MENTOR TRAINING HANDBOOK

CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES

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Our Mission:

CONNECTING **PRISONERS** WITH **MENTORS** IN CHRIST-CENTERED **RELATIONSHIPS** SO THAT **LIVES, PRISONS** AND **CHURCHES** ARE RESTORED THROUGH THE **GOSPEL**

Dear Mentor,

Thank you for joining Crossroads Prison Ministries! I want to give you a warm welcome as you begin this journey of mentoring men and women in prison through studying God's Word together. You are joining **thousands** of other volunteers across the United States, and in over twenty extension centers worldwide, **bringing hope, light and love into prisoners' lives.**

Through your efforts, you will help prisoners build a solid foundation upon which they will grow, base their decisions and find their place and purpose in life. You will also help build up the Church behind prison walls by making God's Word available and applicable to men and women who desperately need its guidance and life-changing message of unconditional love and hope.

God has a special place in His heart for the prisoner. Jesus tells us that if we have visited those in prison, we have visited Him (Matthew 25:36, 40). This call to "remember those in prison as if you were together with them" is also highlighted in Hebrews 13. As you review Bible lessons and write encouraging letters to prisoners, you are fulfilling this biblical mandate.

The Bible is full of letters that encourage God's people toward greater faith and a deeper connection to Jesus Christ. Paul's letters to the churches make up a large portion of the New Testament. These letters, some of which were actually written from prison, were instrumental in growing the early Church and spreading Christianity. Today, over 2,000 years later, the Church continues to be shaped, inspired and encouraged by the letters of Paul.

Through your letters, you will play a key role in guiding and encouraging men and women in prison. **Most prisoners rarely have visitors and often feel disconnected from the outside world.** Prison culture further perpetuates a cyclical pattern of isolation and loneliness, often leading to despair and, eventually, total hopelessness. **Words that you share in your letters may be the only reminder to those who receive them that they have not been forgotten.** Most importantly, your words of love and encouragement reflect light to those who are in a very dark place. These words may very well be the only representation of the Gospel they receive. Your words, used by the Holy Spirit, truly have the power to change the trajectory of someone's future.

I want to thank you for stepping out in faith as a representative of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Crossroads is a part of my personal story. Almost 20 years ago, I was a Crossroads student. I am so grateful for people like you who invested in me and helped me navigate my new faith in Jesus. Each lesson and letter I received from my mentors guided me to pursue a deeper, grace-filled relationship with Jesus and, eventually, to realign my life with His will. I held on to the letters for years, rereading them many times, even after my release from prison.

My prayer for you is that the God of hope will "fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

In Christ,

Douglas Cupery
Church Mobilization Director

P.S. Be sure to check out **cpministries.org/justformentors** to access newsletters and videos that offer tips and suggestions for how you can best serve your students!

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Core Values of Crossroads

The ministry of Crossroads is rooted in the six core values that we uphold. These values guide and inform everything we do as an organization. Please keep these values in mind as you interact with your students.

1. **We are Christian.** John 3:16–17, 1 John 4:7–11

We find our call to ministry through experiencing the abundance of God's love.

2. **We are respectful of all people.** Luke 10:25–37, Romans 3:21–24, Colossians 3:1–14

We demonstrate respect, unconditional love and acceptance of all people, recognizing all are created, loved and redeemable by God.

3. **We are servants of the Church.** Ephesians 4:1–16

We equip the Church to engage in transformational relationships with prisoners, generously providing resources and opportunities for greater growth.

4. **We are stewards.** Matthew 25:14–30, 2 Corinthians 9:6–15

We are faithful to the purpose for which resources are given and manage them in a manner that maximizes the benefit to the Kingdom of God.

5. **We are partners.** 1 Corinthians 12:12–26

We recognize our strengths and abilities, we partner with others in humility and with transparency and we embrace the reality that we are better together than any one of us is alone.

6. **We are committed to ministry excellence.** 1 Peter 4:8–11, Colossians 3:17, 23–24

We evaluate our ministry and work continually to be intentional and strategic as we serve with excellence and urgency to accomplish our mission.

Things to Keep in Mind:

- **Your student may not be a Christian.** We have students of all faiths and backgrounds who decide to do our courses to learn more about Christianity. Their responses to questions asking them what they believe or what they think may be different from yours. Please do not mark their answers wrong in those instances. Instead, encourage them to continue studying and asking questions. Do your best to acknowledge their perspective and then share the answer to the questions based on your understanding of the Bible and your experience with Jesus and His impact on your life. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or need help with a specific response!

- **What you have read and seen on TV regarding prisoners is probably not true.** Any preconceived notions you have about prisoners and correctional facilities is not usually their reality. Put that aside and do your best to be open to your students' stories and what God is doing in their lives.

- **You will encounter a wide variety of educational backgrounds.** A majority of prisoners have only the equivalent of a third grade education. If their spelling or sentence structure is rough or if they do not write much for their essays, but the content is accurate, please do not consider the answers incorrect. Read their answers to see if they grasp the concepts. Please keep in mind that we are not saying that men and women in prison or jail are unintelligent. Many are very smart and some have even earned advanced degrees, but others simply lack education due to life circumstances and/or choices. If you notice that students are consistently struggling with specific questions (or if you read a question and it seems unclear), please let us know and we will adjust the lessons. Our goal is for students to understand God's Word.

- **Keep the focus on the lessons and what God is doing in your and your students' lives through His Word.** Please avoid politics and other divisive subjects. Keep in mind that you are not going to be able to continue a conversation with a student. You may disagree with them about something, but please simply encourage them to keep studying and reading the text. It is not your job to convict them of truth. Prayerfully let the Holy Spirit do His work and do the best you can to show the student God's love.

- **Never ask your students about their crime.** None of us would want to be identified continually by the worst thing we ever did or the lowest point in our life. However, some students may choose to tell you. If they do share about their past, please respond graciously and keep in mind that all of us "have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). God does not let our sin define who we are in His eyes once we have decided to follow Jesus. Let your students see that grace from you as well. As the Bible says, "love covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). Let love prevail.

Overview of the Mentorship Program

Crossroads mentors review students' completed Bible studies, write to them and answer their questions. Mentors share stories from their own lives and help their students see how God is speaking to them through His Word.

There are three levels to the mentorship program:

Tier 1:
LEARNING

In this introductory level, students learn about God and basic biblical concepts.

Tier 2:
LIVING

In this intermediate level, students learn how to live out their faith in response to God's love. Tier 2 students study with an individual mentor.

Tier 3:
LEADING

In this advanced level, students study seminary-level material that provides them with the skills they need to become leaders in their communities. Tier 3 students study with an individual mentor.

All students and mentors begin in Tier 1. In Tier 1, each lesson completed by a student is assigned to a mentor randomly. This means that, as a Tier 1 mentor, you will review a different student's lesson each week.

Because of this, you will experience a range of student abilities and review a variety of different lessons. You may receive a packet from a non-Christian studying Lesson 2 of *Who Are You?* one week and then receive a packet from a longtime Christian studying Lesson 12 of *Great Truths of the Bible* the next week.

If you'd like to make a commitment to mentoring an individual student, you can sign up to be a Tier 2 or Tier 3 mentor. You must serve as a Tier 1 mentor for four weeks before signing up for Tier 2 or 3.

The goal in reviewing the lesson and writing to each student is to find as many ways as you can to encourage your student to continue learning more about God and lay a foundation for them to continue to grow in their faith and understand who they are in Christ: God's son or daughter, made in His image and deeply loved by Him.

Students take each course one lesson at a time. Below is an explanation of the progression of a lesson from its starting point in the Crossroads office:

Step 1 Crossroads sends a Bible study lesson to a student.

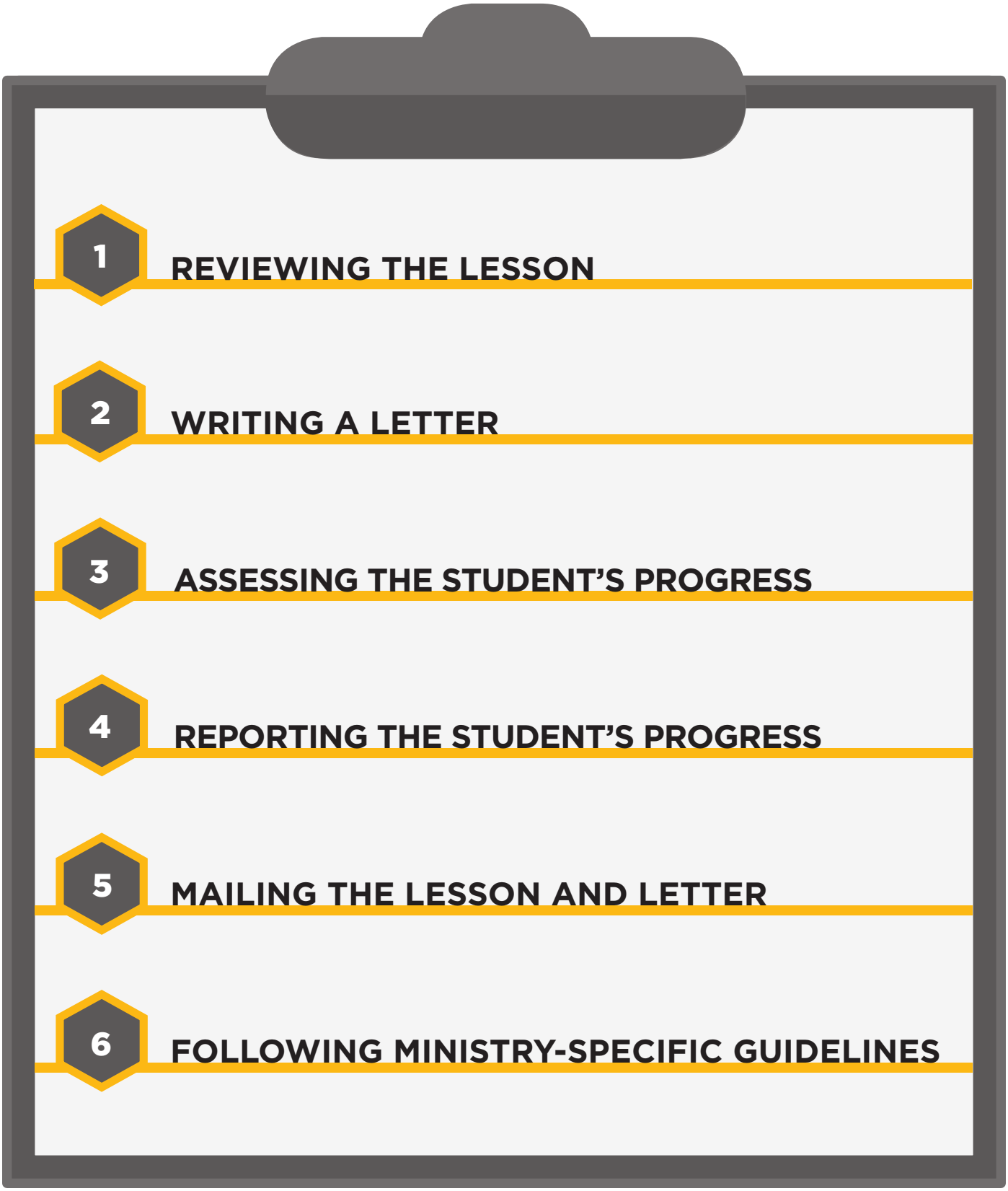
Step 2 The student completes the lesson and mails it back to the Crossroads office.

Step 3 Crossroads sends the next lesson to the student and forwards the student's completed lesson to a volunteer mentor.

Step 4 As the student works on their next lesson, the mentor reviews the completed lesson and mails it back to the student along with an encouraging letter.

Tier 1 Mentor Responsibilities

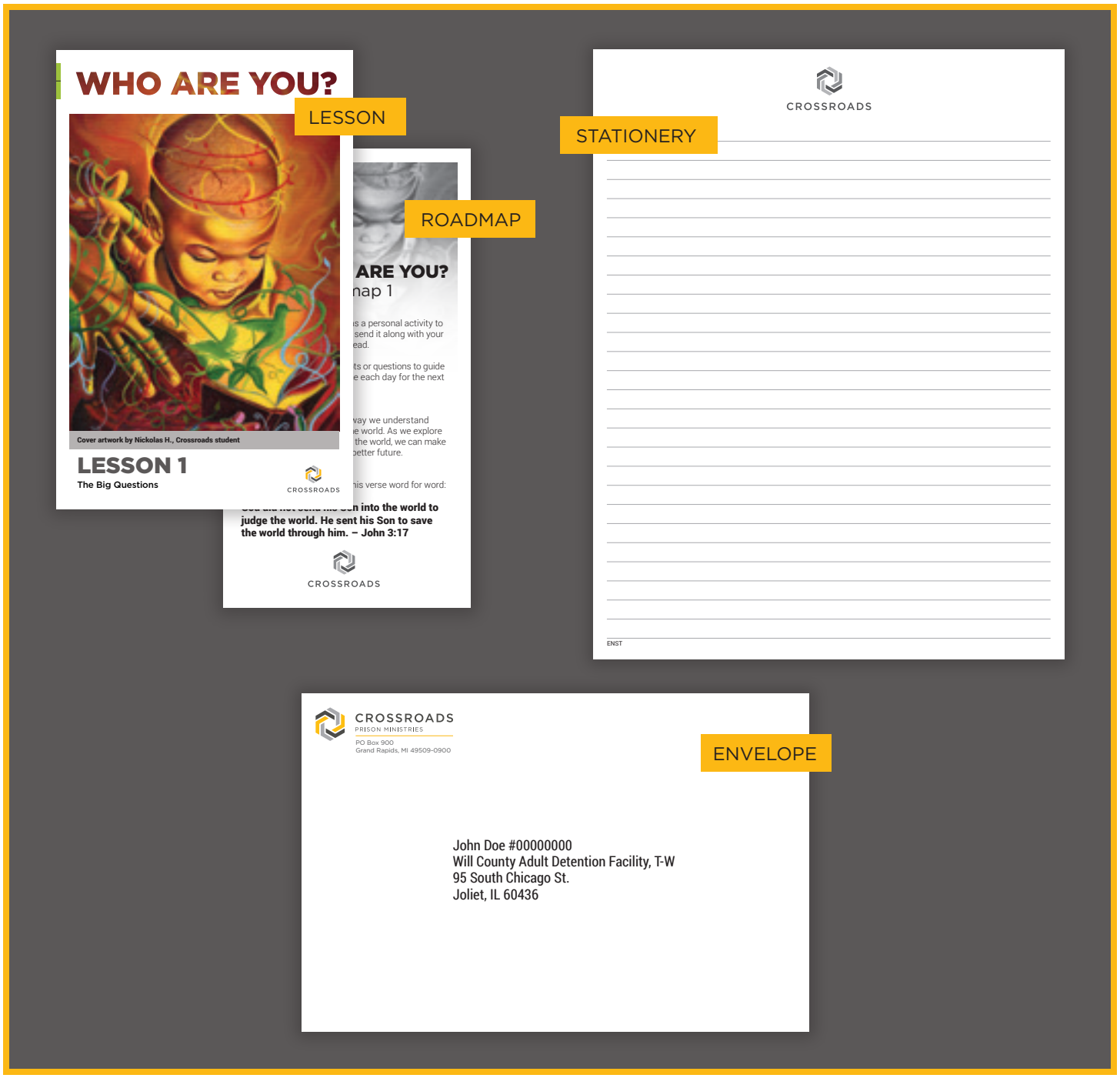
Each week, you will receive a new lesson packet from Crossroads (see next page for more information about lesson packets). When you receive it, you will be responsible for completing the following six tasks **within one week** of receiving the packet. Further explanation of each of these tasks begins on page 12 of this handbook.



The Lesson Packet

When a student has completed a lesson, they mail it back to the Crossroads office. When we receive it, we put it in a new envelope along with several other documents and then mail the package to a mentor. We refer to this package as a **lesson packet.**

You will typically find the following items in your lesson packet:



The packet will include a student's lesson, and possibly one or more devotional Roadmaps, for you to review. There will be Crossroads stationery you will use to write a letter to the student and a pre-addressed envelope for you to mail the reviewed lesson and the letter to the student. You will occasionally find other items or notes for the student.

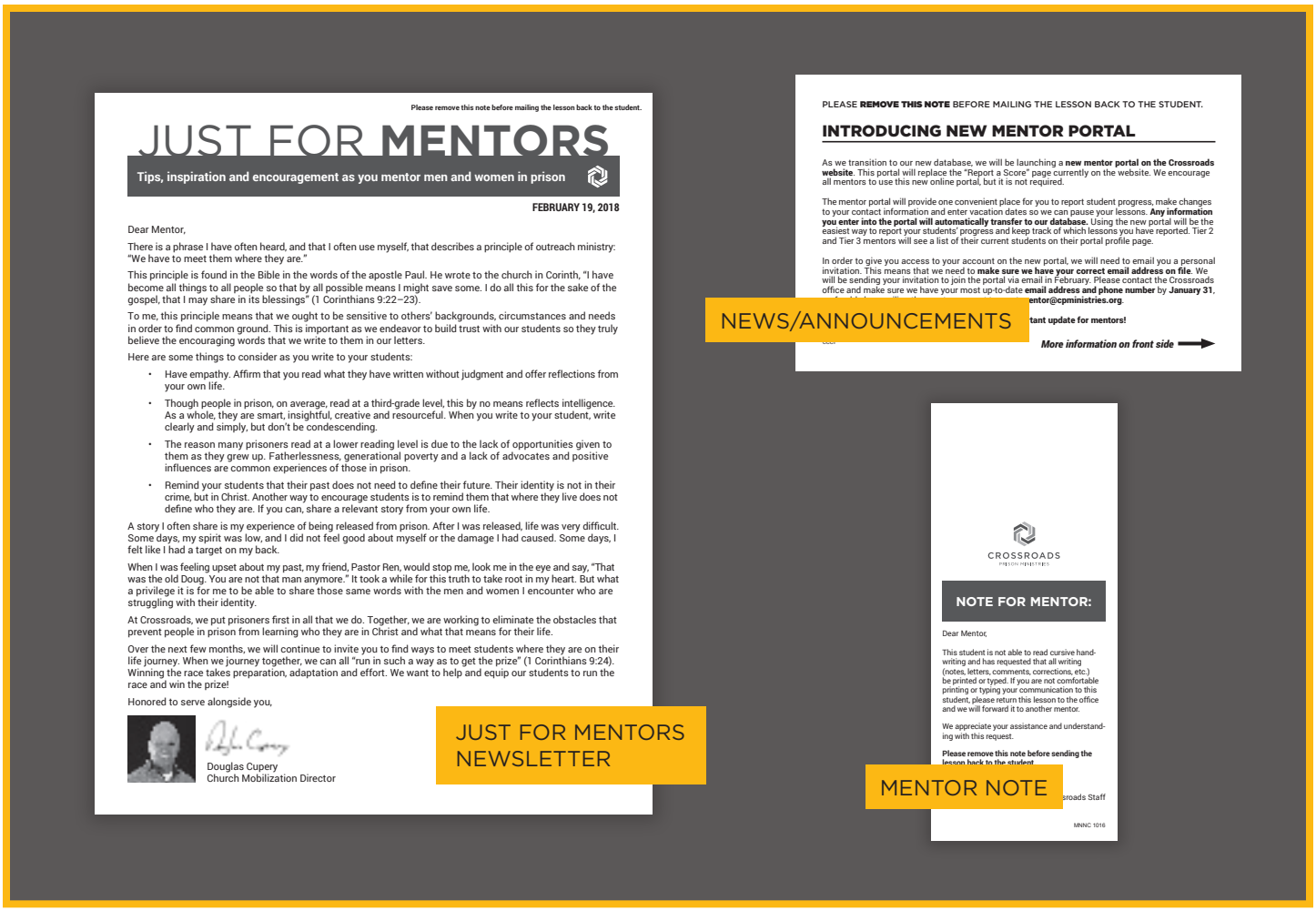
Each lesson packet may also contain one or two informational notes for YOU, the mentor. They will be clearly marked that they are for mentors only. Please do not send these to students.

These mentor notes are easy to leave in a lesson accidentally, especially when there are multiple inserts in the packet. However, they include information that is important for you to read and might confuse the student if they were to receive the note.

Please be sure to double-check each item in your lesson packet and remove anything that is for mentors only before you send the lesson to the student.

These inserts include:

- ***Just for Mentors* newsletters:** These are monthly newsletters that contain additional training, tips and suggestions on how you can best serve your students. They often contain important announcements and updates.
- **Mentor notes:** Some students' lessons require special handling; for example, some students cannot read cursive writing. In those cases, you will receive a note alerting you to the specific needs of the student.
- **Various news/announcements:** Occasionally, you will receive inserts that include important news or announcements that we need to communicate to all mentors.



1 REVIEWING THE LESSON

The objective of reviewing a lesson is to help any student, no matter where they are on their faith journey, to find their next step toward deeper faith in Christ.

Lesson packets should be reviewed **within one week of receipt**. Mail takes quite a long time to get from students to Crossroads and then to you—generally about two weeks. It will take about another week to be processed through the postal service and the prison or jail's mail room. Please review and send the lesson as soon as you can so the student isn't waiting too long for their lesson.

Here are the basic steps for reviewing lesson packets as a mentor:

Be sure to use **blue or black ink** when writing corrections and suggestions (and when writing letters and notes to your students). Many facilities ban the use of other colors of ink, and red ink often reminds students of negative school experiences.

PRAY

Pray before you begin. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your study and to give you the responses you need to encourage and guide your student.

READ

Read through the lesson and any Roadmaps that are included in the packet.

COMPARE

Use the lesson answer key to check any fact-based answers.

If you find a mistake or an incomplete answer, write the correct answer for fill-in-the-blank and multiple-choice questions, or write a note to help your student find the correct answer.

Please do not use letter grades, check marks or stars, correct students' spelling or grammar or tally the number of errors on either the lesson or the Roadmap. Although it is important to let students know when they have missed a concept and provide helpful feedback, we want to make sure that our focus is on helping students learn more about God's Word and ensuring that they feel encouraged to continue even if they are struggling.

If you find that the student's answers to the fill-in-the-blank questions are similar, but not identical, to the answer key, this may be an indication that they are using a version of the Bible that does not correspond with the lesson material. In those instances, please do not correct their answers. The most important thing is that the student understands the material, and finding the best fit from a different translation still demonstrates this.

If you want to figure out what version of the Bible a student is using, websites like **www.biblegateway.com** can help. You can use their platform to compare versions by entering the Bible verse citation in the search field.

We provide free NIV Bibles for our students upon request. You may contact us and request a Bible for your student if you feel they could use a NIV Bible but have not asked for one.

INTERACT

Respond to the student's reflections and opinion-based answers in the lesson and any Roadmaps.

Focusing on the student's answers first and contemplating how you would have answered each question will allow you both to get more out of the study. The answer keys are provided as a reference and can give suggestions for possible answers, but they are only intended to be an additional voice in the discussion if needed.

If a student misses the concept on an essay, consider it an opportunity to interact. Give them suggestions for places to find the answer, share how you might answer the question and add some supporting verses you have found in your own study of the Bible. We have provided examples of issues that arise frequently, paired with suggestions for how to handle those issues, on page 29. If your student shares opinions that differ from yours or are not biblically based, acknowledge their response and then share your own understanding of the passage. When reviewing and commenting on a student's Roadmap reflections, share with the student ways you have applied the verses to your own life (see page 15 for more on Roadmaps).

Celebrate what the student understands. If the student seems unsure, help them discover the heart of the concepts. If they are confident in their work, take the opportunity to dig deeper with them. You may even find that students teach you as much as you teach them! With their life experience and previous Bible study, they might make an observation that you've never noticed or considered. If you learn something from a student, let them know!

WRITE

Write an encouraging note or comment related to the student's work on each page of the lesson and Roadmap(s).

We ask you to write a note or comment on every page because this makes it clear to the student that you have reviewed all of their work. Students remark regularly that they appreciate knowing someone has thoroughly reviewed their answers and that they are encouraged by their mentors' comments. The comments can relate to how you have seen a truth apply to your own life or how the section relates to the overall lesson. When you're not sure what to write, simply include a word or phrase to encourage them and let them know they have done great work or have shown good effort (see page 26 for examples of encouraging words and phrases to use).

RESPOND

Respond to the student's prayer requests and answer any questions they have asked about the material.

Students often write questions throughout the lesson and in the space provided for comments. Many students do not have access to biblical study resources—you may be the only person who can help them find answers to their questions. Answer any questions to the best of your ability, but don't hesitate to contact Crossroads if you need additional guidance. We will do our best to get back to you within one to two business days.

In some courses, space is provided throughout the lesson that students and mentors can use to interact. We call these **conversation boxes**. Students may fill the entire space (since extra paper is often expensive), but if they don't, you may use any blank space to respond and write comments.

Please be sure to indicate that you have prayed for your student in your letter or in the lesson, especially if they have expressed specific requests. It means a great deal to students to know that people are actively praying for them. If you do not receive a lesson due to a holiday or scheduled time off, please take the time you would usually spend reviewing lessons to pray for your students and for the ministry.

If a student is struggling with a spiritual or personal issue, see page 30 for a list of resources you can request to have sent to the student.

Prayers for God's people can be found throughout the Bible. We have selected a few as examples that you can use in your letters or in response to your students' prayer requests (see page 28). It is a short list—there are many more!

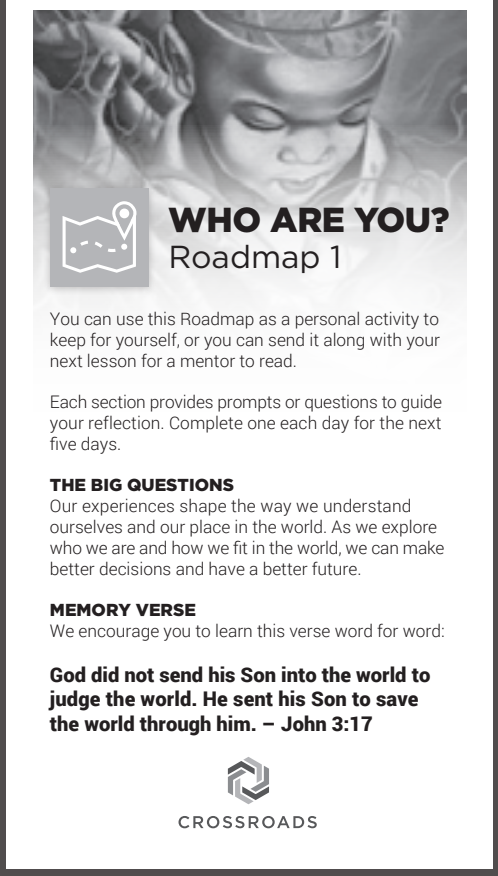
Students will often ask for help with a range of issues and concerns. We attempt to address any student questions before sending the lesson to a mentor. When you see "Thanks, Crossroads" stamped next to a student's question in a lesson or Roadmap, or a "Dear Student" note included in the packet, this means we have noted it and addressed it through the main office. If it does not appear that the office caught or addressed the issue, please let us know. Feel free to call or email us if you have a question about a student's request or are unsure of how to respond.

STAMP

STUDENT NOTE

About Roadmaps

Roadmaps are daily devotional guides for students that are intended to reinforce the truths found in the lessons. Students are encouraged to complete their Roadmaps and send them to you with their lessons, but you may not always receive one. There also may be times when you receive more than one. The number on the Roadmap will rarely correspond to the number on the lesson you are reviewing (typically, a student will send in a lesson with a Roadmap from the previous lesson—for example, Lesson 2 with Roadmap 1). Please review them as you receive them and return them with the lesson.



WHO ARE YOU?
Roadmap 1

You can use this Roadmap as a personal activity to keep for yourself, or you can send it along with your next lesson for a mentor to read.

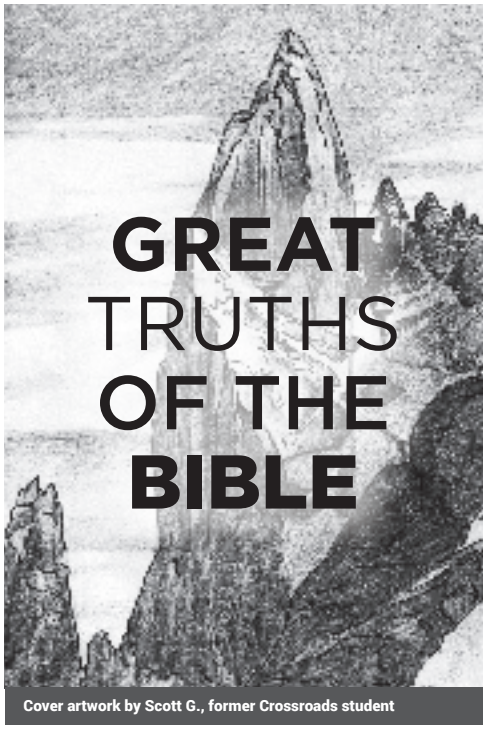
Each section provides prompts or questions to guide your reflection. Complete one each day for the next five days.

THE BIG QUESTIONS
Our experiences shape the way we understand ourselves and our place in the world. As we explore who we are and how we fit in the world, we can make better decisions and have a better future.

MEMORY VERSE
We encourage you to learn this verse word for word:

God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him. – John 3:17

CROSSROADS



Cover artwork by Scott G., former Crossroads student

ROADMAP 1
Our God Is an Awesome God

CROSSROADS

Unlike lessons, we do not require students to complete and return their Roadmaps, but we do ask you to read through any Roadmaps that you do receive and write an encouraging note or comment to students on each page of their completed work. A Roadmap answer key is provided for some courses (located behind the lesson answer key in the answer key book for the course). These answer keys provide you with the text of the passages the student is studying and a theme for each day. The theme represents an idea we are hoping the student grasps from reading the passages.

We do not expect new Christians to be able to do this perfectly. It is more important for the student to be listening to the Holy Spirit and spending time in God's Word than it is for them to write the exact response provided. If you notice your student is struggling with the questions, please help them to the best of your ability and then let us know about the problematic area. Sometimes the issue is with the question and not the student's ability. We are working on fixing that, and your input can help!

2 WRITING A LETTER

Letter writing is what sets Crossroads apart from other correspondence prison ministries. Our goal is to make learning about the Bible more relational. Jesus tells us, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20). For many men and women in prison, the letters you write are the only way they can study with other believers and may be the only connection they have to life outside prison. This is why we ask you to write a **full-page, individualized letter** to each student.

Please approach the process humbly. Pray before you write. Ask God to direct your words and to help you include the words your student needs to hear, and trust that the words you are writing are what's needed. It does not have to be perfect; just be sincere. And don't worry if it feels strange at first. Most of us are out of practice when it comes to writing letters, but it gets easier over time.

Please avoid writing in cursive if possible; print or type your letters instead. Many students did not learn cursive in school, so they have trouble reading it.

If you need help thinking of what to write or need some inspiration, you can follow the suggestions in the outline provided below:

Sample Letter Outline

*** Please do not share:** your last name, where you live, the name of the company you work for, etc.

A. Briefly introduce yourself.
- Who are you? What is your first name? What type of work do you do? *
- How did you become a Christian?
- Why did you decide to become a Crossroads mentor?

B. Reflect on the lesson after reviewing it.
- What do the passages in the lesson mean to you? What is God telling you through them?
- How can you apply the lesson topic to your life today?
- How has a passage/story/truth in the lesson changed your life in the past?
- Is there a story, teaching or sermon it reminds you of?
- Are there other Bible passages that relate to the lesson and would provide further wisdom or encouragement for the student? (See page 27 for a list of encouraging Bible verses suggested by other Crossroads students.)

C. Encourage and engage the student.
- Respond to their questions and prayer requests.
- Write encouraging comments about the student's work.
- Compliment the student on completing the lesson. Prison is not an easy place to find the time or space to complete studies or to focus on reading.
- Share a Bible story or passage that came to your mind based on one of their answers.
- Let the student know you are praying for their prayer requests.

D. Remind the student that God loves them.
- Write a short prayer for the student based on their requests and/or the lesson topic.
- Write a blessing for the student (see Numbers 6:24–26 for an example).
- Find a verse you can share that shows God's love for them.
- Write some song/hymn lyrics that relate to the topic of the lesson.
- Share a favorite Bible passage. Let the student know why it means so much to you.

E. Sign the letter.
- Use your first name only, followed by **"your mentor for this lesson"** *

3 ASSESSING THE STUDENT'S PROGRESS

We ask you to help us assess student progress for several reasons:

- To discern whether the student is struggling or excelling in the program
- To observe whether the curriculum is helping the student grow spiritually
- To give recommendations to parole boards, potential employers and judges regarding the student's effort

With information gained from these assessments, Crossroads will be able to provide better spiritual direction and learning paths for each student based on their specific abilities and needs.

We ask mentors to assess their student's progress according to three categories: **Completion**, **Understanding** and **Application**. For each category, you will choose the phrase that most accurately reflects the student's work: **Needed Help**, **Good** or **Excellent**. Focusing on these three assessment categories will reveal useful insights into the student's engagement with the lesson.

The table below explains each category and each choice within the categories.

COMPLETION:
Did the student complete all lesson material to the best of their ability?

- **Needed Help:** Student left multiple questions unanswered and/or many of their answers were incomplete or unrelated to the questions.
- **Good:** Student completed the required parts of the lesson and answered every question.
- **Excellent:** Student also completed the Roadmap and/or indicated additional study beyond the lesson.

UNDERSTANDING:
Did the student understand the biblical truths in the lesson?

- **Needed Help:** Student was unable to answer many of the questions or answered many inaccurately.
- **Good:** Student understood the questions and answered them accurately.
- **Excellent:** Student thoroughly comprehended the material and added their own thoughts and suggestions.

APPLICATION:
Was the student able to apply what they learned in the lesson to their personal life?

- **Needed Help:** Student indicated that the lesson topic did not apply to them or that they did not know how to apply it to their life.
- **Good:** Student indicated an understanding that the lesson topic applied to their life and wrote a few generic comments.
- **Excellent:** Student described how they planned to apply what they learned to their daily life and the desired result.

4 REPORTING THE STUDENT'S PROGRESS

Once you have assessed your student's progress, the next step is to report it to the Crossroads office.

There are three different ways to submit progress reports to Crossroads:

ONLINE MENTOR PORTAL
The mentor portal is the most efficient way to report a student's progress. There are directions on how to activate your account on page 31. After your account is activated, you can go to **cpministries.org** and click on "REPORT STUDENT PROGRESS" in the top right corner of the web page to log in and submit your reports.

EMAIL
You may also report a student's progress by emailing the information below to **reports@cpministries.org.**

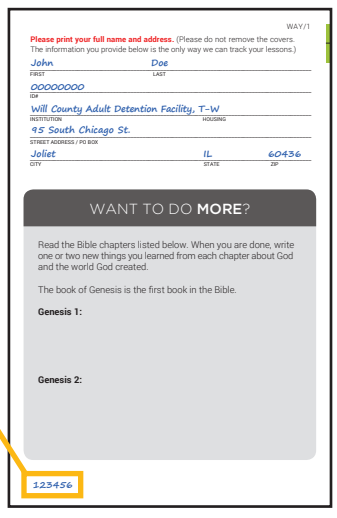
CALL
You may also report a student's progress by calling the Crossroads office at **(800) 668-2450**. If an office volunteer is available, they will answer the phone. Otherwise, please follow the prompts to leave a voicemail with your report.

When reporting a student's progress, please be prepared to include the following information:

SAMPLE REPORT:	
Lesson ID#	123456
Student's first and last name	John Doe
Course and lesson number	*Who Are You?*, Lesson 2
Selection in COMPLETION category	Excellent
Selection in UNDERSTANDING category	Good
Selection in APPLICATION category	Needed Help
Lesson-related comments (optional)	John seemed confused about how to answer question 7.
Your first and last name	Fred Smith

LESSON ID#:

You will find the lesson ID number on the bottom left corner of the back cover of the lesson (this is NOT the student's ID number). Crossroads tracks each lesson by its unique lesson ID number.



LESSON-RELATED COMMENTS:

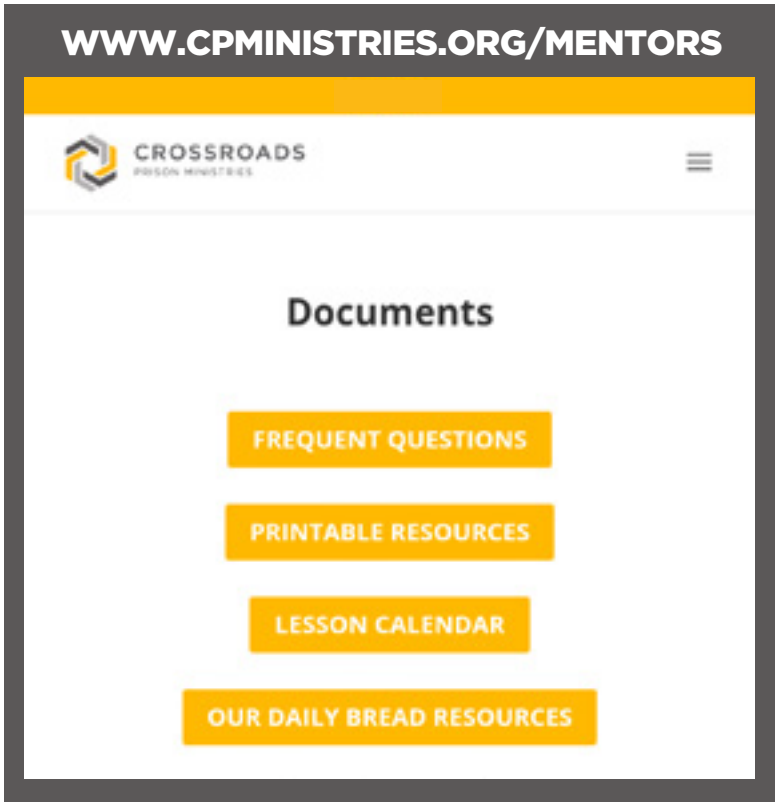
In addition to reporting student progress for each lesson, you have the option to leave comments about issues related to the specific lesson and the student's ability to understand the material and apply it to their life. For example, you can mention questions or concepts the student found difficult to understand or offer suggestions for further study that you or the student believe might be helpful to include in the lesson. **Please keep in mind that Crossroads staff will not review these comments every time a progress report is submitted**—only when assessing a student's progress at the end of a course of study or when updating the curriculum.

If you have any other questions or concerns when reviewing a student's lesson, please email or call the office.

If a student expresses suicidal thoughts, please call the office at (800) 668-2450 ext. 4010 as soon as possible and do not mail the student's lesson until you have spoken with a staff member.

LESSON LOGS:

Please keep a record of each student's progress in the **lesson logs** we provide for you in case we have questions about a specific report. You will find several pages of these logs at the end of this handbook (see page 35). Additional lesson logs are available on the **Printable Resources** page of our website for you to download and print once you have filled the ones provided in this handbook.



IF YOU DON'T REPORT YOUR STUDENTS' PROGRESS

If you don't report your students' progress for four consecutive weeks, you will be placed **on hold**. We do this because sometimes a mentor is unable to continue reviewing lessons but is also unable to let us know about their changed status. In those situations, if we were to continue to send lessons to that mentor, students' lessons could get lost or dramatically delayed.

When we put you on hold, we will try to contact you using the latest contact information you have provided. If you find that you are not receiving lessons and have not heard from us, or if you feel that you may have been placed on hold in error, please contact us.

5 MAILING THE LESSON AND LETTER

After you have reported your student's progress to Crossroads, gather the lesson, Roadmap(s), your letter and anything else that goes to the student and place them all in the pre-addressed envelope. Remember to remove any material that is for mentors only.

If you did not receive a pre-addressed envelope with your lesson packet, please use a blank white 6”x9” envelope and write Crossroads Prison Ministries’s address as the return address:

Crossroads Prison Ministries
PO Box 900
Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900

To address the blank envelope, please write the student's address exactly as it appears on the back cover of their lesson. If you are unable to read the address, please email us at mentor@cpministries.org or call the office.

Lesson packets range in weight, but a standard lesson requires the 2-ounce postage rate. A lesson that includes a topical booklet from one of Crossroads's ministry partners (see page 30) or other inserts requires the 3-ounce rate.

Example of standard (2-ounce) lesson packet:

Example of 3-ounce lesson packet:

Insufficient postage on an envelope will cause the packet to be rejected from the facility and returned to the Crossroads office, resulting in a delay of two to three weeks before the student receives the lesson.

You can have a lesson packet weighed at the nearest post office if you are unsure of how much postage to use. Or, if you don’t want to worry about weighing the envelope, you can use two forever stamps, which will always provide enough postage.

6 FOLLOWING MINISTRY-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

We serve students in many different prison systems with varying rules and regulations, but we have highlighted several guidelines that are consistent among facilities as well as several that are specific to Crossroads's guidelines. We deeply desire to be able to serve all students in any correctional facility, and respecting these regulations will ensure that this continues to be possible.

1. Please do not send the following items to students or use them on the lesson, letter or envelope: stickers, tape, address labels, correction fluid, correction tape, glitter, tracts, books, plastic or laminated bookmarks, CDs, money or stamps. When a prison mail room finds any of these items in a lesson, they will refuse to accept the lesson and will return it to Crossroads, causing a delay in the material reaching the student.

2. Please do not put greeting cards or note cards in a student's lesson. Because prison mailing restrictions for cards change often, cards included with a lesson may cause the lesson itself to be rejected.

3. Please use only your first name when communicating with students. Please do not use your last name or address in your communication. Remember to remove any inserts that include your personal information before sending the lesson to the student.

4. If a student asks for a parole recommendation letter, please tell them they may send a written request directly to the Crossroads office. As a Tier 1 mentor, you will not have enough information about your student to advocate for them effectively.

5. Use caution when responding to student requests. If a student requests that you contact family, friends or victims on their behalf, please do not do so. Direct any financial or legal requests to Crossroads. Your role is to encourage and disciple your students as you work through the lessons with them. Getting involved with these types of requests can hinder this role. Simply respond to them by stating, "I am not allowed to do this."

6. If your student speaks negatively about the prison system, please offer encouragement rather than engaging in negative discussion. The environment in prison breeds negativity and can be oppressive. Over time, this can weigh heavily on students, and they will occasionally express this in some way. Please encourage your student in these moments, keeping in mind that we don't have control over what the student is experiencing.

Contacting the Crossroads Office

SCHEDULING TIME OFF FROM REVIEWING LESSONS

When you need to take a break from reviewing lessons for any reason, such as an illness or a vacation, please let us know. Contact the Crossroads office at least **one week ahead of time** to ensure you don't receive any lessons when you are not available to review them. You can notify us via the mentor portal (see page 31) or by emailing or calling the office.

QUESTIONS?

Please feel free to contact us at any time with questions or concerns.

Email: mentor@cpministries.org

Phone: (800) 668-2450; follow prompts for mentors

Website: www.cpministries.org

Be sure to use your first and last name as they appear on the mailing label on your lesson packets when sending an email or leaving a voicemail (and if your mailing label is incorrect, please let us know!).

Many mentor resources are available on our website at **www.cpministries.org/mentors**.

We welcome any suggestions regarding edits to our curriculum. If you find a typo or another error in any of our materials, please notify us by using the **curriculum suggestions** contact form on our website.

You are ready to get started!

We are excited to welcome you to the Crossroads mentor team! You are joining a growing group of 5,000 mentors across the United States and in over 20 extension centers worldwide. Crossroads mentors, along with about 300 office volunteers and 20 staff members, reach over 30,000 students in jail and prison annually. We know that you will have a big impact on the students you mentor and that they will have an impact on you as well. We have seen the multitude of ways that God has changed lives, prisons and churches through the simple act of writing letters and studying His Word together through the Crossroads mentorship program.

Now that you have reviewed this material, you are ready to get started! **Remember to contact us to let us know that you are ready to start receiving lessons.** We will send your first lesson packet as soon as we hear from you!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Encouraging Words and Phrases for Lessons and Letters

Students appreciate feedback on the work they've done and cherish encouraging letters from their mentors. This list of words and phrases can be used in lessons, Roadmaps and letters.

- God loves you.
- I am curious what you think about _____.
- I appreciate all your hard work.
- Your ideas are creative.
- You've made me think about things in a new way.
- I have also struggled with _____.
- I love the way you _____.
- My favorite thing you wrote was _____.
- You can change your mind.
- You can learn from your mistakes.
- You can ask for help.
- I can tell that you are learning.
- You did a really good job on this.
- I can tell you really care about _____.
- I have faith in you.
- Keep up the good work.
- You can say no if you need to.
- Your choices matter.
- Your words are powerful.
- Your actions are powerful.
- Your story has the power to change other people's lives.
- It may be difficult, but you can choose how you react to things.
- You are more than your emotions.
- You are kind.
- Growing is hard work.
- I believe you.
- I believe in you.
- You are valuable.
- You made an interesting point.
- When you make a mistake, God still loves you.
- You are important.
- Your ideas matter.
- You can make a difference in someone's life.
- I enjoy your comments.
- I'm glad you're part of this program.
- I'm proud of you.
- Excellent.
- Thanks for helping me understand _____.
- I'm grateful God put you in my life.
- You are loved.

Encouraging Bible Verses

We asked Crossroads students which Bible verses have been the most encouraging to them during their time in prison. The list below includes the most frequently suggested verses. In cases where students suggested a long passage, only the first verse is provided.

We have provided these verses as they are found in the NIRV Bible, as this version is the easiest to read and understand, but please feel free to share different versions with your students.

God's Love:

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him. – John 3:16–17

But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. – Romans 5:8

Trusting God:

The Lord is my shepherd. He gives me everything I need. – Psalm 23

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding. In all your ways obey him. Then he will make your paths smooth and straight. – Proverbs 3:5–6

"I know the plans I have for you," announces the Lord. "I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come." – Jeremiah 29:11

Don't be controlled by love for money. Be happy with what you have. God has said, "I will never leave you. I will never desert you." – Hebrews 13:5

Ask, and it will be given to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. – Matthew 7:7–8

Finding Strength:

Jesus looked at them and said, "With people, this is impossible. But not with God. All things are possible with God." – Mark 10:27

No! In all these things we are more than winners! We owe it all to Christ, who has loved us. – Romans 8:37–39

Finally, let the Lord make you strong. Depend on his mighty power. – Ephesians 6:10–18

I can do all this by the power of Christ. He gives me strength. – Philippians 4:13

That's because everyone who is a child of God has won the battle over the world. Our faith has won the battle for us. – 1 John 5:4

Grace:

Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory. – Romans 3:23–25

Those who belong to Christ Jesus are no longer under God's judgment. – Romans 8:1

When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here! – 2 Corinthians 5:17

Loving Others:

If you do not judge other people, then you will not be judged. If you do not find others guilty, then you will not be found guilty. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. – Luke 6:37–38

I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you. – John 13:34–35

Prayers From Scripture

Below is a short list of prayers found in Scripture that have been reworded for you to use in your letters to students and as you pray for your students. This is not a comprehensive list. Please feel free to use these or create your own based on other Scripture passages.

Ephesians 1:17–19

Father God, I ask You, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give _____ wisdom to see clearly and truly understand who Christ is and all that Christ has done for him/her. I pray that the eyes of _____'s heart may be enlightened so that he/she may know the hope to which You have called them, the riches of Your glorious inheritance in Your holy people and Your incomparably great power for us who believe in You. Amen.

Ephesians 3:14–19

Almighty Father, out of Your glorious and unlimited resources, I ask that You give _____ the mighty inner strength of Your Holy Spirit. I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in _____'s heart, living with him/her as he/she trusts in You. May _____ build roots that grow deep into the soil of Your marvelous love. May he/she be able to feel and understand, as all God's children should, how long, how wide, how high and how deep Your love really is, and to experience this love for him/herself, though Your love is so great that we will never see the end of it or fully know or understand it. Fill _____ with Your love. Amen.

Philippians 1:9–11

Father God, I pray that _____'s love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that he/she may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to Your glory and praise. Amen.

Colossians 1:9–12

Dear Heavenly Father, I pray that You will give _____ the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives. I pray that _____ will be able to lead a life that is worthy of You, Lord. I pray that _____ will please You in every way and that he/she would bear fruit in every good thing he/she does. I pray that _____ will grow to know You better. I pray that _____ will be very strong, in keeping with Your glorious power. I pray that _____ will be patient and never give up. I pray that _____ will give thanks with joy to You, our Father, because You have made him/her fit to have what You will give to all Your holy people: a share in the kingdom of light. Amen.

Suggestions for Dealing with Essay and Roadmap Issues

SCENARIO 1: *The student wrote something misguided or even false about the passages.*

We do not want to discourage the student in the difficult task of studying Scripture, but we do want to encourage and teach right understanding. If the student wrote, "When I get to heaven, all of the evil will be weighed against the love I showed to God and people," you could respond, "Remember that Christ died for our sins so that we wouldn't have to be judged or weighed." You could also reference an appropriate verse or passage (e.g., "2 Corinthians 5:21 says that God had Christ, who had no sin, take our place for us, so that in Christ we might become perfectly righteous in God's eyes").

SCENARIO 2: *The student summarized only part of the passages, or the student wrote something true about God, but it was not relevant to the passages/question.*

This is great! It shows that they are learning about the faith and are also learning to read and meditate on Scripture. God uses Scripture to speak to different people in different ways, so be supportive of what your student is hearing from the Holy Spirit. To provide additional guidance, you can write something like, "That's true! These passages also teach us that God watches over us."

SCENARIO 3: *The student did not provide a personal response about how the passages make a difference in their life.*

Many students struggle with answering personally. The best way to help them is to lead by example. In other words, try to answer specifically from your own experience, using "I" instead of more general words. For example, if the passages are about rejoicing, instead of writing "Christians should always have a positive and joyful attitude," try saying, "When I'm tempted to complain, I think of something I am thankful for." Alternatively, ask specific questions to guide the student. If the passages are about witnessing, you might ask, "Do you have a friend who doesn't know Christ? Could you ask if that person wants to join you in studying the Bible this week?"

SCENARIO 4: *The student skipped parts of the question.*

In your letter, encourage the student to try to answer each question even if they are not sure of the right answer. Remind the student that completing the work is for their benefit. The focus is on trying to learn more about God, but, like riding a bike or driving a car, it can be challenging at first, and even "pros" still crash sometimes. The Holy Spirit will guide us and help us as we continue to study and try to understand. The reason we study together is because no individual person has all of the answers. Please note that students are required to complete their work in full in order to receive a certificate of completion for each course.

Other Materials Available for Students

If a student is asking questions about an issue that you do not feel entirely equipped to answer, you can request to have additional resources, provided by our ministry partners, sent to the student.

Our Daily Bread Ministries (ODB), our publishing partner, and Keep Believing Ministries, a partner who provides books for Crossroads students, have given us the following booklets to share with students:

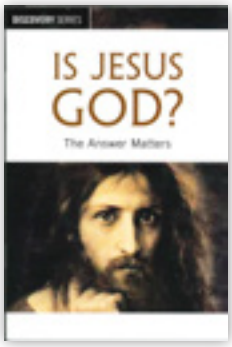
Our Daily Bread Ministries®

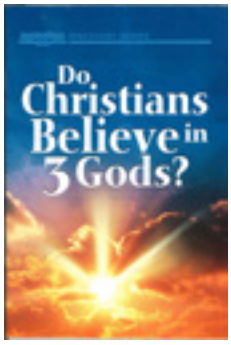
- Baptism
- Do Christians Believe in Three Gods?
- God Is Love
- Is Jesus God?
- Joseph: Overcoming Life's Challenges
- The Forgiveness of God
- Why We Believe

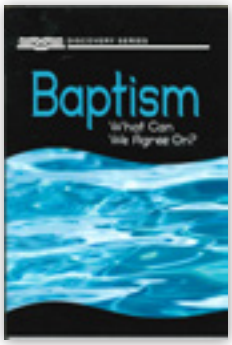
KEEP BELIEVING MINISTRIES

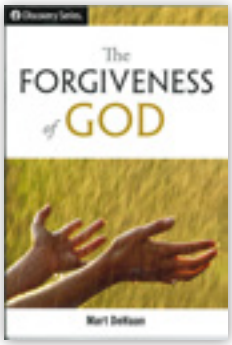
- How Can I Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?
- How to Love Your Enemies
- If I Believe, Why Do I Doubt?
- Why Is Life So Hard?

The list of booklets is subject to change. If you would like one or more of these booklets sent to a student, or if you have additional questions about any of these topics, please do not hesitate to email us at **mentor@cpministries.org** or call us at (800) 668-2450, ext. 4010.









HOW TO USE THE MENTOR PORTAL

The Crossroads mentor portal is an online tool that allows you to report student progress directly to Crossroads and update your personal information when necessary. To gain access, you will need to request an email invitation from Crossroads. You can make this request at any time. We recommend that you make the request when you inform Crossroads that you are ready to start as a mentor. Using the portal is the most efficient way to report your students' progress.

GETTING STARTED

After requesting an invitation, you will receive an email from Crossroads titled "Mentor portal invitation." The email will include a link. When you click the link, you will be taken to a web page with your invitation code supplied for you. Simply click the blue "Register" button (do not mark "I have an existing account") and you will be taken to a page where you can create a username and password.

From: Alaina Zwiernikowski
Sent: Wednesday, January 02, 2019 3:26 PM
To: Fred Smith <fsmith@fsmith.org>
Subject: Mentor portal invitation

You have been invited to our new mentor reporting portal. To redeem your invitation, please click the link below.

https://crossroads.microsoftcrmportals.com/Register?returnurl=%2f&invitation=oqfHgtacotjowFi

Sincerely,
Crossroads

NOTE: If you can't find the email in your inbox, don't forget to check your junk or spam mail. If you still can't find it, please call the office.

Be sure to write your username and password in a safe place, because you will need to use it every time you log in to the portal. If you forget your password, you can use the "Forgot Your Password?" link on the login page. When you click the link, you will be given instructions for resetting your password.

HOME PAGE

When you log in to the portal, the home page shows a list of all the lessons assigned to you waiting to be reported.

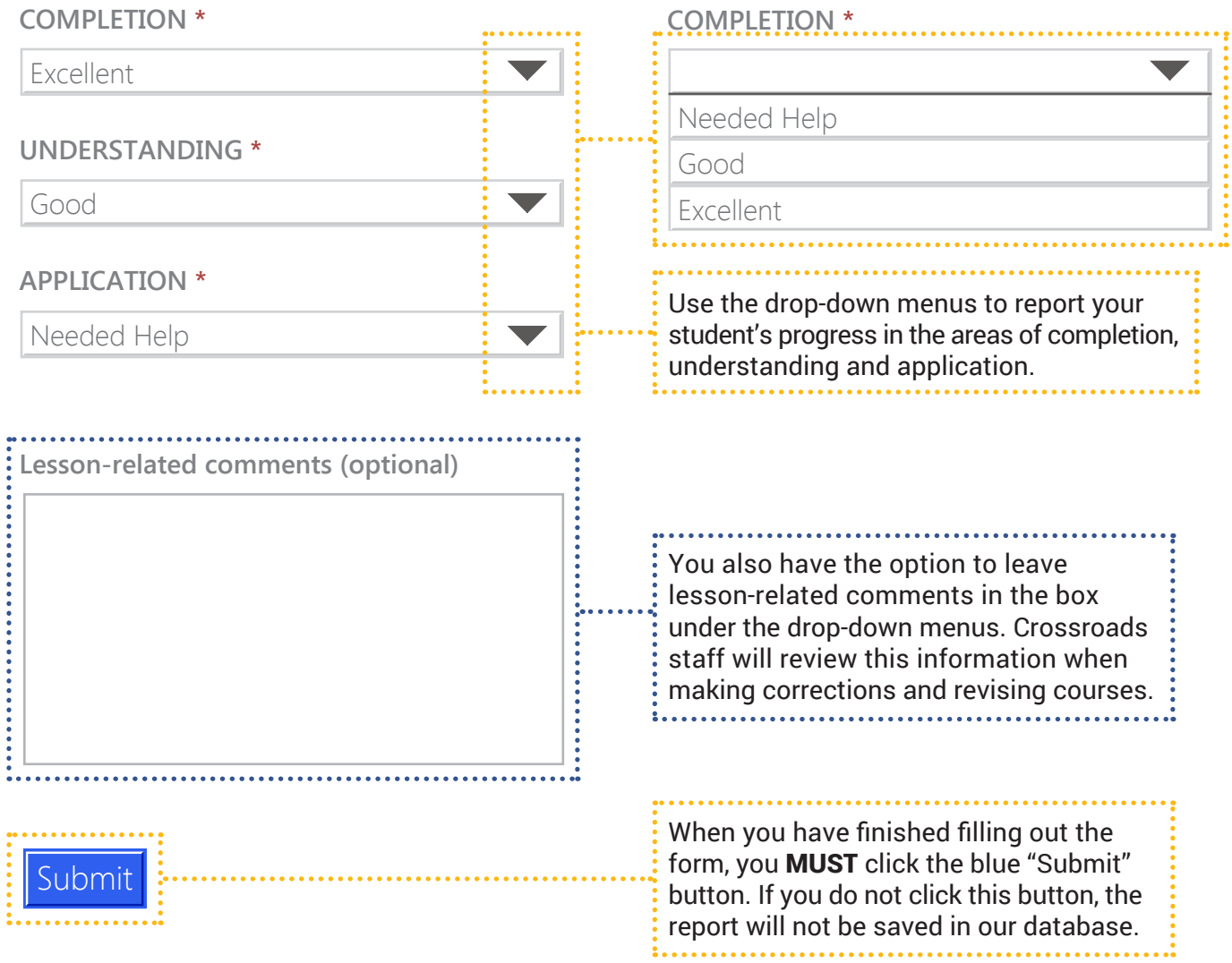
Lesson ID	Lesson	Student	Gender	Sent to Mentor	Reporting Status
436399	Who Are You L1	Eric Leatherwood	Male	1/28/2019	Awaiting Report

Reporting status: Once you have submitted a progress report, the reporting status will change to "Report Received." If you need to edit your report, you can access it for 24 hours after submitting the original report.

Every lesson has a lesson ID number on the bottom left corner of the back cover. **Click on the corresponding lesson ID number to report your student's progress for that lesson.**

REPORT STUDENT PROGRESS

After you have clicked the lesson ID number, you will be taken to the reporting progress page.



MY TIER 2/TIER 3 STUDENTS

Tier 2 and Tier 3 mentors will find a list of their active students on this page. It will include each student's current mailing address and date of birth.

Full Name	DOB	Institution	Student Status	Tier
Michael Watson	1/9/1967	Franklin Correctional Facility	Active	Tier 3

NOTE: If you only review Tier 1 lessons, you will not see a list of students here.

HOLD LESSONS

In order to schedule your vacation or other time off from receiving lessons, select the date your time off will begin and the date your time off will end. You will not receive any lessons between those dates. Remember to enter the reason you are taking time off by selecting an option from the drop-down menu. We ask that you submit this information **at least one week in advance**.

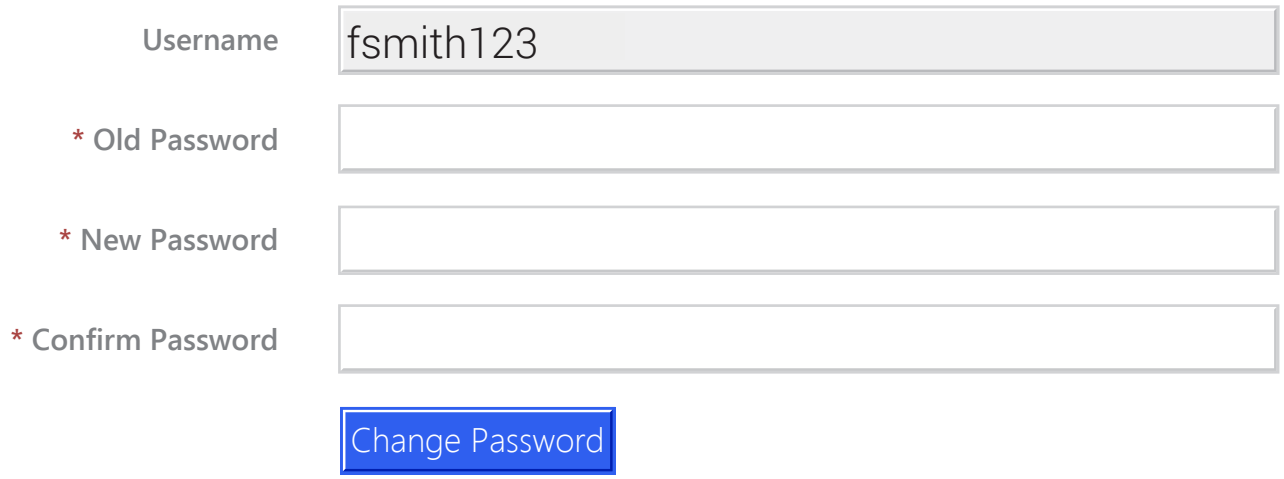
NOTE: Make sure to click the blue "Submit" button at the bottom of the page to submit your time off notice.

MY PROFILE

On this page in the portal, you can update your contact information and change your password.

CHANGE PASSWORD

In order to change your password, simply click the "Change Password" box on the left side of the "My Profile" page. Enter your old password, then set your new password and click the blue "Change Password" button.



NOTE: If you forget your password, use the "Forgot Your Password?" link on the login page to reset your password.

UPDATING YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Use the form to fill out the correct information. It will be updated automatically in our new database! Be sure to click the blue "Update" button at the very bottom of the page to save any changes you make.

First Name *
Fred

Last Name *
Smith

E-mail
fsmith@fsmith.org

Home Phone

Mobile Phone

Mentor Status
On Hold

NOTE: When you first access your portal account, check to make sure your information is correct.

Address 1
8305 Wooded Cove Dr
Plano TX 75025

Address 2
1234 Happy Ct
Grand Rapids MI 49301

Address 3

Current Mailing Address
Address 1

Current Mailing Address:
Be sure to select the address to which you would like your lessons sent right now.

Addresses 2 & 3: Use these address boxes to add alternative addresses to which Crossroads can send your lessons when you are away from your primary address.

Update

NOTE: Make sure to click the blue "Update" button at the bottom of the page to save your changes in the database.

TIER 1 LESSON LOG

CROSSROADS

You can download and print additional lesson logs at **www.cpministries.org/printable-resources**

Lesson ID#	Student name	Course & lesson number	Write the best phrase (**Needed Help**, **Good** or **Excellent**) that describes the student's work in each category below.			Lesson-related comments	Report submitted?
			Completion	**Understanding**	**Application**		
123456	John Doe	Who Are You? 2	Excellent	Good	Needed help	John seemed confused about how to answer question 7.	✓

SAMPLE SAMPLE SAMPLE

TIER 1 LESSON LOG

CROSSROADS

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Lesson ID#	Student name	Course & lesson number	Write the best phrase (**Needed Help**, **Good** or **Excellent**) that describes the student's work in each category below.			Lesson-related comments	Report submitted?
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			Completion	Understanding	Application		

Statement of Faith

The Bible is God's Word; we can rely on it to guide us.

The Holy Scriptures as originally given by God are divinely inspired, infallible and entirely trustworthy and they are the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. *Hebrews 4:12, Matthew 5:17–18, 2 Timothy 3:16–17, Psalm 119:160*

There is one true God, who is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

There is one God, who exists eternally in three persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. *Matthew 3:16–17, Matthew 28:19, John 15:26, 2 Corinthians 13:14*

Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless human life, divine miracles, vicarious and atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension, mediatorial work and personal return in power and glory. *1 Corinthians 15:3–4, Hebrews 7:25–27, John 1:1–4, Romans 5:6–8, Colossians 1:15–20*

The Holy Spirit lives in us, enabling us to follow Christ.

The Holy Spirit dwells within all believers, enabling them to live a holy life, to witness and to work for the Lord Jesus Christ. *Mark 13:11, Matthew 10:19–20, Luke 12:11–12, Romans 8:1–17, 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, Galatians 5:13–25*

Salvation is by grace, through faith and not by works.

The salvation of lost and sinful humanity is made possible by God's grace, through faith apart from works, through Christ's blood shed on the cross and through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. *Ephesians 2:8–9, Romans 3:21–28, Romans 5:1–11*

The dead will be resurrected.

The resurrection of both the saved and the lost will occur when Christ returns. Those who are saved will experience the resurrection of eternal life; those who are lost will experience the resurrection of eternal death. *John 5:28–29, Matthew 25:46, 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17, 1 Peter 1:3–5*

We are called to be unified with all believers.

We believe in the unity of the Spirit among all true believers, who are the Church, the Body of Christ. *John 17:20–23, Ephesians 4:4–6, 1 Corinthians 12:12–26, Galatians 3:26–29*

CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES

PO Box 900
Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900

800.668.2450 | cpministries.org

T1MH-0219