



Hello!

We are living in unprecedented days!

Generis has launched a Covid-19 Portal: generis.com/covid19

A few other thoughts and practical ideas:

This checklist isn't specifically for the COVID-19 crisis; but instead, it's an essential checklist to be used for any crisis communication:

Respond with corresponding understanding and empathy to the mass media's coverage.

Get ahead of the crisis. If you can't, now is the time to respond.

Inform them simply how you're responding and what you expect them to do.

Be concise with your communication but know you may need alternative options for the future. Things will change.

Remain calm, serious and confident. Use language that sounds like you and your church.

Use all usual communication channels. Pin posts to the top (if possible).

Write personally to your audience. They want/need to hear from you. What a great time to demonstrate the Christian's response to the crisis. Don't be overly spiritual though. Expect them to use your language as a response to their neighbor or coworker.

On social media; monitor, reply, and engage. Be understanding. Do not argue. Hide comments from trolls who don't listen to reason (don't delete since that stokes heated responses).

Don't try to be clever.

Simplicity is better than complexity. Edit out all unnecessary words and concepts. People prefer short and concise.

If you're cancelling in-person services; do something online (during regular service time) to personally engage with your members. Offer them something to do so they can feel part of the solution (volunteer, give, etc.).

Before sending, proof. And proof again. A typo looks like you're rushing.

Use today's crisis to help formulate a long-term plan for future crises.

Be known for love. In all things. John 13:35

Weekend Services:

If you had to cancel "live" weekend services and you have not moved to live streaming yet, you can utilize FaceBook live. You can also look at these links:

<https://churchonlineplatform.com/>

<https://www.portablechurch.com/2020/announcements/how-to-live-video-stream-and-start-church-online/> for another option.

Not "Service as Usual": It will be "easy" to simply live stream what we've always done for weekend services. However, your church family is not in your worship center, they are in their living room, kitchen, bathroom, etc. The goal needs to be engagement. They will likely not sit for 60, 75, 90 minutes uninterrupted by distraction. If we're honest, they don't even do that in our environments!

Service times: As we saw last weekend most churches streamed at "normal" service times and many providers struggled to keep up with demand. Consider moving to "off hours" for your live stream as this will cause less frustration for your viewers.

Worship "engagement" ideas to consider:

Shorter worship set - Put lyrics on the screen, not just the band. The goal is worship, not entertainment. Or, maybe better, create a weekly Spotify/iTunes playlist and send it out to the church family. Then encourage them to set aside undistracted time each day to worship. Send a short video from the worship pastor unpacking some of the lyrics and why he/she selected the songs.

Message - keep it short, shorter than usual. Maybe it's more of a 8-10 minute devotional thought **and then** invite them to engage DAILY online, social media and unpack elements of Sunday message in an ongoing conversation.

Or make it a conversation! TED Talk meets Jimmy Fallon, meets church!

Have several leaders from the church family on the platform, at a table, on a sofa:

Teaching Pastor shares a brief devotional thought

Groups Pastor shares how to join a virtual group to stay in community

Outreach/Missions Pastor shares powerful stories of how your church is engaging with and supporting the community. Have a live chat bar with someone monitoring it and share some of the comments/questions/encouragements "on air". etc...

As spiritual leaders, let your church family hear from you every day, not just on the weekend

Offer a platform to receive prayer requests:

Create google hangouts or other online "rooms" for your church family to connect, pray, encourage. (This is NOT a "teaching" platform but a place to process - people want to dialogue with others and process their thoughts, feelings and concerns during this time)

Invite younger church members to actually create these online rooms and then invite the "less tech savvy" to simply join in. Don't ask/expect people to just do this themselves. Again, they are already way outside their comfort zone just trying to "do life". As much as you can, do it for them!

Create Prayer/Intercession Plan - Get the church PRAYING!! If my people...will PRAY!!!

During the broadcasts, share stories of ministry impact and tie it directly to generosity. "Because of your continued faithfulness to serve our community and invest in Kingdom work, we were able to do X."

Community Engagement:

- Create an online platform for prayer requests AND ideas/opportunities to serve your community.
- Shopping for the elderly or those with health concerns
- Most Senior Care facilities have stopped all visits. Contact facilities in your community and ask if you can schedule online, face to face calls between residents and family members or church members to chat with them and pray for them. *Maybe it means buying them a few laptops!?!?*
- Provide lunches for families with school aged kids where this may create a hardship
- Deliver coffee, meals, treats, gifts to medical workers, clinics in your community

So many ways to serve and love our communities and **your church family will be a great source for ideas!**

Generosity:

Update your giving page to reflect the current reality. AND make sure to check the functionality of each platform regularly!

Shoot a short, engaging video on HOW TO utilize the electronic giving platforms. Consider mailing something to older givers with pictures and/or a phone number they can call to help set it up.

Also, can be fun to set up a **church-wide "test"** of the online giving platform. *"At 7pm on Thursday night we're going to do a church-wide test of our online giving system. Please use the platform to give \$1.00 (or pick some other small amount) All contributions during the test will go directly to (name a local organization, food shelf, care facility, etc)."* **Then share the story of how that gift impacted the organization!**

If you don't have online giving established here are a few resources:

Easy Tithe: <https://www.easytithe.com/>

PCO: <https://www.planningcenter.com/giving>

Tithly: <https://get.tithe.ly/>

Subsplash: <https://www.subsplash.com/giving>

Kindred: <https://kindrid.com/>

Gyve: <https://gyve.com/>

Continue to Give: <https://www.continuetogive.com/>

Secure Give: <https://www.securegive.com/>

Pushpay: <https://pushpay.com/>

MoGiv: <https://www.mogiv.com/>

Paypal: <https://www.paypal.com/us/home>

For your **older (traditional) givers**, many give via cash/check and now is not the best time to press them for more change.

Write a cover letter sharing your heart with them and for them. Encourage them and "pastor" them. Share some of the missional impact your church has seen so far in 2020. Baptism, salvation, life change. Ask how

you can be praying for them and what their church can do to support them. Then end with... *"Many of you have asked how can I continue to support the vision of the church in this season? We've enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelopes for you. As God provides for you in this season, please use these to invest in His continued work in and through the church. Thank you so much for your generosity!"*

Make sure they have a place to submit prayer requests and ministry ideas.

Thoughts/Ideas for Giving Page Language:

Philippians 4:6-7(ESV)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

These are unique days and we trust that God will both guide us and care for us as we provide for those He entrusts to us. Please prayerfully consider how God would have you engage in ministry and generously support the work of His church. While we are not meeting face to face, the work of the church and the hope of the Gospel are more important and relevant than ever! You can continue to invest in His kingdom work easily and securely [here](#) (link to online giving platform)

Once they've given, make sure the auto-reply is updated as well.

"Thank you so much for your generosity and your faithful giving during this unprecedented season of ministry opportunity! We are responding to our community in many ways in order to demonstrate and declare the love of Jesus. If you have ideas on how we can more effectively serve please share them here: (link to share page)."

Segmented Communication:

Our work in the generosity space has shown that in most churches, **60% of giving comes from 20% of the givers.**

Don't flood your entire congregation with message to give, they are likely under significant financial pressure!

Craft a clear and compelling vision for how you plan to engage your congregation and your community. **Be specific!!!**

How has God uniquely gifted, called and placed your church to respond to the crisis?

Schedule a personal phone call with each of the financial leaders in your congregation.

Find out how they are, what they're thinking, seeing, feeling. (LISTEN!)

How can you pray for them?

THEN..... "May I share the vision God has placed on my heart for this season?"

Share your specific plan for worship services, ongoing discipleship and community engagement

"Joe, you are a significant part of our church family and I am so grateful for your generosity. Many are losing jobs and income and we need to be positioned to come alongside them. And we need to serve our community in ways we've never even dreamed of. Can your church count on you to stay the course

financially with us as we navigate this crisis and even increase our Gospel impact?"

Cast vision, exude gratitude and call them to invest in Gospel impact and you will retain and potentially increase giving from your financial leaders.

Keep families engaged in discipleship!

Communion:

Family Supper: Reclaiming Community Through Communion

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/family-supper-reclaiming-community-throughcommunion>

6 Names for Communion and How They Shape Our Worship <https://www.faithecc.org/6-names-for-communion-and-how-they-shape-ourworship/>

Ten Creative Ways to Celebrate the Lord's Supper

<https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/pastors-lords-supper-communion-celebrationcreative>

Teaching Kids About Communion <https://www.rootedfamily.com/lifestyle/prayer/teaching-kids-about-communion/>

Students:

Relationships, more than programming, have always been the driving force behind student ministry. As great as it is to provide an online service or digital gathering, it might be more important to stay connected throughout the week.

This just might be one place where student ministry is ahead of adult ministry.

- Send students personalized text messages. Let them know that you have not forgotten them and that even when they feel alone, they are never alone.
- Call your students! Yes, call them. It seems weird, and it may be awkward, but give them a good old fashioned phone call.
- Use Google Hangouts, Skype, or Zoom to video call several students at once. Most of these services are free and can have 10+ people on the call.

Why not play a game with them?

Pull out the classic games and conversation starters like Two Truths and A Lie, Never Have I Ever, or Good Thing, Bad Thing. GroupMe is a great way to stay connected to students outside of events, even during times when you can gather. Many students already use this for school, sports, or church.

More than ever, students need caring adults to lean in and facilitate connections. Students already live their lives digitally, but this is a new opportunity for the church.

Kids Ministry:

Remote Solutions for Your Children's Ministry -a comprehensive plan for your ministry to stay consistent while you keep your families safe.

<https://bit.ly/2W6Kib9>

Story and Worship Experiences

using this shareable link: <https://bit.ly/3aMZ76I>

- weekly video presentations that go along with our current First Look and 252 Kids curriculum. You can distribute this week's presentations to families

Helping Kids Navigate Anxiety Podcast

- On this episode, Sissy Goff, Director of Child and Adolescent Counseling at Daystar Counseling Ministries in Nashville, Tennessee, shares tools for leaders helping kids process anxiety. <https://bit.ly/2TZx1OR>

Partnering with parents is always important, and it can be especially helpful in times of uncertainty. Consistent communication builds trust, and it also equips the parent to have spiritual conversations at home. Below are a couple of tools to help you connect digitally with families during this time.

Parent Cue App - This free app gives parents weekly cues that are aligned with the content in the video presentations.

<https://bit.ly/2wTCNtG>

Promo Kit for Parent Cue App

<https://bit.ly/38RbXja>

Managing Fear and Anxiety During a Health Pandemic

a blog post for parents on managing anxiety during any number of life disruptions:

<https://bit.ly/2Q6kJTG>

Anxiety Conversation Guides

Helping a child with anxiety is a challenge. Parents can download these age-appropriate resources to find tips and practical ways to help their children.

Preschool

<https://bit.ly/33eSacg>

Elementary

<https://bit.ly/38LkjZs>

Great resource for the entire family: [Bibleproject.com](https://www.bibleproject.com)

Staying strong in worship, small groups, and finances is critical as we work to love and serve hurting people during this tumultuous time.

We are here for you. Let us know how we might serve you as we navigate these challenging times together.

May God give you wisdom and discernment as you lead in this strange new world.

Jon Wright and the Generis team.

Feel free to reach out anytime.

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