



stuff you wish they taught in seminary

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## *5 Reasons*

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***YOUR CHURCH SHOULD USE SNAPCHAT  
(PLUS 5 ACCOUNTS TO FOLLOW!)***

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## 5 REASONS YOUR CHURCH SHOULD USE SNAPCHAT (PLUS 5 ACCOUNTS TO FOLLOW!)



Snapchat is a rapidly growing video and photo sharing social network where users send files that disappear in a matter of moments. Users also publish public videos and images that people who follow them can view for up to 24 hours ... this feature is called "stories." [\[Click here for more information about what Snapchat is ... or talk to students at your church about it.\]](#)

Social networks come and go with high velocity. Keeping up to speed on these networks and applications can be a full-time job and will often waste your time if you're not careful. It seems like every year or so a new network gains critical mass. As leaders who are interested in connecting with the broader culture, we need to take notice and consider them for our church.

**Now is the time for you and your church to evaluate Snapchat and the place that it could play in your communications strategy.** It has reached its tipping point and we anticipate it will continue to grow in its influence in the culture.

### 5 Reasons Your Church Should Use Snapchat

- **100,000,000 Active Daily Users** // It took 4 years for Facebook to get to one hundred million users. Twitter accomplished the same goal in just 3 years. Snapchat reached 100,000,000 user accounts in just 2 years. [\[ref\]](#) This is a significant tipping point in the growth of a social network because the more people that are on it, the more likely other people are to join. The value of a network like this is in the size of its user base ... people want to find friends and family to share with on the network. The [network effect](#) is at play with Snapchat and a growing number of your people and the people you want to reach enjoy it today.

- **13-21 Year Olds** // These social networks are driven by youth culture. We need to look carefully at what students adopt as a group because they lead the trends. All "mass consumer" social networks start as a platform for student interaction. Eventually, their parents and teachers get on-board and it "ages up." That trend continues to the point where the network floods with adults and students migrate to a new platform. Prehistoric social networks (e.g., MySpace, Friendster) all followed this arc. Facebook codified this process by starting as a network for students at elite Ivy League schools before slowly opening up to a

broader market. However, that network isn't attracting 13-21 year olds, so they acquired Instagram, which has a younger audience. Now Snapchat is supplanting that network as the place of choice for young people. This is a tough demographic for most churches to connect with and communicating with them on their terms is the start of impacting the next generation. (Side note: My theory is that once you start to see financial institutions widely adopting a social network, it's a signal that network is on the decline. Just a theory ...)

- **Remember 2007 on Twitter?** // There is a "golden age" in the life of all these networks, when it's large enough to gain critical mass but small enough that a single focused and responsive user can gain a following. That is the moment we're in right now on Snapchat. Your church can gain influence with the early adopters in your community. This will be the year that people will become "Snapchat Famous" as they figure out the form and build a following. Churches that wait a year or two will be left behind in the noise and it will be harder to gain traction with your community. Now is the time to experiment with how you could use this network to drive ministry outcomes for your church.

- **Open Rates** // Currently, snaps have an almost 100% open rate. Look at your other channels and consider their "reach." Your emails probably get 15% opened, Facebook content is seen by maybe 5% of your group ... that means you need a much smaller group of

followers on Snapchat to get a similar penetration because people open content on Snapchat at such a high rate. Of course, that will shift over time as more people come to the network. In the meantime, the attention is there and waiting for you to capture. These high open rates are partly due to the age of the network and to its excellent user experience. If they continue to innovate the user experience, they will retain this advantage even as the network grows. Getting people's attention is difficult to do when they aren't sitting in a service at your church. Snapchat reaches a segment of your community seeking content from a new network ... a rare opportunity!

- **It's Personal** // Each social network seems to settle on content that gains the best traction. Instagram is ideal for beautiful imagery. Pinterest is great for visual ideas with a shopping bent. Twitter is for quick-hit ideas. Facebook is great for sharing what's happening with your family... and for fighting over politics. ;) Snapchat is ideal for "behind the scenes" and "real and raw" videos and images. Rather than polished videos or beautiful images, the content that resonates is fresh and live. Because the videos and images go away quickly, people don't spend lots of time crafting perfect visuals. This lends itself to the personal nature of the work we do. Giving people a behind-the-scenes look at your life ... in all its "unpolished" forms ... gives them insight into what it means to follow Jesus. It continues to push the "social" of "social media" to new levels.

### 3 Tips for Starting on Snapchat

- **Lurk Before You Leap** // Follow industry leaders for a while to get a sense of how they use the platform. Watch how they leverage it to push their cause forward. Follow churches, Christian leaders and thought leaders, and look for what you could apply from their approaches.

- **Tell Stories This Weekend** // A great way to get started is to take many photos and videos behind the scenes this week at your church and post them to [the stories](#) feature. Try this approach for a few weeks in a row to get used to

the platform and how it works. Expand your offerings after you've consistently delivered on a weekly basis.

- **Share on Other Channels** // The people who are most likely to move to your Snapchat channel are people who follow you on the other social networks you manage. Let your followers on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter know that you offer content on Snapchat. Email everyone under 30 years old and invite them to join you there.





## 5 Accounts To Follow on Snapchat

● **Cross Point Church** // crosspoint\_tv // Early leader in providing consistent story content. Best in class.

● **Riverview Church** // rivchurch // Michigan church providing great behind-the-scenes content.

● **Gwinnett Church InsideOut** // gcinsideout // Take a look at this fantastic student ministry as they leverage the network.

● **Sandals Church** // sandalschurch // Using the platform to reach out ... more than just behind-the-scenes footage or advertising

● **Gary Vaynerchuk** // garyvee // Gary is a marketing entrepreneur who is leading the Snapchat charge. He has a potty mouth but it's fascinating to see him in action.

● **BONUS: Rich Birch** // richbirch // I'd be honored to connect with you ... I mostly share stuff from personal life here.

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