

Trinity, The Woodlands, reports phenomenal success with our first Facebook advertisement. While Trinity has had a Facebook page since 2008 we have only just delved into the world of advertising, selecting our annual "Blessing of Backpacks and Teachers" event this year as the pilot project.

For a total spend of what turned out to be just \$127.62 Trinity Episcopal Church was quickly in front of a targeted audience of between 5,000 and 10,000 Facebook users per day. Of that group, we had 71 unique users click on our Ad, which diverted them to Trinity's event page. The ultimate testimony has been our identification of at least one family who has attended Trinity regularly since signing in at our Facebook event page during the advertising campaign.

The Blessing of Backpacks and Teachers event was held on Sunday, August 26th and we began the Facebook Ad on August 14th. Since advertising is the core of Facebook's revenue stream they have made the process of creating the advertisement very straightforward. Clicking on our advertisement would lead people directly to Trinity's Facebook event page, where all the details for the services were explained. Visitors to our event page could also sign up to attend or ask questions.



The key to any advertisement is targeting it to the right audience. Again, Facebook guides you through the process. Geographically, we wanted to limit our advertisement to those located within 25 miles of The Woodlands, which instantly yielded a potential audience of over 280,000 Facebook users. By comparison, a large regional newspaper recently indicated to us that they have an online distribution of only 250,000 for the entire Greater Houston area. The potential reach of social media cannot be understated!

To further target our advertisement to the right audience, we narrowed the search by users' precise interests. This is a search capability offered by Facebook that pulls information from users' stated interests, activities, posts and group memberships. In our case we were aiming the advertisement at teachers and parents of school age children, so we used keywords such as teacher, high, middle and elementary school, college, Conroe or Magnolia ISD, or the specific phrase 'back to school'. Most importantly, we regarded this project purely as an evangelism tool so we purposely did not target members or current affiliates of Trinity.

It was not just our Facebook presence that increased during the time of the advertisement project. Trinity's website experienced a 17% increase in first-time visits. There were many new faces in the pews on the big day and attendance exceeded 600 for the third time this year.

The Blessing of the Backpacks Facebook advertisement was an experiment in evangelism that yielded real results for very little time or monetary investment. We have made the decision not to keep a running Facebook advertisement for Trinity to avoid the Ad becoming tiresome. We will instead continue to experiment with targeted advertising of 'non-threatening' Church events, or in other words those events which appeal to the wider community and will serve as an introduction to Trinity and to the Episcopal Church.