General Online Best Practices
For Hosts

- Recommend everyone download the Zoom app (https://zoom.us/)

- Go to Zoom.us to sign up for a free link. With this free link, you can hold a 40-minute meeting with a group of three or more. If you want more than 40 minutes, you can subscribe to a paid version (approximately $15 per month, $150 per year)

- To use Zoom, you will need one of the following:
  - Windows or Apple computer with speakers and a microphone. (Note: Webcams are recommended particularly for hosts but not required for all participants.)
  - Mobile Device. iOS or Android.
  - Phone. Mobile device, desk or landline.

- To use Zoom, you will also need an internet connection. Minimum speed is 600kbps (up/down) and recommended is 1.5 Mbps (up/down). 3G or 4G/LTE is sufficient for mobile devices.

- Recommend participants use a headset with microphone. Phone headsets/earbuds or a simple headset with a microphone can also work.

- Recommend tablet or laptop for the host. Smart phones will work but not all features work well (e.g. whiteboards, breakout rooms). Host the meeting on a device with the largest screen available to you. This will allow for the best visibility of people and shared documents/presentations.

- Some people in your group may not have a webcam, in which case, a box with their name in it will appear on the other peoples' screens. The participant without a webcam will see other participants and any screen sharing, but the group will not see that participant's face. Encourage those without webcams to join the group and to upload a photo of themselves.

- Remind people to mitigate background distractions. Ask them to mute their microphone when talking with other people in their room; if pets are noisy send them away; mute when coughing, sneezing.

- When taking breaks remind people to mute their audio and turn off their video.

- People with only moderate English skills or people with hearing impairments may struggle to hear well. Encourage them to invest in good audio equipment and to test the system before joining a group.

- Consider lighting: limit backlighting behind you and try to be in a location where you have light in front of you, making you more visible to the others.

- Schedule a trial run before beginning with actual content. This helps people to download the App, become familiar with how to use it, try some of the features and get to know one another.

- If you are leading the meeting, arrange for another person to serve as host to take care of technical problems, create breakout groups and so on. This will minimize interruptions. As the Zoom host, you have the ability to assign a co-host or even allow someone else to be the host.

- Your co-host should be on a separate computer even if you are in the same physical location. You can use the private chat feature to communicate as needed.

- Don't try all the features at once, but judiciously choose which feature to use to help learning objectives.

- Some useful analogs to the traditional classroom: chat = post it notes; whiteboards = flipcharts; break out rooms = small groups or pairs; screen share = PowerPoint, videos.

- Experiment with different features in every lesson, varying methods for all types of learners.

- Encourage the group to learn with you as you lead. You don't have to be an expert in the technology. It will be new to many of your participants.

- Recommend no more than 2- to 3-hour sessions online.

- People are creative when given a chance to explore new things. For example, role plays can be used online, reading the Bible as a reader's theater, highlighting scripture as a visual while they pull out various observations and so on.

- **IMPORTANT NOTE**: If security is an issue for your group, be aware that recording your Zoom session disables the security of your meeting. Also, all participants must be using the Zoom app for the meeting to be secure. They cannot call in by phone or use another third-party app to access the meeting. However, using the Zoom app on a phone does maintain security.

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