

# Best Practices to Thrive in a Virtual Environment

## MIDYEAR STATE DEPUTIES MEETING

NOVEMBER 19-21, 2020



### INTAKE

- Promote online membership aggressively and effectively.
  - For councils, this is a quick, safe, and (until Dec. 31) cost free way to turn prospects into members.
    - Specifically target prospects who have previously been approached but – up to now – not taken the step to join.
    - Share and encourage others to share KofC social media posts about free membership
  - Spread the word through parish & diocesan publications (paper & electronic), and on social media.
  - **EXAMPLE: British Columbia specifically targeted every prospect that had been identified at a Church Drive in the last 12 months.**
- Be creative when prospecting...use all the tools and resources that are available.
  - Develop a target list of potential members and reach out to them in the following ways:
    - Parish email lists
    - Flocknotes or parish bulletins
    - Traditional mail
    - Phone calls
  - Use council events and opportunities to invite men to join.
- Establish state and local degree teams, and conduct exemplifications.
  - The exemplifications hosted by the Supreme Council are good, but locally conducted degrees are better.
    - Develop and rehearse teams, schedule and promote exemplifications, and conduct regularly scheduled degrees.
    - Degrees can be virtual (recorded and streamed on regularly scheduled dates and times) in-person (see the attached Best Practices for doing this safely), or both.
      - Conduct an in-person degree and live stream it so those unable to participate in-person may do so virtually.

- Guidelines for conducting virtual exemplifications can be found here: <https://files.constantcontact.com/716460b3001/b79600c0-024c-4f81-bddc-0c0b2aa45297.pdf>
- **EXAMPLE: California has conducted two “statewide” degrees, with the Exemplification of Charity, Unity & Fraternity conducted both in-person and virtually at locations in each diocese.**
  - **The most recent brought in 112 new members.**
- Promote the availability of the Supreme Council degrees.
  - Use Supreme Council’s scheduled and on-demand degrees. Councils can invite candidates to participate in these degrees. Online Exemplification information can be found [kofc.org/ceremonials](http://kofc.org/ceremonials)
  - There are regularly scheduled degrees, as well as an on-demand option where prospects can join 24/7/365 from the safety and convenience of their homes.
- Incentivize your team
  - Reward those who successfully adapt and continue to grow during COVID.
    - Use public praise, reductions in state per capita, special considerations at the upcoming state convention or other appropriate event, etc.
    - Learn what will motivate your recruiters, and offer incentives based on that knowledge that will drive the behavior you’re looking for.
    - **EXAMPLE: Ontario is offering reduced state per capita to councils who are membership-active during the COVID-19 pandemic.**
  - Know and promote all Supreme Council Awards and their requirements
    - To be eligible for any awards, the council must be in good standing with the Supreme Council and fully compliant with Safe Environment requirements.
    - Father McGivney Award for membership growth is now based on 5% net increase in council membership
    - Columbian Award for council activities can be achieved through 16 total program credits. The featured programs, worth 2 credits, were expanded in each category. There are no required programs.
    - Founders’ Award for insurance promotion is now in recognition of a council hosting/participating in two (2) approved Fraternal Benefit Seminars with their field agent. No minimum attendance is required, but councils must make every effort to promote these seminars by sending an email announcement to all council members, and at least two of the following: promote the seminar on social media, announce the seminar in parish bulletin(s), announce the seminars at Mass, and/or invite all council prospects to attend.

- Additionally, councils must complete their Service Program Personnel Report (Form #365) and the Annual Survey of Fraternal Activity (Form #1728)
- Lead by example.
  - Recruit a new member yourself.
  - Challenge your state officers and state team to do likewise.
  - Then tell district and local leaders how you did it.
    - Show them that it is possible to recruit virtually – “If I can do it, you can do it.”
- Communicate
  - Make certain that you and your state team are communicating regularly with your district deputies and regional leaders.
    - Not emails...phone calls.
  - Make sure DDs are talking to their grand knights.
    - Again, calls, not emails.
  - These calls should not be strictly membership, but membership should be part of them.
    - Ask about how they’re doing, how their family is doing, what they’re struggling with, what’s working for them, etc.
      - But also talk membership.
  - **EXAMPLE: The state deputy and state membership director in Tennessee have each personally communicated with every district deputy this fraternal year. That type of direct, personal engagement drives increased commitment and engagement.**
  - **EXAMPLE: The California state membership director sends weekly emails to grand knights promoting state and Supreme council sends sponsored degree exemplifications.**

## COUNCIL SUSTAINABILITY

### Council Leadership Personnel

- Identify the competencies missing in your leadership team. Council officers should focus on addressing critical council operations needs and then look to fill those areas from within your council and parish.
- Identify a technology “point-person” for the council to assist officers in virtual meetings and programming. A committee may be needed to provide tech support to members new to the digital tools.
- If current officers or appointed leaders cannot fully serve at this time, make plans to recruit replacements who can fulfill duties.

### Technology & Remote Council Operations

- Using technology is critical to council sustainability. The right tools will help council leadership communicate with members, meet remotely, exemplify candidates, and be more efficient in conducting council business. Embracing technology will streamline council operations and make council activities and events available to more men and their families.
- Decide which tools your council will utilize for communication and meetings. Make sure they are well publicized and that all members and key parish and community partners know how to reach you using them.
- Learn the best way to reach your members. Some members prefer to be contacted by email, others by text, others by phone. Use any of the following tools (or others not listed):  
*The specific technologies mentioned are meant to summarize tools councils have found helpful and is not meant to be an exhaustive list or an official endorsement.*
  - Constant Contact, Flocknote, Dial My Calls, Whatsapp, Groupme, or a manual phone tree. For instructions on how to use these tools, click [here](#).
- Make sure your essential council officers and appointed leaders are trained in using the latest council tools and resources:
  - Utilize the Data Extract Tool to develop your member contact list for use in your digital tools. Grand knights, financial secretaries and faithful navigators can access the Data Extract Tool on Officers Online. A tutorial video can be found [here](#).
  - Build emails through Member Management and Member Billing. A tutorial video can be found [here](#) for grand knights, financial secretaries and faithful navigators.
  - Use the [Membership Interest Survey](#) to identify your members’ interests and ideas regarding council programs and events. Healthy councils survey their members at least once a year.

- Fraternal webinars are typically held on the third Thursday of every month. All fraternal leaders are encouraged to attend. You can register for upcoming webinars and view past webinars on demand by visiting the [webinar](#) webpage.

### Planning and Conducting Remote Meetings

- Make a plan to conduct remote meetings that can be activated when deemed necessary by the council officers.
- Use digital meeting tools to run a hybrid meeting, with some members present in-person while including those who wish to participate remotely.
- For remote meetings, decide on using any of the following tools (or others not listed):  
*The specific technologies mentioned are meant to summarize tools councils have found helpful and is not meant to be an exhaustive list or an official endorsement.*
  - Google Hangout, Skype, GoToMeeting, WebEx, FreeConferenceCall.com, FreeConference.com
  - For instructions on how to use these tools, click [here](#) for more instructions on how to use these tools.
- Test the meeting platform in advance and ensure a strong connection to the internet on the day of the meeting. Consider a hardwire connection or a mobile hotspot as a backup to WiFi.
- Utilize best practices for engagement during virtual meetings to optimize experience:
  - Use headphones (with a built-in microphone) for best audio.
  - Raise hands and use chat features to ensure a well-structured conversation.
  - Look at the camera when speaking.
  - Mute when not speaking.
  - Use ‘thumbs up’/‘thumbs down’ for voting

### Partnerships with Pastors

- Let your pastor know that the council has virtual programming that can keep the parish connected while building up the Domestic Church. Guidelines for supporting your parish can be found in our [Leave No Neighbor Behind Guidebook](#).
- Use parish communication channels to invite the Church community to participate in council Faith in Action programs.
  - **EXAMPLE: Many councils have partnered with their pastors and chaplains to plan and implement Faith in Action and Leave No Neighbor Behind programs to meet the spiritual and material needs of parishioners.**

## Communicating with Council Members

- At a minimum, you should communicate with all members once a month. Councils find success when they develop a regular schedule of council communications and reminders of upcoming meetings, events and programs.
- Utilize all communications channels available to you, such as your parish bulletin, social media or a council website. These are not a substitute for direct communications to members, but can be an effective supplement.
- Develop a council calendar of events to share with members and your parish.
- Ensure your council leaders are subscribed to the Fraternal Leader Advisory
  - The Fraternal Leader Advisory highlights current K of C initiatives, programs, and tips for council operations and membership growth. Past issues can be found [here](#).
  - To subscribe to Fraternal Leader Advisory, click the [SUBSCRIBE](#) button at the bottom of any past issue.

**Remote Programming** (The full document will be placed in the [Faith in Action: Overview](#) page.) Councils should be prepared to adapt and find new ways to continue programmatic activity and fulfill the mission of the Order.

- Select programs and possible online tools to enhance programs
  - Council technology “point-person” and Program Director collaboration
  - Review existing council resources
    - [Tools for Remote Meetings](#)
    - [Tools for Member Communication](#)
    - [Council Donor Advise Fund](#)
- Work with your pastor and parish staff
  - Review council resource [Working with your Pastor](#)
  - Present possible programs and online solutions to the pastor and his team
  - Cooperation: Many parishes already have digital tools available, share resources
  - Support: If the parish does not have these tools, the council should help get them set up
  - Confirm programs and program schedule
- Establish your digital “toolkit”
  - Confirm tools to meet unique needs of programs

- Consult program [guide sheets](#) for specifics – online supplementing does not change program requirements.
- Select appropriate tools to supplement your programs
  - e.g., videoconferencing, live-streaming, online giving, social media
- Review guide sheets – The online supplement does **NOT** change program requirements
- Practice with your digital tools
  - Soft run of program, testing all links and tools – be patient with yourselves, this is NEW
- Communicate and promote your programs
  - Use social media, email and other forms of communication
  - Communicate well in advance of the program so everyone can get set up
  - Collaborate with the pastor and parish staff for communication – specifically email lists and parish contacts
- Run the program and practice hospitality
  - “Start” the program early so online participants can join in early
  - Help troubleshoot any issues
  - End with an invitation to the next council program or event – updated council schedule is important
- Evaluation and follow-up
  - It is always important to gather feedback so we can continue to improve.
  - Gather feedback from members and participants from planning to execution
- Reporting
  - Review [Minimum Requirements](#) to confirm
  - Utilize online [Fraternal Program Report Form \(#10784\)](#)
- Online Resources
  - *Into the Breach* Video Series
  - Building the Domestic Church Series – Catholic Information Service (CIS)
  - Beatification Council Resources Page
  - **EXAMPLE: Conduct a Virtual Prayer Service or Into the Breach video viewing/discussion.**

## Beatification Council Resources Page

- The beatification of our founder is a cause for ongoing celebration for the entire year. It is a continuing opportunity to spread the message of the life, vision and holiness of Blessed Michael McGivney to our fellow Catholics and in our communities.
- The Beatification Council Resources Page currently offers numerous resources and ideas for councils to celebrate Father McGivney's beatification, and the page is being updated with additional materials regularly.
- The page contains a variety of resources under the categories Read, Watch, Pray, Act, and Order. Many of the resources and ideas in these categories are well suited to be used in a virtual environment.
  - Read - Under the Read tab, there are web resources (such as the beatification website [kofc.org/beatification](http://kofc.org/beatification)) that can be shared and utilized online, as well as print resources that can be shared by mail.
  - Watch - Under the "Watch" tab, there are numerous videos on the life and legacy of Father McGivney, including documentaries and short videos. All these videos are available to watch and share online.
  - Pray - Under the Pray tab, there are devotions to Father McGivney which are available online to use individually or share with others. The devotions can easily be used in virtual council meetings or other online meetings.
  - Act - Under the Act tab, there are numerous ideas which can be easily adapted to the virtual environment using the guidance offered in the Remote Programming Supplement.
  - Order - Under the Order tab, there are physical resources (such as banners or prayer cards) that can be set up on parish property (with your pastor's permission) or mailed as appropriate.