

JUST FOR MENTORS

Tips, inspiration and encouragement as you mentor men and women in prison

OCTOBER 2017

Dear Mentor,

Over the course of the past several years, a window into the prison system has opened up to me. It has helped shape how I look at others and at myself. As I looked inside, I found:

- Positive role models are precious gifts from God. Many people simply don't have them.
- Generational poverty critically limits a person's view of the world and drives the decisions that they make.
- Prisoners are reminded every minute that they are "less than."
- Childhood wounds can affect someone for life if they are not addressed.
- Opportunities for success in life are very limited for many people.

Please keep these truths in mind when you are corresponding with and praying for your students. Also, be open to God teaching you more and expanding your worldview as you interact with students.

Honored to serve alongside you,



Douglas Cupery
Church Mobilization Director
Crossroads Prison Ministries

For more helpful mentoring tips and ideas, watch the **Just For Mentors video series** at cpministries.org/resources/mentors/just-for-mentors/

MENTORING TIP

As mentors, we have a wonderful opportunity to bring encouragement and hope to prisoners through our own life stories. Today, as you read your student's lesson, I would encourage you to try this while responding to the student's answers:

- **As you look at questions that are incorrect or incomplete, think of them as an opportunity to start a conversation.**

Share with your student how the verse or theme has impacted your own life. How has it formed your thinking about who God is? How have you struggled with this verse or theme?

- **Read the essay questions carefully and share a personal life reflection about them.**

We need to take advantage of opportunities to share our stories, and we need to pursue others just as Jesus has pursued us by meeting the prisoner right where they are.

What is a mentor?

By Lisa Blystra, Executive Director

Crossroads has almost 5,000 volunteers who are mentoring prisoners all around the world. These men and women have stepped out of their comfort zones and responded to God's call to "remember those in prison as if you were together with them" (Hebrews 13:3).

Crossroads mentors not only remember those in prison, they also are committed to helping them know Jesus more fully. As mentors and prisoners read the Bible together and exchange encouraging letters that highlight biblical truth, prisoners begin to grasp an understanding of God's plan and His greater purpose for their lives.

So, what is a mentor? A mentor is a person who guides the development of a less experienced person by building trust and encouraging positive behaviors. A mentor is dependable, engaged, authentic, encouraging and tuned in to the needs of the person they are mentoring. A spiritual mentor, or discipler, uses the Bible as their guidebook and purposefully points to Jesus as the perfect role model of how to live in accordance with the will of God.

One of the more familiar mentoring relationships described in the Bible is that of Paul and Timothy. Paul understood that the Christian life was meant to be shared with others and that it was incredibly difficult to grow spiritually by oneself. He also knew that, as a follower of Jesus, he was expected to pass on that which the Lord had given to him (2 Timothy 2:2).

The mentoring relationship between Paul and Timothy developed over time. In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he addressed him as "my true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2). Timothy met Paul and eventually accompanied him on a mission trip. Paul recognized Timothy's need for a spiritual father, and he stepped up to the plate. Many Crossroads mentors are doing just that—assuming the role of parenthood to spiritual sons and daughters who are not grounded in the faith or have lost their way. They love them, pray for them and encourage them to pursue a different path.

Paul also emulated the lifestyle that he wanted Timothy to follow. Their relationship grew and Paul eventually shared

his whole life with Timothy. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:10, "But you, Timothy, certainly know what I teach, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance."

Crossroads mentors must also be willing to be open and transparent about their own lives. As they share personal stories of God's faithfulness in hard times, their student begins to understand the faith, patience, love and endurance needed as a follower of Jesus. They are reminded of His forgiveness and unconditional love, even when poor choices are made.

Paul defined success in his mentoring relationships as Timothy eventually becoming a partner in the Gospel. Timothy moved from being a son or a student to being a co-laborer. Crossroads mentors believe in their students' capacity. They are long-suffering and persistent, often waiting months and even years for their lost child to come home (Luke 15:20). They embrace their students' God-given potential to be used for Kingdom purposes. They equip and release them for future ministry, celebrating their partnership in leading Bible studies or churches inside or outside of prison.

The Bible tells us that God has a special place in His heart for the prisoner. He also has an incredible Kingdom-expanding mission for the mentors He has called to serve them. Thank you for helping Crossroads make this vision a reality.



Brighten the Christmas Season for Someone in Prison

Every year, Crossroads Prison Ministries collects Christmas cards from volunteer mentors like you to send to students. Many of our students tell us it's the only Christmas card they receive. Sending a personalized card is a wonderful way to help us tangibly show Christ's love to men and women in prison.

For more information on how to get involved, visit cpministries.org/christmascards.

New Covers!

You will soon see new covers on all our Tier 1 and Tier 2 student lessons and mentor answer keys. Each course will feature a different piece of student artwork. We have only changed the covers; the course materials have not changed. You can still use your current answer keys with the updated lessons!

