

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



DECEMBER 2017

Dear Mentor,

I want to take a moment to share a letter that Bobby, a student in Georgia, recently sent to Crossroads. Here's what he wrote:

You don't know how much all of the mentors have helped me with their words of encouragement and their feelings on some of the questions. When I don't answer the question right, they would explain to me the right answer and why, giving me more understanding. Each one has been down-to-earth, helpful and caring and has shown the love of Christ in their heart. Even when I answered a lot of questions using my past experiences, they listened to me with the love of Christ and prayed with me on certain matters. Y'all just don't realize how that made me feel!!

A lot of people would not try to get to know the students, seeing them just as a "student." But Crossroads makes you feel like you are a someone and a child of God and a brother or sister in Christ.

I think Bobby has noted a few things that are important for all Crossroads mentors to do:

1. Our mentors should strive to be down-to-earth (not over-spiritualizing everything). They should be helpful and caring and should exhibit the love of Christ in their letters and comments.
2. Our mentors should listen to students' experiences and stories with compassion and empathy and then pray fervently on their behalf. Handwritten prayers are powerful!
3. Our mentors should make prisoners feel like they are someone. So often, prisoners are defined by their crime or by their inmate ID number. Mentors are in a unique position to help students see their value.

How encouraging to hear that Bobby experienced all these things in his interactions with Crossroads mentors! I want every student to have his experience. And, thanks to fantastic mentors like you, I think that's possible.

Honored to serve alongside you,



Douglas Cupery
Church Mobilization Director

Recently, Crossroads welcomed gang pastor, jail chaplain and author Chris Hoke to our office in Grand Rapids. He and his friend Neaners Garcia spoke to our staff and volunteers.

Chris and Neaners exchanged letters for years while Neaners was in solitary confinement. Their story tells how a Mexican gang member and a self-described "dorky, white church guy" developed a friendship through the mail and how it changed both of them. Now they co-lead Underground Ministries, a gang and prison ministry in Washington state.

You can experience their amazing story by watching the recording on-line. To see the video, go to YouTube and search for:

Chris Hoke and Neaners Garcia at Crossroads

Tier 2 Students Are Waiting for Mentors

It has been exciting and rewarding to witness the energy of the Crossroads ministry over the past few months. As we continue to improve our training for mentors and share the stories that demonstrate the impact mentors are having on the lives of prisoners, we can feel momentum building.

We have been receiving many phone calls from people across the country who are interested in answering the biblical call to remember and care for people in prison. Within the past month, Crossroads received 128 requests for volunteer mentor applications and signed up nearly 50 mentors. Many of these new volunteers are joining the mission because current mentors are sharing their story and the story of Crossroads. Your enthusiasm is infectious! Your story is powerful!

While there is certainly much to celebrate in these past few months of growth, we want to make you aware of a critical need here at Crossroads. Students are finishing Tier 1, excited to advance to Tier 2, but are unable to begin due to a lack of Tier 2 mentors. **About 50 students are currently waiting for a mentor to journey with them through Tier 2.**

We don't make this request lightly. We know it requires commitment, patience and time to become a long-term mentor to a Tier 2 student. But we also know that these students, in prisons all over the country, are longing to grow in Christ and develop a relationship with a Crossroads mentor at a deeper level.

The most powerful stories of transformation that we hear come from students in Tier 2. That's because they develop real relationships over time with Crossroads mentors. In the process, they learn to trust, to heal and to love more fully.

If you have not yet mentored a student in Tier 2 but decide to start, you might discover that your life is impacted in an even greater way in a one-on-one relationship with a Tier 2 student. You might discover new, unexpected biblical insights from your student. You might be forced to dig deeper into God's Word. Your heart might expand to love more fully. And who knows? You might just discover a deep, life-giving friendship with someone very different from you.

If you are interested in becoming a Tier 2 mentor (or journeying with more students if you are already a Tier 2 mentor), please contact us at mentor@cpministries.org or 1-800-668-2450.

Doing Time Booklets

We will soon be sending a newly created booklet called *Doing Time* to all Crossroads students. This publication is designed to help people who are new to prison navigate the difficult journey of being locked up. All tips and advice come from current and former prisoners, and all artwork was done by artists in prison.

If your student would like more copies of this booklet, they can contact our office. If you would like to read *Doing Time*, go to cpministries.org/doingtime.

Crossroads Holiday Hours

The Crossroads office will be closed on the following dates to celebrate the holidays:

Monday, December 25
Tuesday, December 26
Wednesday, December 27
Thursday, December 28
Friday, December 29
Monday, January 1

No lessons will be mailed on these dates.