

## Google+ Mini-Class

### Click PRESENT

**CLICK** Vivek Gundotra, the former Senior Vice President of Social at Google, is credited as the “Father” of Google+. Google+ was launched in June of 2011 and currently, **CLICK** Google+ has 440 million active users, and 1.5 billion photos being uploaded every week. That’s roughly the equivalent of the total population of North America posting pictures of the total population of India or China, every seven days. **CLICK** Studies show that the Google+ mobile app is used by fully 30% of smartphone users, making it the fourth most-used app. Using Google+ is easy. If you already have a Google or Gmail account, then you also have a Google+ account. A Google+ account allows you to build a profile, connect & share posts with others through circles, and Hangout in video conference calls.

**CLICK** A Google+ account also connects you to other products including Gmail and even YouTube. Since Google+ is a product of Google, it receives preferential treatment in Google’s search engine. That means your efforts to share the gospel online can be especially impactful on Google+. Google+ is a relatively young social network, but because it integrates will all Google products, it definitely has a huge potential for future growth.

**CLICK** Today we will explore how to use Google+ as a missionary tool. Elder Uchtdorf has shared that “While some members of the Church have a natural gift for talking to others about religion, others are a little hesitant or may feel awkward, embarrassed, or even fearful of doing so.” To help answer those concerns, he presents several suggestions: one, be a light, two, be conversational, and three be full of grace. As we share our light online, talk about our faith in natural, conversational ways, and gracefully navigate the challenges of member missionary work, we will be filled with faith in the cause of spreading the gospel to all the world.

**CLICK** Google+ is an exciting and new way to approach missionary work! As with other social networks, it is important to live your faith and share your faith both in person and online. We often assume that others around us know what we believe. But being a little more transparent about your faith can open the door to opportunities—for instance, adding a few details to your bio and profile can be an essential first step to starting gospel conversations. You can share what is most important to you and be a light online by simply saying “I’m a Mormon” or by using an LDS-themed cover photo. Maybe a temple picture, a family picture, a MormonAd or a quote from a general authority is all it will take to spark the interest of a friend or family member. Search for simple ways that make you more approachable to others on topics of faith and religion.

**CLICK** One great way is making your religious faith visible in what you post, in the communities you join, and in the pages, circles and people you promote. If you like to write posts about your everyday life, mention your church attendance, your calling, or church activities you enjoy. If you are more introspective, share a lesson you’ve learned as you’ve studied the scriptures, or a video that you find inspiring. Google+ communities are a great place

to find easy-to-share LDS-themed content, and to share your own thoughts as well. You can also post photos from special moments like right after a baptism, a baby blessing, or a temple sealing. It doesn't take a ten minute testimony for someone to see the light in your life. You also don't have to make religion the topic of every post. Instead, prayerfully and selectively share at the right times, in the right ways, and with the right people. The whole idea here is to do missionary work in ways that are natural, socially appropriate, and inspired. The prophets and apostles have counseled us to engage in missionary work on social media, so start that journey with faith, and rely on the Lord's wisdom to help you fill in the details.

Also keep in mind that because it is a Google product, everything that is posted, shared, "+1'd", circled, or linked on a Google+ account makes it back to the Google search engine. That means that as you promote gospel centered material, you give credibility and precedence to positive LDS sites, groups, pages, leaders, and ideas, which in turn displaces anti-Mormon content in search results. That displacement ultimately helps others who may be looking for the truth online. Interaction equals promotion on social media - the more people are talking about something, the more important it is. So engage in the conversations, communities, and circles that matter most. And remember that when you use Google+ for missionary work, you're not only showing your friends what you believe in, you're helping to show the world what's true about our church, our community, and our faith.

**CLICK** Another perk of using Google + is that there are so many different Google product integrations. With email, chat and video hangouts at your fingertips, you are able to communicate with your circles in a variety of ways. As you try to develop relationships and initiate gospel conversations, having these options at your disposal can be a valuable resource. Do what makes sense, and what feels right when it comes to reaching out to your friends on a one-on-one basis. Missionaries in the Referral Center Mission in Provo, Utah have taught the gospel to many people through video conferencing. The fact that Google+ allows for both anonymous learning as well as face-to-face interaction is a wonderful example of how the Lord has prepared the way for the restored gospel to be "preached unto every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Follow the lead of the Spirit and of the Savior in prayerfully identifying and reaching out to individuals to share the message of salvation. And don't forget to look back at what you've posted - which of your non-member friends has been most interested in your spiritual posts? Who +1'd the Mormon Channel video you shared? Who asked more about your photos? It may be easier than you think to identify someone who's interested in learning about the church.

**CLICK** President Monson and the 12 apostles each have their own Google+ page, where you can find their quotes, videos, and other inspiring, shareable content. So create a circle of inspiring leaders, your personal heroes, or people who matter to you, and circle the prophet and apostles. You can also add them to your default "following" circle. Have you "followed" the prophet yet? He has taught us that the Lord, "has prepared the means for us to share the gospel in a multitude of ways, and He will assist us in our labors if we will act in faith to fulfill His work."

**CLICK** As we join the conversation we can feel confident that we are making a difference. Our job is not to convert people - it's to open our mouths. Unlike a face-to-face lesson, or bringing a friend church, it may be harder to see when your online missionary efforts are having an impact. But as we unite to share the light of Christ online, lives will be changed and people will be brought to know the truth. President Uchtdorf, in his talk "A Word for the Hesitant Missionary" gives the following advice: "My dear friends, today there are more ways than ever for us to open our mouths and share with others the joyful news of the gospel." Harnessing the power of technology and social networking is today's chapter in the rolling forth of the gospel to all the world.

**CLICK for Q&A**

**CLICK for During Activity**