

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



FEBRUARY 2020

Dear Mentor,

The statistics surrounding incarceration are shocking. Mass incarceration is real, and it is an indication that the criminal justice system in our country is broken. Consider these facts:

- 10 million people are incarcerated around the world. Many live in absolute squalor.
- 2.2 million men and women are incarcerated in the United States. With just 5 percent of the world's total population, the United States houses about 22 percent of the world's incarcerated population.
- 1 in 4 Americans has a criminal conviction.
- The racial disparity in our criminal justice system is startling: 1 in 17 white males, 1 in 6 Hispanic males and 1 in 3 black males will be incarcerated at some point in their lives.
- 1 in 28 children in the United States has an incarcerated parent.

These huge numbers can be overwhelming and numbing. Sometimes we can lose sight of the fact that these numbers represent people just like us. Each one is a man or woman created in the image of God Himself (Genesis 1:27).

They are more than the ID number assigned to them. They are sons and daughters. They are parents, grandparents, neighbors and friends. Many have left families behind. Each one has a name.

They could be us. We are all one bad decision, circumstance or action away from a prison sentence. We all bear the scars of sin that have marked humanity since the Fall.

Here are a few writing tips for this month:

- Intentionally use your student's name several times in your letter to them. Remind them that they are a child of God, created in His image, which means they have intrinsic value that can never be taken away. *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well"* (Psalm 139:13–14).
- Tell your students that you are praying for them, their family and the challenges they are facing due to incarceration. Encourage them to pray regularly, and remind them that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us even if we don't know what words to say. *"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God"* (Romans 8:26–27).

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God has called us, the Church, to be His reflection in a broken world—to offer glimpses of heaven in His name until His return. You are doing this, one student at a time. You are helping each student discover who they are in Jesus, which helps restore and heal the body of Christ.

My prayer is that the Church as a whole will answer the call to bring healing to a broken system, one person at a time.

Serving alongside you,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas Cupery".

Douglas Cupery
Church Mobilization Director

Have a question? You can contact the mentor support team at mentor@cpministries.org or 800-668-2450.

NEWS & NOTES FOR MENTORS

Volunteer conference and appreciation luncheon: You are invited to our volunteer conference and appreciation luncheon on Saturday, April 25, 2020! The event will take place at the Postma Center at Pine Rest in Grand Rapids, MI. Paul Tan, the director of Crossroads Singapore, will be featured as the keynote speaker. You will receive an invitation with more details in the mail soon. Space is limited, so RSVP as soon as you can!

New cover art for *Who Are You?* We recently discovered that certain correctional institutions have been rejecting *Who Are You?* lessons because they strictly prohibit any depictions of children inside their facilities. To remove this barrier, we decided to change the cover art on the lessons. The new cover art, called “Contemplative Man,” was created by the same student artist, Nickolas. You may receive a mix of both versions of these lessons for a while. However, the lesson content, other than a few minor updates, will be the same no matter which cover is on the lesson.

We have also expanded the answer key for this course. The updated answer key includes the same suggestions and guidelines for mentors, but we have placed them within the context of the lesson material to make it easier to follow along while reviewing lessons. You may continue to use the answer key you have, but if you would like an updated version, you may download it from our website or contact us at mentor@cpministries.org or 800-668-2450, ext. 4010.

