped out, bare public profile, but you DO need to change your settings, it's not automatic on creation.

27. Use fine grained controls

don't want your family accessing your photos – lock them out. Want to only allow reading access to your status updates to people closest to you? You can do that too (though remember, apps use your default posting, which is your overall status posting setting). Go to 'Account' then 'privacy settings and explore your options there.

28. The tightest locks

If you put everything in your security to 'friends' and remove yourself from search engine results, and then start using Facebook, you'll have to add people, and they'll never be able to do it themselves. If you don't want people knowing you're on Facebook, this is an ideal solution

29. Know your settings!

Understanding what the different settings mean for privacy and posting is what makes or breaks your Facebook usage. There are four settings – 'Everyone', 'Friends of friends', friends only and custom. Friends of friends means that any information you share on your profile can be visible by anyone that has friend any of your friends, opening your profile up to a lot more exposure.

30. Your name, date of birth, address and other information

Keeping as much of your information private as you can means that you can protect yourself against identity fraud – this also means not adding random people and practicing safe login and logout practices. Facebook is rife with mistakes that have opened people up to identity fraud, but knowing your way around security settings will stop this.

31. Privacy – profile information

In 'Account', Privacy Settings, you can choose to set your different parts of your profile and information to one of several settings - you can also customize them so that only your own lists of friends get to see certain things. This extra layer of security is incredibly powerful and worth the time it takes to set up.

32. Being harassed by a colleague that you just don't want to add?

Sometimes people don't take no for an answer – if you find that someone is continually asking you for an 'add' go to their profile page, scroll down to the bottom and then hit 'Report/Block this person'. Blocking them will stop any unwanted advances – they won't be able to see you at all (or you, them)

33. Apps getting you down?

Did an app you added suddenly change its posting policies? Are you finding that some apps are more invasive than you wanted? Go to 'Account', then 'Application settings'. There, you can remove any you no longer want to use, change posting policies (in some cases) and more. Since Facebook changed how apps notify people, their 'notification' feeds have been a lot less cluttered, but notifications now appear in the left side bar, which confuses some people.

34. Don't let Google see you

If Google using what little of your profile is visible after you've adjusted your security settings to your perfect level of privacy makes you nervous, you can tell all search engines that you don't want them to view your profile by going to 'Account, privacy settings, search and search engines' and unchecking the box beside 'public search engine'. If you've got good security settings and are happy for your name and photo to appear, have a look at the preview before checking it. There is very little on the average profile, including no updates.

35. Hacked?

Sometimes, people lose control of their Facebook account – this could be because of a virus, or worse. You can regain

control by following the instructions by following Facebook's own guidelines. It's important to do a virus scan as soon as you discover you've been hacked – just in case – do that before returning to the site to reclaim your profile.

36. Photos and videos – don't appear where you don't want to

Along with all other privacy settings – be especially careful about your movie and photo settings. It's important that you keep your video and photo settings as private as you can – if you're tagged in either, it displays them to the 'world' at large based on your settings. If you lock your video and photo options to minimum, friends only, you can be sure that embarrassing items will be kept to just your circle, rather than any Google Cache.

Part 2 – Access, API and apps offsite

Off Facebook access

It's important to take advantage of any software or apps that you can use, simply because Facebook can become time consuming if you only access it at a primary terminal. Using apps to speed up your access will mean in most cases, your time won't be devoured by social networking (until you get into games)

37. The best phone app?

There is no one 'best' app for Facebook on each mobile platform, so look around and see if you can find a highly recommended one – sometimes phones come with bundled apps, or built in API access – which, if you're a social animal your phone can be a lifesaver. Be aware that most apps are limited, as are most phone based browsers.

38. Tweetdeck?

Tweetdeck is a twitter poster that has expanded to take in other places like Facebook, and comes highly recommended on any PC or laptop. It has a tiny memory footprint and gives you unparalleled access to a lot of feeds at once. Beware its API call on twitter though (at 150 an hour). Facebook currently has no limitations.

39. Automatic posting?

Some people use automatic posting to allow them to post information at set times, though Facebook's TOS seems to be a little grey about this. Being careful and only posting relevant information will allow you to connect and network in a way it was designed to allow

40. Facebook connect

Facebook connect is a handy extension of the Facebook login and API, tying various things back to your profile, or allowing you to interact with other sites, or programs using your Facebook credentials. This can be a good and a bad thing – if the interaction causes constant posting to your feed, people may find it annoying, but it also means you've got a centralized login.

41. Lifestreaming

Lifestreaming allows you to pull all of your feeds into one place and Facebook offers several widgets based on what you need for your site – go to Facebook's widget page - or search the internet for information on how to use your feeds in interesting ways offsite.

Part 3 – The basics of the site

Facebook's basics are easy to master, but if you skip learning them, it can slow you down massively – there are several functions on the site that most people don't use, and could, to get more out of their networking, and sharing with friends

42. Posting updates

The main basis of Facebook is the ability to post short (420 character) updates – you can tag friends in these by going @ (name) or simply tell people what you're up to. Some people take part in mini games in these too – the choice is only limited by character length.

43. Auto subscribing

Commenting or liking someone's status or notes or anything else in their feed will automatically 'subscribe' you to notifications about any future activity. You can reply to this however, from your email, which means you don't need to log into the site constantly.

44. The notification bar

At the top of the page, there is a blue bar with four icons – this is your quick overview of any activity aimed at you. This includes anything you've subscribed to by participating in it.

45. Your newsfeed

Your news feed comes with several options – you can read the most 'important' stuff (based on Facebook's algorithm), or the most recent posts. Missing friends? Scroll to the bottom and click 'edit options'. Put 5000 in the bottom box – it'll remove all limitations on your feed.

46. Not interested in a friend's updates right now?

If for whatever reason, you don't want to see a friend's update (for example, their updates are only about games you don't play) you can hover over their update, and a box will appear saying 'hide' – you'll get different options based on what sort of update you've hovered over.

47. Walls

You can have a public discussion by posting something on someone's wall. This appears in your feed and there, so is great for congratulating someone, or wishing them a happy birthday. Walls are public though, based on the person's settings.

48. Boxes and tabs

Various apps will allow you to add boxes and tabs to your profile. Boxes appear on a page, and are small – tabs are headings much like a filing cabinet. These can give you the ability to display key information on your pages, or in separate 'sub pages' but can also clutter your profile page – be careful what you place and where.

49. A box on your profile

There is a box on your profile, (when you click view profile) which can be readily edited and contains some key information that you choose. Some people use it to show others their calendar; others display a quote or some mini information. Use this as best you see fit to give your friends and new adds something interesting to read.

50. Left hand side – your profile

Your profile has several key areas to interact with – the

middle where your feed is, your left hand side, to access your stuff) and the right hand side which has suggestions, your gifts and other items from apps, and some other things, such as pokes.

51. Messages – your messages are your internal email inbox.

This gives you the opportunity to message people without writing on their wall (see the previous tip) or start a discussion between friends – if you're doing this frequently see our tips on pages and groups.

52. Events

You can set up events – a bit like a calendar, people can RSVP and you can use it to invite friends to anything you're doing, from a birthday party at your place, to a gaming party or Guild event in your favorite MMORPG. Use it to organize social events without worrying about lost emails.

53. Removing events you can't attend

Once you have declined an event, you can then remove it from your events list – simply open up the event, optionally leave a note apologizing for not attending then directly below the image on the right hand side, there is an option 'remove from my events'.

54. Photos and videos

Your photos and videos list item will let you access any photos that are tagged of you (remembering your privacy settings) and review them. You can also remove tags at any time – which means even though you are in the photo, it won't list in your stream.

55. Applications

All of your applications are accessible from this tab – it will take you through to a list of most used and when, and will also give you options to access others. This is a great tab to review what apps you do – and don't - use and remove them to save them cluttering your feed, or visit them and check what's new. You can also search for new apps from there.

56. Games

Much like the applications menu option, the games option shows you when you've played, whether your friends play (and how many) and allows you to explore popular games amongst your friends and the wider Facebook population that you may not have seen yet.

57. Ads and pages

We talk more about ads and pages in their own section (Part 5 – ads and pages) but this is how you access them quickly, and if you choose to advertise them, set up AdSense like adverts.

58. Groups

Your groups' menu item is actually the access to your pages and groups, two columned lists with each showing recent activity and more. You can easily view the things you may have missed simply by checking the recent activity on these pages.

59. Notes

Notes are a bit like mini blogs, or can be used by you to import RSS feeds and automatically post. Its Facebook's own

solution to lifestreaming, but only allows you to import one RSS feed at time. You could build a Yahoo pipe of everything you wanted to import and use that as your 'uber feed' if you had a lot of blogs though, so it works out well.

60. Links

Your links menu option is a lot like Del.icio.us – every time you post a link, it's added to this list, and you can view what your friends have been posting recently, or just keep track of your own stuff.

61. Right hand side

The right hand side of your page contains any application items (such as gifts – be aware that these build up really fast), friend suggestions, information on inactive friends, pokes and event listings (that you've accepted).

62. Gifts and application notices

Facebook has suggested that eventually these will all be incorporated into the left bar of the site, where your games are listed, but for now you will still get listings of any gifts, invites to games or any other requests (including friend requests) in that top right corner. You should keep on top of them – 20 invites a day leads to 140 at the end of a week and it can be time consuming to prune them weekly.

63. Application notices out of control

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try your application lists will get out of control. You can either dedicate time to fixing them, or quit from the app in question – by clicking 'ignore app'. You can also ignore a friend's invites, but not the friend

themselves... Reload the page and any you've ignored should be gone.

64. Suggestions

Facebook has an algorithm that chooses information to show you – when people friend other people, sometimes you will have suggestions – as they do with pages and groups. These suggestions and they can't see your profile (and until they add you, you won't see their whole profile). Suggestions can be hidden or ignored.

65. Poking

Poking allows a person to see your profile (even if they aren't their friend). If they are your friend, it will give them a message the next time they log into their Facebook in the right hand bar of their page. Any pokes you've received will be here too for you to respond to.

66. Events

You will see a list of any events you're confirmed to attend in your sidebar – this is a great feature because you can simply align your diary by reading that area and booking it into your time management system of choice. You can also click through and turn down events, or see who else is attending.

67. Ads

If you have used Facebook to place an ad, you will find that they appear in the right hand bar. If you keep seeing an ad, you can report it so Facebook can fix their algorithm for showing them, or hide them entirely from you.

Part 3 – Clicking on a friend’s profile

When you view a friend’s profile, there are a couple of neat things you can do to interact with them, or see what they’ve posted and you may have missed.

68. Under the picture

You can view their profile by clicking on their picture in your feed. Once there, you can poke them, view videos and photos of them, or send them a message. Below that is information that they’ve made available to friends lists, including relationship status. It’s a good way to catch up with someone you haven’t seen in a while, then reach out and contact them.

69. Commenting on their wall

You can leave people public messages on their walls – as they can do on yours – just click in the status box and write what you’d like them to see – remember though, it also posts in your feed, so be careful what you say.

70. Adding apps or boxes your friend has

If you see something really interesting that your friend has, click through – and add the app they’re using by following the instructions. If you’ve seen a Facebook page that is exactly how you’d like yours to be, click through and create items as you can.

71. Commenting

You can comment from your own feed, or if you’ve gone over to a friend’s profile (which is a good idea just in case they’ve been bumped out of your algorithm based feed) and comment

there. Comments have a length limit, but you can split it over several boxes and it will stack correctly.

72. Tagging

You can tag a friend, or yourself in most photos you have access to – be aware that some people dislike being tagged in photos, so if your friend frequently removes tags of him or herself, maybe you shouldn't tag them. Any tags of people in videos or photos or notes will appear in their stream.

Part 5 – Your own page, or groups

In addition to having your own profile, Facebook allows you to keep basic groups and pages, for fan purposes, or you can set up a group to talk about your passions, your interests or both. You can also join others – some places suggest there is a limit to the amount of pages and groups you can add.

73. Group or page?

A page is basically a mini profile – a group has a more group centric feel to its 'front' page, but there's very little difference between them in reality. There are no current accurate figures posted on limits to pages and groups, so there may not be any – but be careful to join an 'official' group or fan page belonging to the official entity – there are many unofficial fans and groups on Facebook, and it's not highly policed at present.

74. Pages and apps

Some apps can post to pages as if they were profiles – much like fully fledged Facebook profiles, pages can have most of the features of a 'real' profile, so adding apps to them may be a possibility, depending on the app in question. Explore your

options carefully though, because if an app is posting to your main profile, and your page, people following both will get duplicate content.

75. Groups

Groups are like clubs offline – you choose who can join and how wide its access is. Much like other parts of Facebook, it has its own wall, which everyone can post to. Pages have two – one for the owner to post to, one for fans to post to, and then it all feeds into one amalgamated stream.

76. Running both

Many people consider Facebook to be a place for allegiances – groups would then represent (casual) memberships and interaction in clubs, pages could be considered a greater endorsement or badge of interest, so running both isn't a bad thing.

77. Causes

There are specific apps for causes on Facebook, but if you're passionate about something, starting a group, or page is a great way to go – remember to make others admin (in edit membership on the group or page's main page) so you're not the only one in charge.

78. Ads

You can place your own ads on Facebook – and they run a lot like AdSense ads in most cases. You'll need to condense whatever message you want to 'send' into very short sentences, but these ads are targetable and very powerful.

Have fun

While all these tips cover the mechanics of networking and beyond, it's important to remember that you should always try to enjoy yourself. Facebook is a social site – be social and enjoy everything it has to offer!