The Effective Use of Technology in Faith Formation Programs

By

Lindsey Bernardy

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Master of Arts in Teaching.

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PROJECT

Summary

This project was created with the intention of being a solution to the question of *how can utilizing technology within a faith formation program provide opportunities for students to grow in their faith?* After much research confirming the rising use of social media, cell phones, and technology in classrooms and other contexts, developing an app seemed to be the most effective way to combine technology with faith formation to come to the ideal outcome of youth engagement and growth in their faith.

The mobile app is called Ministry Media, and it was developed with youth ministers and the groups they work with in mind. The color scheme of the app was chosen based on my own church's branding, as that is the target group for the launch of the app. The app is a social media platform that provides space for individual youth groups to see upcoming events and share resources and faith-based content with the individuals in the group. It is set up so everyone who has the app can access every post (as long as it is set to 'public'), regardless of youth group, but users can also choose to only see their friends' content on the home page. Similar to Pinterest or the 'explore' page on Instagram, allowing youth and youth ministers to see content from people outside of their scope could encourage, inspire, and connect them. Similarly, providing the option to only see that which other peers or youth group members have posted allows for discussions to start in the context of the actual youth group gatherings.

Posts on the app can take shape as images or text, and there is a direct chat feature available, as well. In an effort to keep the posts within the theme of faith and to disallow any shenanigans that often come with youth-related activities and projects, each post not

created by a youth minister must be approved by one. If a student would like to post about their favorite Bible verse, they are encouraged to do so on the platform - but it would not show up on their peer's feed until it was approved by an administrator.

The project, while made for the youth more than anyone, is also a tool for youth ministers. Its features include calendaring events, providing updates to the group, and even doing the work of automatically sending any direct message between an adult and a minor to the minor's parent, in accordance with policies put in place by the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis to ensure transparency and appropriate relationships among members of the two demographics.

This project is similar to formerly-created social media apps in its ability to connect people regardless of physical location, but it is unique in its intention and its functionality. Ministry Media is a hub for youth ministry and everyone involved in it: the youth, the parents, and the youth ministers. The upcoming events sections and ability to view the calendar based on an individual's youth group is a feature that is helpful to all involved and ensures the privacy and safety of each group, while still allowing different groups to connect with one another and even collaborate on various events, projects, and posts.

The long-term goals for this project include user interface expansion and separation of portals for parent and youth experiences. Additionally, integrating forms, folders, permission slips, and RSVPs directly into the app will come with further development.

As a proposed solution to the question *how can utilizing technology within a faith formation program provide opportunities for students to grow in their faith?,* Ministry

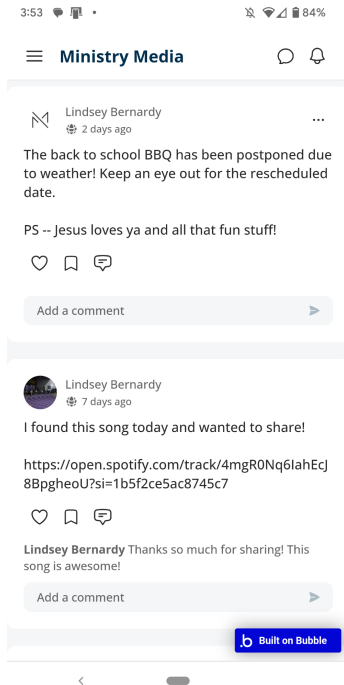Media is the social media app developed to accompany youth on their journeys toward

Christ and disciple others to do the same.
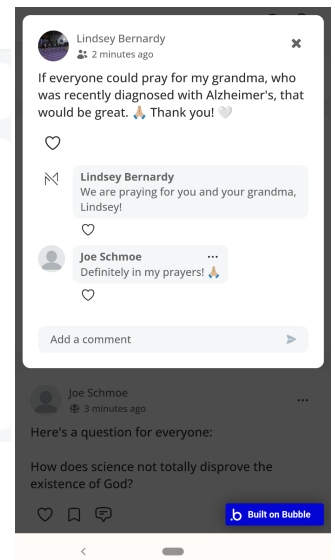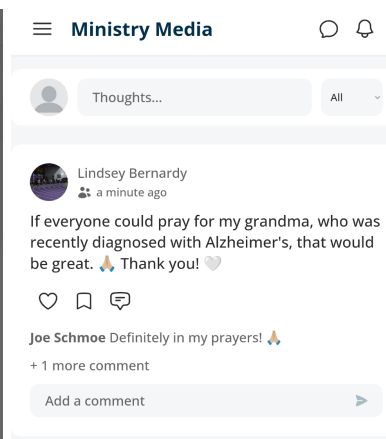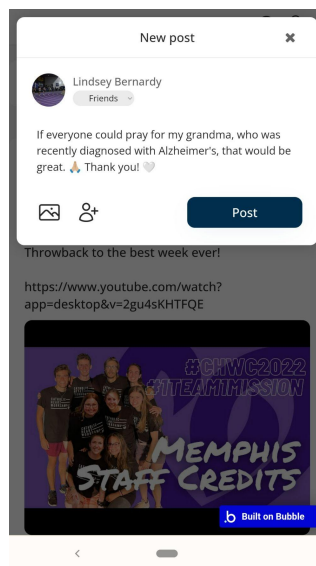
Project

Title: Ministry Media

Link: http://ministry-media.bubbleapps.io/version-test/
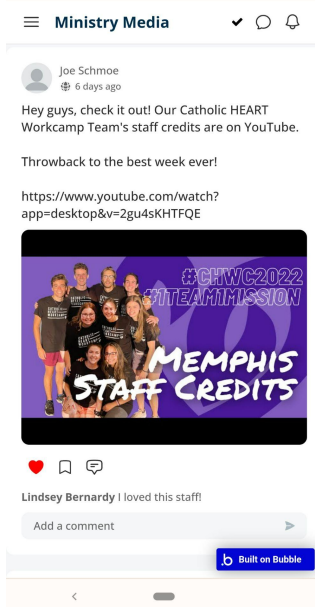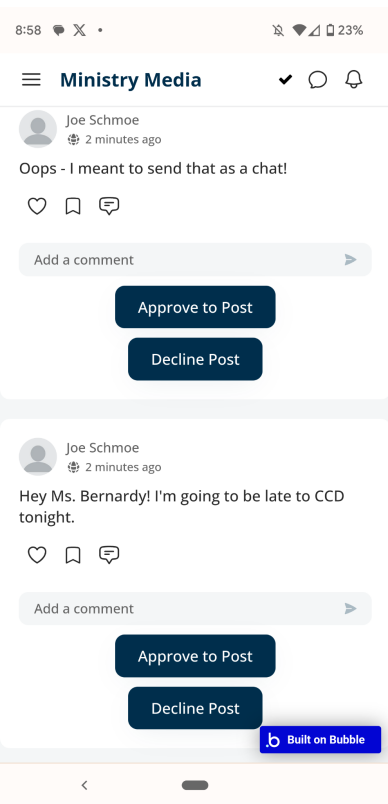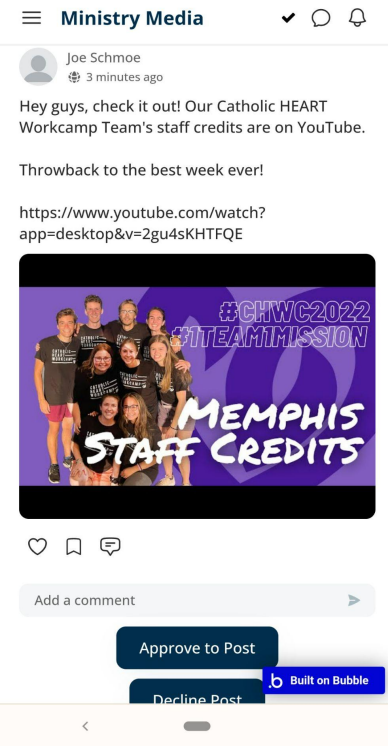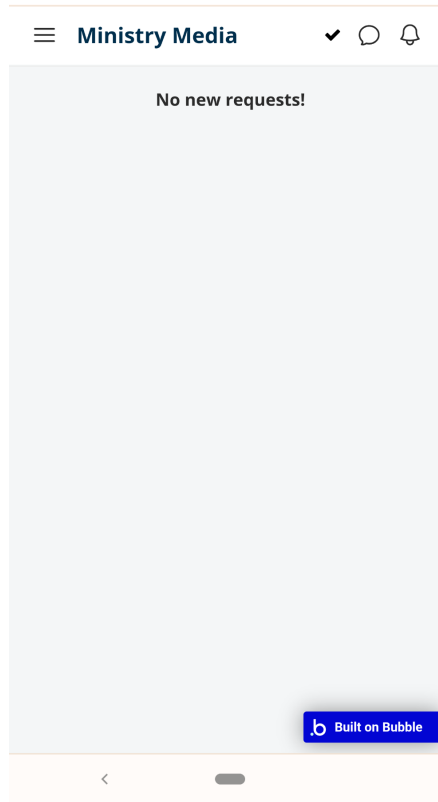
Images and Descriptions:

Home Page

- After logging in, the home page includes all posts that have been approved or posted by administrators.

- Posts are able to be filtered by 'friends' and 'all posts,' and each user can choose whether their posts are private (for only friends to see) or public.

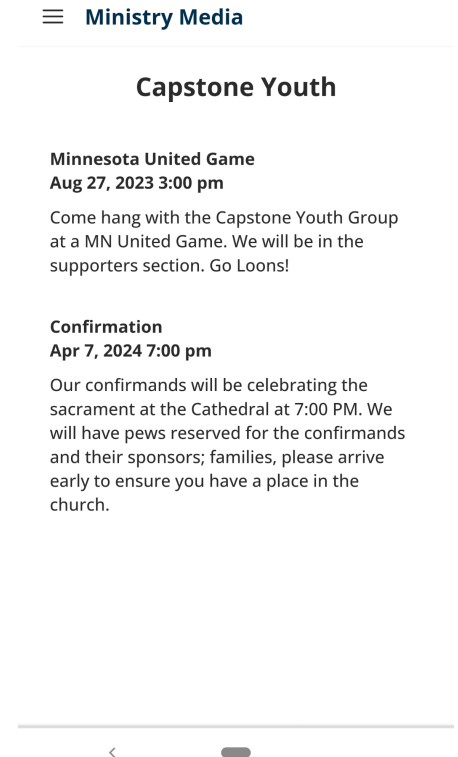- Post types include text and images, and users can engage with posts by commenting or liking.
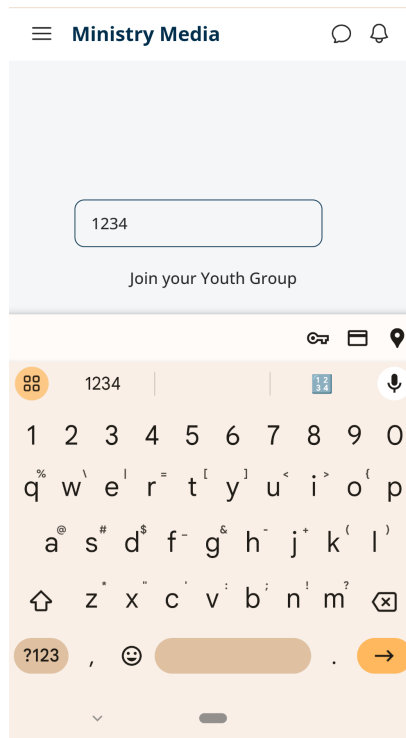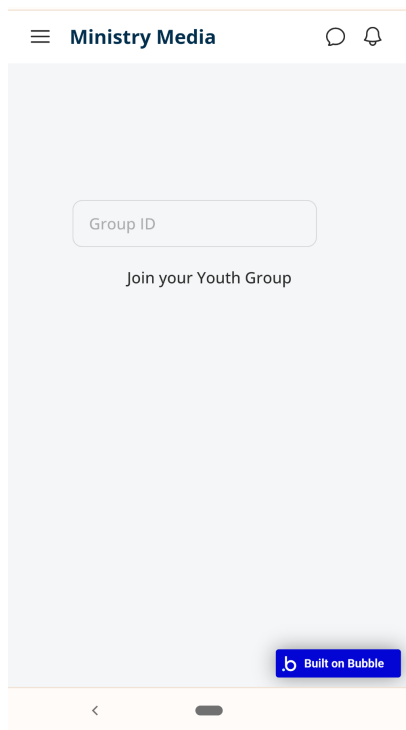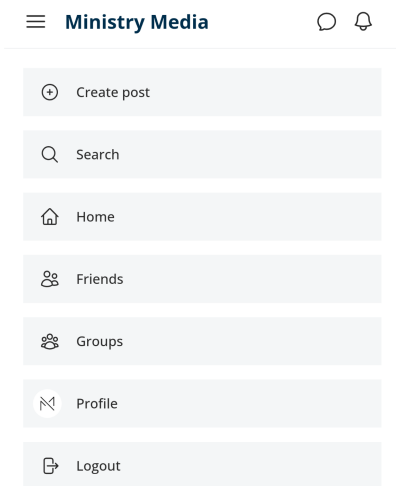
Administrator/Privacy Controls

● Administrators have access to an additional menu option (the checkmark icon) that will allow them to approve or deny posts.

● Posts will appear on the general home screen only when they have been approved by an administrator. If they are declined, they are deleted from the database.

Group Feature

- Each youth group administrator can provide their youth group with a specific code to join a group; an option shown in the image above.

- The group page is specific to each youth group, and can include calendar events and updates.

Capstone Youth

Minnesota United Game
Aug 27, 2023 3:00 pm

Come hang with the Capstone Youth Group at a MN United Game. We will be in the supporters section. Go Loons!

Confirmation
Apr 7, 2024 7:00 pm

Our confirmands will be celebrating the sacrament at the Cathedral at 7:00 PM. We will have pews reserved for the confirmands and their sponsors; families, please arrive early to ensure you have a place in the church.
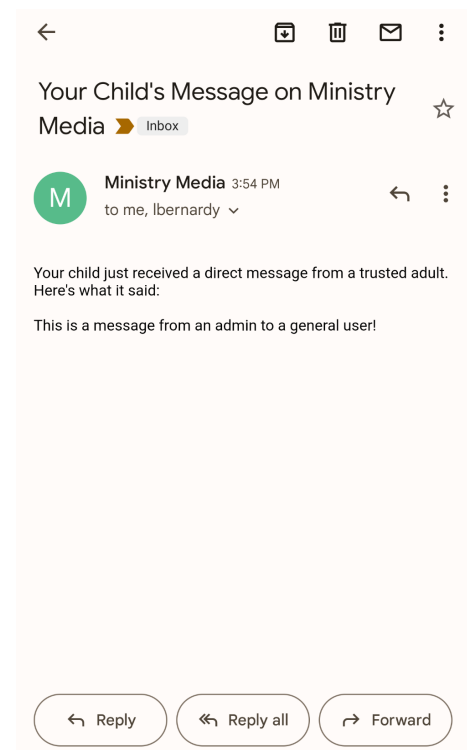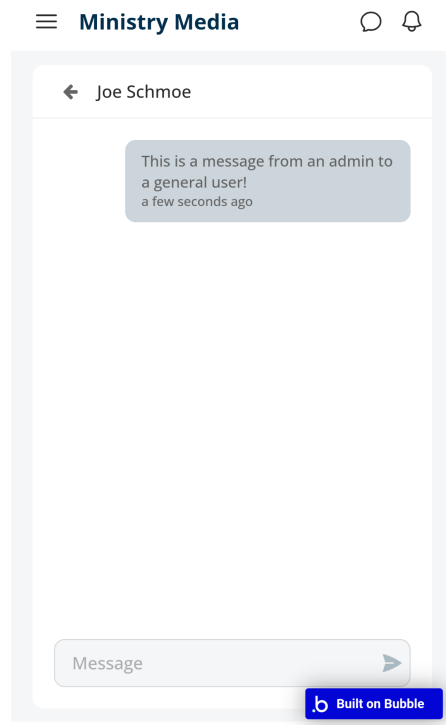
Menu

- The convenient sidebar menu rolls out and provides the option to search for users and posts, view friends, and view a specific youth group's calendar.

- Users can start independent chats with any of their Ministry Media friends from any screen by clicking on the message bubble icon, as seen on the top right.

Chat

- The chat feature allows all users to connect with one another, and when any contact is made between an administrator (adult) and a general user (minor), an email is automatically sent to the minor's parent (whose email was provided at registration) to document the interaction.

REFERENCES

Final Project (Ministry Media). http://ministry-media.bubbleapps.io/version-test/

App Development Platform. https://bubble.io