



BEST PRACTICES FOR DIGITAL OUTREACH & GATHERINGS



MOST ESSENTIAL PRACTICE: *Never forget that the purpose of the event you are planning is to share the Gospel with those who are far from God. Plan every part of the agenda based on that priority.*

This is not for you; this is for her. Think about a woman in your life who does not know Jesus and plan for her. Zoom is an incredible tool to share the Gospel, but women can exit a meeting at any time if they are not engaged. Capture them from the beginning with fun, shorten the agenda, highlight the speaker. Most importantly, pray that God draws the hearts of women who do not know Jesus.

Here are a few tips that can help you lead with excellence, so everyone has an enjoyable experience.

- 1. Create an agenda.** Keep in mind Stonecroft's mission to reach those who don't know Jesus.
- 2. Decide how to publicize.** Create an invitation that captures interest. Find someone who can make the design simple, attractive, and compelling. Learn and practice Zoom prior to holding a gathering. You can find video tutorials at support.zoom.us.
- 3. Gather planning teams on Zoom to practice.** While practicing try muting and unmuting everyone, using the chat box, turning cameras on and off, screen sharing, and using the security button to remove an unidentified person while leading a Zoom meeting.
- 4. Limit other devices in your home that are using Internet or streaming video.** You can also hook your computer directly to an Internet cable to ensure the best quality.
- 5. Pay attention to your background.** Is it clean? Is it too busy? Can people see your face fully and clearly? Is there enough lighting? Tip the screen forward a bit so very little ceiling is visible. A clean, simple, well-lit background is best.
- 6. To protect from public hacking** into your meeting, we recommend Zoom links NOT be posted on public websites or Facebook pages. Instead, send emails, digital invitations, or utilize closed Facebook groups to secure attendance.
- 7. Consider using Zoom registration** to collect contact information before an event. This will give you everyone's contact information, and Zoom will send reminders for the event.

DAY OF GATHERING

1. Just remember to **have a "practice" session** prior to the meeting with those involved on the agenda until you are comfortable with Zoom. Email a copy of the agenda to everyone presenting in the meeting so you have a seamless event.
2. **Assign a co-host** who is not speaking to manage muting and any PowerPoint slides. This person should also utilize "speaker view" or "spotlight video" to highlight the presenter. Make sure she is familiar with sharing screen, muting and unmuting, and spotlighting the speaker.
3. **Assign a team member to manage the chat box** during presentations, in the event questions need to be addressed.
4. **Sign onto Zoom 15 minutes before the event** and greet everyone as they arrive.
5. **Mute everyone once the program starts.** Remind women participating via phone to unmute or press *6 when they are invited to speak and mute again after speaking.

DAY OF GATHERING (continued)

6. **Simplify the agenda.** Keep in mind the mission! (Aim for no more than 1 to 1 ½ hours.)
 - *Ice breaker/door prize:* Use chat to warm up the group and to create conversation.
 - *Special Feature:* Consider a feature that is relevant to the season of COVID-19 or works well on a small screen. For example, making masks, card writing, card crafting, parenting skills, mental health counseling, fitness from home, cleaning supplies, closet organization, new businesses in the community, etc.
 - *Speaker:* Consider the “felt needs” of women today. Find a speaker who has a testimony that can be adapted to those felt needs. Some ideas might be fear, anxiety, stress, depression, or change.
 - *Friends of Stonecroft:* Talk to your Field Director/SRA to determine if you should do Friends of Stonecroft. Possibly other alternative donation means would be appropriate.
7. **Avoid music in nearly all situations.** Music may seem like a good idea, but it rarely sounds good over video unless the musician has special equipment. (Exception: The musician has a special microphone that works with computer and has practiced with Zoom.)
8. **Avoid showing videos** because special bandwidth and other technical considerations are needed.
9. **Use visuals/slides to keep the presentation interesting.** Consider sharing visual information, i.e. pictures of the speaker’s story or a picture of the speaker, or information about Stonecroft.
10. **Do not use the time for group business.** Avoid too many announcements that sound like it’s just for “insiders.”
11. **Provide contact information for women who decided to follow Christ or are interested in a Bible study.** You may want to use stonecroft.org/know-god for attendees to report a decision to follow Christ, as “A New Beginning” is automatically emailed to those who fill it out. One option could be to private message the speaker through the chat.
12. **Utilize speakers/features from other states** that would not normally be an option because of travel distance.
13. **Presenters will need to shorten their talk.** Zoom attention span is short. Timeframe should be kept between 15-20 minutes.
14. **Follow up Bible study.** Offer a virtual Bible study. Provide the topic, date, time, and how to register.
15. When planning your event, **be mindful that some will have joined via phone only** and cannot see items shared on screen.

PRAYER CONNECTION AND BIBLE STUDY

1. Continue to make small group online or conference call gatherings a priority. Stay connected with each other!
2. Bible study online provides an immediate place to invite women during an outreach. You can find some digital versions of our studies through Christianbook Distributors (stonecroft.org/store), or you can purchase certain physical and Kindle versions at amazon.com/stonecroft.
3. Use chat box to ask and answer Bible study questions or use for prayer requests.

Prayer Connection tips:

- Consider praying together more than once a month.
- Use this time to join with groups from around the state to pray. Distance is no longer an issue with Zoom and conference calls.
- Try shorter, popcorn prayers.
- Read scripture together.
- Merge several women into a phone call through one woman’s phone.
- Develop a prayer partner rotation through your Planning Team and others who desire to be involved. Pray by phone for ½ to 1 hour once a week.