

MENTOR HANDBOOK



CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES





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OUR MISSION

**Crossroads connects
people in prisons
with mentors from
churches to develop
Christ-centered
relationships as
they study God's
Word together.**

CORE VALUES

Crossroads strives to:

1. Honor the God-given dignity in all people

Recognizing that everyone bears the image of God, we unconditionally respect, love and accept all people. We endeavor to restore dignity that the criminal justice system has removed, believing that God offers redemption and renewed purpose to each person who is incarcerated. *“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).*

2. Treasure God’s Word

We center our lives and our ministry around the belief that, through the Gospel, God changes lives. As we immerse ourselves in God’s Word, we also provide the Gospel message to incarcerated people around the world in a way that helps them understand it and apply it to their lives. *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17).*

3. Serve churches around the world

We equip and empower the Church outside correctional facilities to fulfill God’s call to remember those who are incarcerated. We provide resources to help churches grow spiritually and develop mutually enriching relationships with incarcerated men and women around the world. *“Then the righteous will answer him, . . . ‘When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me’” (Matthew 25:37–40).*

4. Fulfill our mission with excellence and urgency

Because we are aware of the great need for God’s love in dark places throughout the world, we aim to accomplish all our endeavors with excellence and with intentional urgency. *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:23–24).*

5. Steward resources faithfully and partner intentionally

We faithfully steward the financial and human resources God has given us and use them in a way that ensures the greatest benefit to His Kingdom. While recognizing our ministry’s strengths and abilities, we also seek to partner with others in humility and transparency to maximize our reach and impact. *“This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:1–2).*

6. Pray continually

Because we believe that prayer is powerful, we regularly bring our praises, laments and requests to God, both individually and collectively. We encourage everyone involved in the ministry to practice the spiritual discipline of prayer. *“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).*

STATEMENT OF FAITH

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

2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:20–21; Psalm 119:160; Hebrews 4:12

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

Genesis 1:1; John 1:1–3; Matthew 3:16–17; John 10:30; John 15:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14

Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.

John 1:1–4; Colossians 1:15–20; Romans 10:9–10; Hebrews 7:25–27

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

John 14:26; Luke 12:11–12; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; Romans 8:10–16, 26–27; Ephesians 1:13–14; Titus 3:5

Every person is made in God's image, but because of sin, every person needs salvation.

Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3–6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8

We are saved by grace, through faith in Christ, not by anything we can do.

Ephesians 2:8–9; 1 John 1:9; Romans 3:21–28; Romans 5:1–11; John 3:16

The dead will be resurrected.

John 5:28–29; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17; Revelation 20:12–15; 1 Peter 1:3–5

We are called to be unified in Christ with all believers.

Ephesians 4:4–6; John 17:18–23; 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, 25–26; Romans 12:4–5

We are called to work with one another to share the message of the Gospel.

Matthew 28:18–20, Acts 1:8; John 20:21; Romans 10:14–15; 2 Corinthians 5:19–20; Isaiah 42:6–7

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION GUIDE



CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES

cpministries.org

[800.668.2450](tel:800.668.2450)

facebook.com/CrossroadsPrisonMin/

Dear Crossroads Team Member,

On behalf of Crossroads' board of directors, I am happy to welcome you to our team! I know you will be blessed as God works through you to bring love and encouragement to men and women in correctional facilities across the country.

Hebrews 13 urges us to "remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison." As you serve people who are incarcerated, you are effectively there with them. Regardless of how you serve with Crossroads, you will help men and women in prison grow in their faith and relationship with Jesus. We believe you will also grow as a disciple of Jesus as the Spirit opens your eyes to a world you may not have experienced yourself.

Having visited various correctional facilities and listened to the stories of men and women who cherish the Crossroads lessons and friendships with their mentors, I assure you that what you have been called to do has an eternal impact. On behalf of those who will experience Jesus' unconditional love through Crossroads, thank you. Thank you for choosing Crossroads as a place to donate your time, talent and treasures. Thank you for answering Jesus' call to join Him in the work He is doing behind bars.

Full of gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Liske".

Jim Liske
Chairman, Board of Directors
Crossroads Prison Ministries



"Thank you, Crossroads, for your prayers and spiritual encouragement. . . . As a prison inmate missionary who is far away from home, friends and family and is weighed down by regret and disappointment, your prison ministry was Jesus to me in my life and difficult situation."

- Mario, Crossroads student in Michigan

THE MASS INCARCERATION PROBLEM



The Scope

- 10 million people are incarcerated worldwide.
- 2.2 million people are incarcerated in the United States.
- The US accounts for 5 percent of the world's total population but houses 22 percent of the world's incarcerated population.



Loneliness

- 70 percent of people in prison do not receive a single visitor in a typical month.



Impact on Children & Families

- More than 2.7 million children in the US have an incarcerated parent—that's 1 in 28 children.
- Approximately 10 million children have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their lives.



Women in Prison

- The female prison population is nearly eight times greater today than it was in 1980.
- More than 60 percent of women in state prisons have a child under the age of 18.
- More than half of the women in state prisons have been abused—47 percent physically and 39 percent sexually (many of whom are survivors of both types of abuse).



Education Level of People in Prison

- Of all incarcerated people in the United States, about 65 percent have not received a high school diploma. Just over 41 percent of those dropped out of high school; 23 percent obtained a GED.
- Almost 23 percent have received a high school diploma only.
- Almost 13 percent have also obtained a postsecondary education.

MISSION

Crossroads connects people in prisons with mentors from churches to develop Christ-centered relationships as they study God's Word together.

HISTORY

In 1984, Tom de Vries, a real estate agent turned car salesman with a passion for prison ministry, began visiting and sharing the Gospel with men in the Kent County Jail. As Tom ministered to the men, he could see they were learning about God, but he wanted more for them. He was committed to helping them become disciples of Christ and learn how to follow and serve Him in their present circumstances.

However, Tom found that just as the men began to connect deeply with God's Word, they were suddenly transferred to a different location, and he lost contact with them. After a great deal of prayer, Tom, his brother and some volunteers gathered to create a correspondence Bible study program, and Crossroads was born. Because everything was done through the mail, the Crossroads program could follow each student no matter when or where they were transferred.

Under the leadership of David Schuringa, who took over as president in 2000, Crossroads gradually expanded its footprint across the globe, grew its volunteer base and added numerous Bible study courses for students.

Lisa Blystra assumed leadership in 2015 and currently serves as the president and CEO. She has led the ministry back to its roots, renewing its focus on Christ-centered mentoring relationships. Under her leadership, the organization has worked tirelessly to expand its programming to meet the spiritual needs of an ever-changing population of men and women behind bars.

Today, Crossroads Prison Ministries is bringing the Gospel message of love, redemption and hope through Jesus Christ to men and women in more than 2,200 correctional facilities in the United States and facilities throughout twenty-three countries around the world. In the 2020 fiscal year, Crossroads sent 158,088 Bible study lessons, with encouraging letters, to students throughout the United States. The students received spiritual guidance, encouragement and friendship from more than 3,000 mentors from churches across the country. Between the mentors who serve across the US and the mission support volunteers who serve in West Michigan, volunteers donated about 194,996 hours of work to move the ministry forward—equivalent to the work of 99 full-time staff members.



Tom de Vries



Lisa Blystra

VOLUNTEERING WITH CROSSROADS

The work of Crossroads Prison Ministries is empowered by a community of volunteers who serve in our office, across the country and around the world.

Volunteers are valued members of our ministry team and are capable partners in achieving our mission.

What volunteers can expect from us:

We will partner with volunteers to help them find the roles that best utilize their experience, talents and personal qualities to create the greatest ministry effectiveness and impact.

We believe in the value of volunteers and are committed to investing time in developing them for their chosen roles. We will provide the necessary training, coaching, support and materials for volunteers to function effectively in their ministry.

We continually work toward our goal of building strong relationships between staff members and volunteers as we serve together.

We strive to create an organizational culture that provides spiritual encouragement and an environment that is positive, supportive, transparent and empowering.

We are committed to identifying and developing volunteer leaders, celebrating volunteer growth in both skill and scope of involvement.

What we expect from our volunteers:

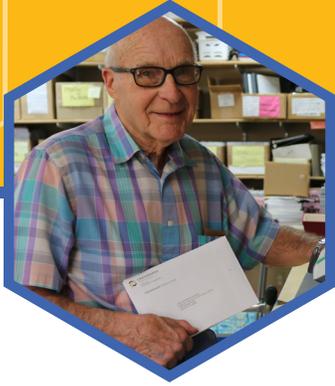
We invite volunteers to approach their ministry with a servant's heart, recognizing that even seemingly simple tasks are vital to the goals of the ministry.

We ask volunteers to participate fully in the training and coaching process by thoroughly reading training handbooks, reviewing physical and digital resources and attending educational events.

We request that volunteers partner with us in our endeavor to maintain a spiritually encouraging, positive, supportive and empowering culture.

We ask volunteers to remain open and transparent, actively participating in receiving and providing feedback and suggestions in a respectful way that contributes to a healthy ministry environment.

We encourage volunteers to be ministry advocates, sharing the mission and story of Crossroads with their faith community and inviting others to join the ministry.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

No matter what passions or skills a person may have, there's a place for them at Crossroads!

Mentors

Crossroads mentors across the country serve without leaving their homes. They form friendships with people in jail or prison through the mail. Using resources that Crossroads provides, they review their students' completed Bible study lessons, offer encouraging comments, answer their questions and help them see how God is speaking to them through His Word. They also write uplifting, hope-filled letters to their students, many of whom do not receive mail from anyone else. Most importantly, mentors pray for their students. Through this journey, both mentors and students experience spiritual transformation as they grow closer to God together.

Ambassadors

Crossroads ambassadors are mentors who present volunteer opportunities to their friends, families, neighbors, church congregations and others in their communities on behalf of Crossroads. They advocate for the vision and

mission of Crossroads and share the amazing stories of spiritual transformation they see happen through the mentorship program. They recruit, support and encourage mentors as they develop friendships with people in prison or jail through Bible studies and encouraging letters.

Mission Support Volunteers

Every Bible study lesson and encouraging letter is touched by volunteers who serve remotely from their homes or at the Crossroads home office in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mission support volunteers do the vital administrative and production work that enables Crossroads to reach thousands of people in correctional facilities each week.

All departments at the home office need people with skills in database management, detailed data entry, proofreading and general administrative support. We also have an ongoing need for people who are bilingual in English and Spanish to assist with phone calls, lesson reviewing and translation efforts.

Various departments have specific needs for:

- People with skills in customer service to assist with mentor recruitment and support, event planning and implementation, hospitality tasks like shopping, setting up for events and serving at events and advocating for Crossroads at their churches
- People with skills in graphic design, writing and editing, art and poetry curation, social media content creation and photography
- People who are detail-oriented and thrive on tracking projects from inception to completion, with skills in proofreading, editing and collecting and compiling data for reports
- People who enjoy general support tasks like mail sorting, administrative support, facility maintenance and custodial care

Interns

Internships are supervised learning experiences for institutional credit that include learning goals and objectives. They are an integral part of our organization, offering high school and college students opportunities to serve in critical roles alongside Crossroads staff. Interns gain knowledge and skills to lead and serve in all aspects of nonprofit ministries that serve marginalized populations, especially the prison population. Crossroads offers many internship opportunities.

- **Communications interns** help share the story of Crossroads by creating content for the website and social media, writing and editing stories for publications and promo-

tional materials and using graphic design skills to create publications and promotional materials.

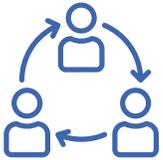
- **Art curation interns** assist with collecting, organizing, evaluating and cataloging student artwork. They participate in conceptualizing exhibitions in the home office building and exhibitions that travel to other host sites.
- **International interns** assist with processing international extension center reports. They receive and assure the processing and shipping of extension center material orders. They are involved in proactive, cross-cultural communication with extension center directors to assure that they are receiving appropriate support from the home office.
- **Curriculum interns** assist the curriculum development director with pilot programs, receive and assure processing of student and mentor spiritual assessments, review student questionnaires, compile data for various projects and place print requests. They mail materials to chaplains, test group leaders and curriculum writers/editors and assist with answering student questions and responding to their requests.
- **Bilingual English/Spanish interns** assist various teams by proofreading translated documents, supporting Spanish mentor recruitment, providing customer service to Spanish-speaking mentors and helping staff respond to Spanish-speaking students' requests for more information or support.

If you would like more information about volunteering with Crossroads, please call 616-208-1480 or email volunteer@cpministries.org



MORE WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Here are even more ways to partner with Crossroads!



Share your story

Tell your friends, family, church and coworkers about your experience of volunteering with Crossroads and invite them to join you in walking alongside men and women in prison and jail.



Invite us to your church

Would you like your entire church to hear the story of Crossroads? We have a team of speakers who can share the mission of Crossroads during your church service or event. Your church could also host one of the Crossroads Prison Art Project's traveling art galleries, which feature student artwork.



Give

Crossroads is mainly funded by the generosity of individual donors and churches. If God is leading you to support Crossroads financially, you can give a gift at cpministries.org/donate.

Pray

At Crossroads, we believe in the power of prayer. Will you commit to pray for the ministry as well as the 10 million men and women incarcerated around the world?

VOG

Mailing address:
PO Box 900
Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900

Physical address:
2480 44th St SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49512



CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES



MENTORING GUIDELINES

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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. You are joining **thousands** of other volunteers across the United States, and in more than twenty extension centers worldwide, **to bring hope, light and love** into the darkest places.

Through your ministry, you will help people in prison build a solid spiritual 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 people in prison. Jesus stated 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 studies and write encouraging letters, you are fulfilling this biblical mandate.

The Bible is full of letters that encourage God's people toward greater faith and a deeper connection with Jesus Christ. Paul's letters to the churches make up a large portion of the New Testament. These letters, some of which were written from prison, were instrumental in growing the early Church and spreading Christianity. Today, more than 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 people in prison 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 part of my personal story. More than twenty 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,



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

Douglas Cupery
Church Mobilization Director

P.S. Be sure to check out <https://cpministries.org/resources/mentors/just-for-mentors> to read newsletters that offer tips and suggestions for how you can best serve your students!

OVERVIEW OF THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Crossroads mentors review students' completed Bible study lessons, write letters 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.

The mentorship program has three levels:

Tier 1: LEARNING

In this introductory level, students learn about God and basic biblical concepts. A mentor receives a lesson from a different student each week. On average, it takes about 1–1½ hours to review a lesson and write a letter.

Tier 2: LIVING

In this intermediate level, students learn how to live out their faith in response to God's love. In Tier 2, mentors are paired with a student with whom they will journey for at least one course. Tier 2 mentors receive lessons from their students about once every four weeks. On average, it takes about 1–1½ hours to review a lesson and write a letter.

Tier 3: LEADING

In this advanced level, students study seminary-level material that provides them with the skills they need to be spiritual leaders in their communities. Tier 3 is similar to Tier 2 in that students and mentors are paired one-on-one. A mentor can expect a lesson from their Tier 3 student about once every six weeks. The average time commitment is about 1–2 hours per lesson, but it can take longer depending on the mentor's familiarity with the lesson content.

All mentors and students begin in Tier 1. After a mentor has reviewed four Tier 1 lessons, we encourage them to consider making a commitment to mentoring a student in a one-on-one relationship. Please refer to the Tier 2 and Tier 3 sections of this handbook for more information.

Many mentors choose to interact with more than one student each week. For example, a mentor may request to receive one or more Tier 1 lessons per week in addition to having a one-on-one mentoring relationship with one or more students in Tier 2 or 3.

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.

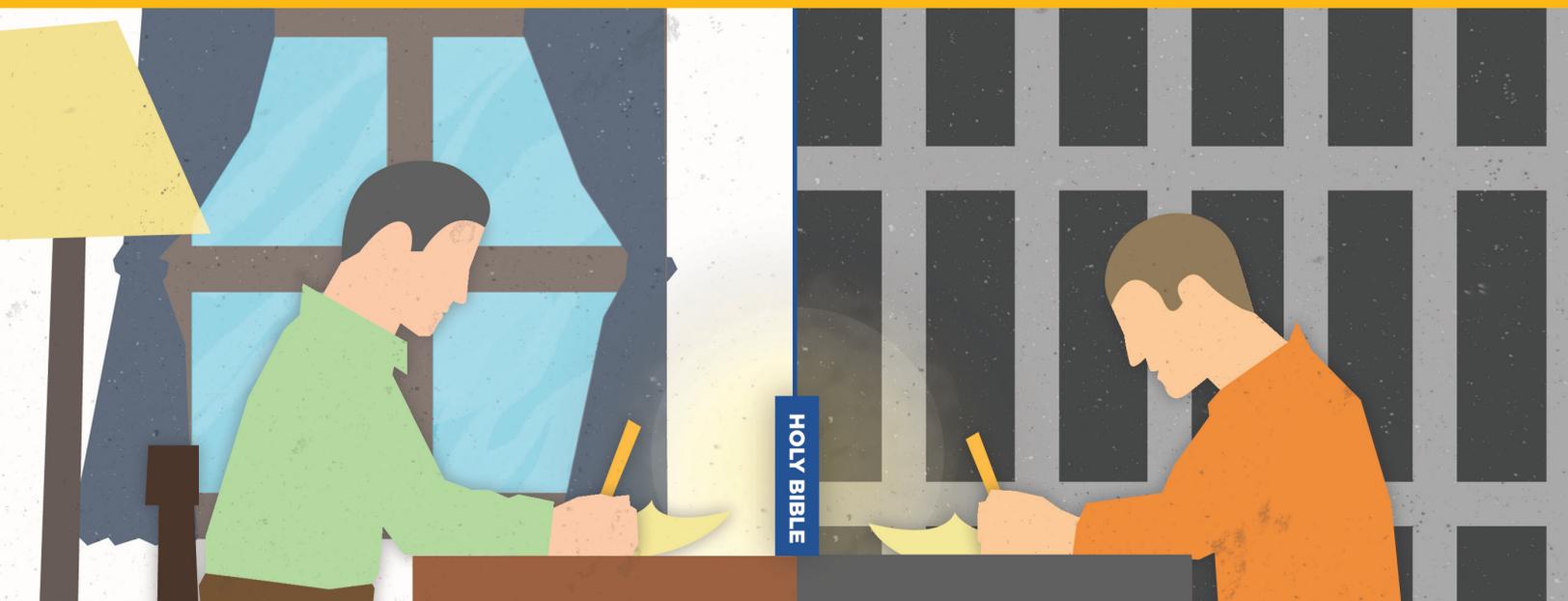
Step 2: The student completes the lesson and mails it back to the Crossroads office.

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.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

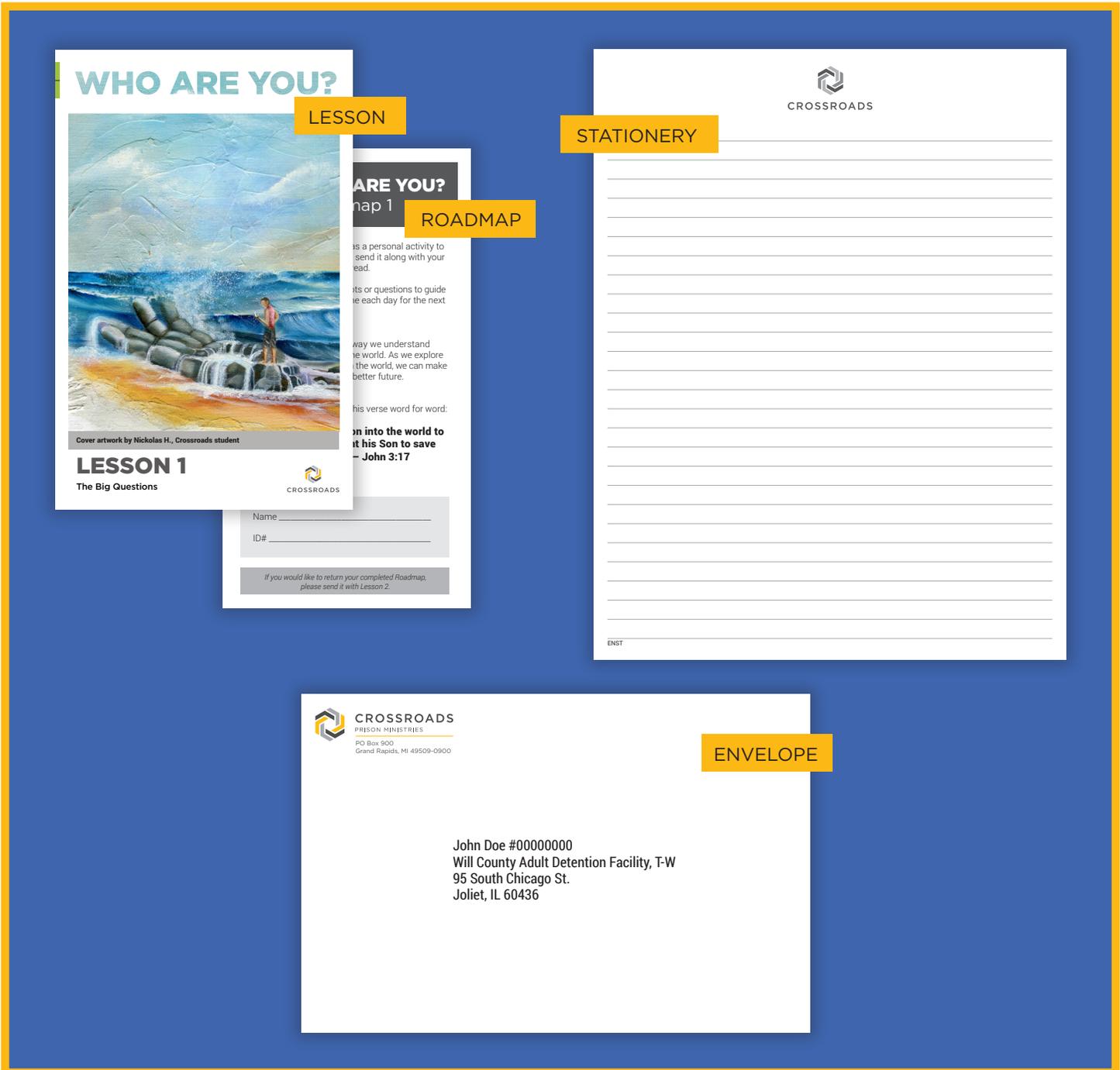
- **Your student may not be a Christian.** People of all faiths and backgrounds decide to take our courses to learn more about Christianity. Their responses to questions asking them what they believe or what they think may be very different from yours. Please do not tell them that they are wrong. Instead, encourage them to continue studying and asking questions. Do your best to acknowledge their perspective, and then share the answer to the question based on your understanding of the Bible. 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 people in prison is probably not true.** Any preconceived notions you have about people in prison likely do not reflect their reality. Put those aside and do your best to keep an open mind while interacting with your students.
- **You will encounter a wide variety of educational backgrounds.** The majority of people in prison have the equivalent of a third-grade education. You may see spelling errors, rough sentence structure or very brief answers, but the most important thing is that they understand the lesson content. 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 did not have access to education due to life circumstances and/or choices. If you notice that students are consistently struggling with certain questions (or if you read a question and it seems unclear), please let us know, and we will evaluate the lesson. Our goal is for students to understand God's Word.
- **Maintain focus on the lesson content and what God is doing in your students' lives through His Word.** Please avoid politics and other divisive subjects. You may disagree with a student about something, but please simply encourage them to keep studying and reading the text. It is not your job to convict them of the truth. Let the Holy Spirit do His work, and do your best to show the student God's love.
- **Never ask your students about their crimes or look them up online.** None of us would want to be identified constantly by the worst thing we ever did or the lowest point in our life. Some students, however, may choose to tell you about their past. If they do, please respond graciously and remember that "all 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. Show that same grace to your students. As the Bible says, "love covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). Let love prevail.



THE LESSON PACKET

After 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 for you to 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 may include:

- **Mentor notes:** Some students' lessons require special handling, and a note may be included in your packet to provide more details.
- **Various news/announcements:** Occasionally, you will receive inserts that include important news or announcements that we need to communicate to all mentors.

PLEASE REMOVE THIS NOTE BEFORE MAILING THE LESSON BACK TO THE STUDENT.

INTRODUCING NEW MENTOR PORTAL

As we transition to our new database, we will be launching a **new mentor portal on the Crossroads website**. This portal will replace the "Report a Score" page currently on the website. We encourage all mentors to use this new online portal, but it is not required.

The mentor portal will provide one convenient place for you to report student progress, make changes to your contact information and enter vacation dates so we can pause your lessons. **Any information you enter into the portal will automatically transfer to our database.** Using the new portal will be the easiest way to report your students' progress and keep track of which lessons you have reported. Tier 2 and Tier 3 mentors will see a list of their current students on their portal profile page.

In order to give you access to your account on the new portal, we will need to email you a personal invitation. This means that we need to **make sure we have your correct email address on file**. We will be sending your invitation to join the portal via email in February. Please contact the Crossroads office and make sure we have your most up-to-date **email address and phone number** by **January 31**, preferably by emailing the mentor support team at **mentor@cpministries.org**.

P.S. Don't forget to watch your mailbox for the important update for mentors!

CCC
More **NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES

NOTE FOR MENTOR:

Dear Mentor,

The student who completed this lesson is in a facility that only allows photocopied documents. The enclosed lesson is a photocopy of the original.

As a result of the copying process, the pages of the lesson may be out of order, upside down or otherwise altered. Some pages may also be missing. Please review the lesson to the best of your ability. Also, please avoid writing comments to the student about any issues you noticed related to the copying process.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email mentor@cpministries.org or call (800) 668-2450.

Please remove this note before sending the lesson to the student. Thank you!

MENTOR NOTE s Staff
MNPL

MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

When you receive a new lesson packet from Crossroads, you are responsible for completing the following five tasks **within one week** of receiving the packet:

- 1 **Reviewing the lesson**
- 2 **Writing a letter**
- 3 **Assessing the student's progress**
- 4 **Reporting the student's progress**
- 5 **Mailing the lesson and letter**

1

Reviewing the lesson

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

Lessons should be reviewed and mailed 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 the lesson as soon as you can so the student isn’t waiting too long.

Here are the basic steps for reviewing lesson packets:



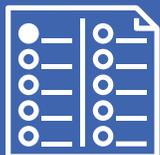
Pray

Pray before you begin. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you 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 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 write the number of errors you have found. 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 concept, and finding the best fit from a different translation still demonstrates this.

Be sure to use a blue or black ink pen 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.

If you want to figure out what version of the Bible a student is using, websites like **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, if allowed by the student's facility. Encourage your student to request a Bible from Crossroads if they make a comment about needing 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 of a question, 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 63. 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 your own reflections on the topics or passages (see page 26 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 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 often remark that they appreciate knowing someone has thoroughly reviewed their answers and that they are encouraged by their mentors' comments. If 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 60 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 lessons and in the spaces 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.

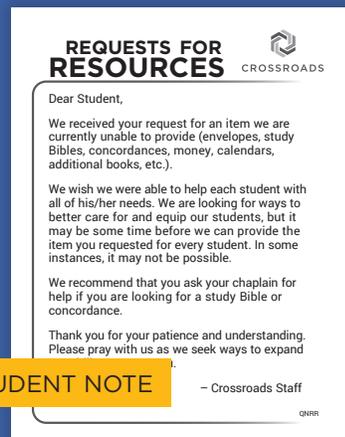
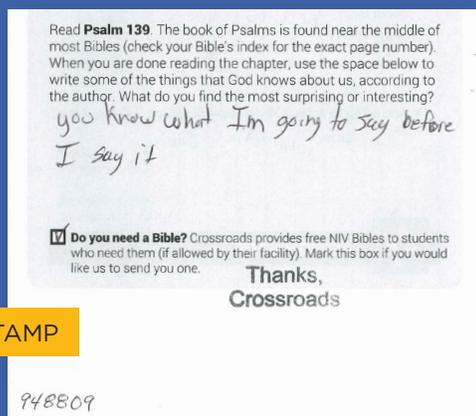
In some courses, space is provided throughout the lessons that students and mentors can use to interact. We call these **conversation boxes**. Students may fill the entire space (since extra paper is often expensive), but if they don't, you may use any remaining space to respond and write comments.

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.

Prayers for God's people can be found throughout the Bible. We have selected a few as examples to use in your letters or in response to your students' prayer requests, which you can find on page 62. It is a short list—there are many more!

If a student is struggling with a spiritual or personal issue, see page 64 for a list of resources you can request to have sent to the student.

Students will often ask for help with a range of issues and concerns. We attempt to address these questions before sending a 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 that we have 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 if you are not sure how to respond.



ABOUT ROADMAPS

Roadmaps are daily devotional guides for students. They 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 multiple Roadmaps with a lesson. The number on the Roadmap will usually not 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

Name _____
ID# _____

If you would like to return your completed Roadmap, please send it with Lesson 2.

GREAT TRUTHS OF THE BIBLE

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 welcome your input!

The inclusion of personal letters is what sets Crossroads apart from other correspondence prison ministries. We want to make learning about the Bible more relational. Jesus said, “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** with every lesson.

Please approach the process humbly. Pray before you write. Ask God to direct your words and to help you write the words your student needs. Your letters do 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.

Use a blue or black ink pen to write your letters. **Please avoid writing in cursive**; print or type your letters instead. Many students did not learn cursive in school, so they have trouble reading it.

Please keep your letters focused on discussing the lesson content and providing encouragement; avoid engaging in debates about political or theological views that may differ from your own.

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

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 content.

- What do the passages in the lesson mean to you? What is God telling you through them?
- How would 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 related story, teaching or sermon that comes to mind?
- Are there other Bible passages that relate to the lesson and would provide further wisdom or encouragement for the student? (See page 61 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 their 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 favorite Bible passage. Let the student know why it means so much to you.
- 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).
- Share a verse that describes God’s love for them.
- Write some song/hymn lyrics that describe God’s love for them.

E. Sign the letter.

- For Tier 1, use your first name only, followed by **“your mentor for this lesson.”** We ask you to do this so students know you will not be continuing to correspond with them.
- For Tier 2 and 3, use your first name only.

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

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 can 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 in detail 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. Please refer to page 65 for directions on how to activate your mentor portal account. 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** and following 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	<i>Who Are You?</i> , Lesson 2
▶ Selection in COMPLETION category	Excellent
▶ Selection in UNDERSTANDING category	Good
▶ Selection in APPLICATION category	Needed Help
▶ Lesson-related comments (optional)	Question 7 seemed confusing.
▶ 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.

123456

WAY/1

Please print your full name and address. (Please do not remove the covers. The information you provide below is the only way we can track your lessons.)

John Doe
FIRST LAST

00000000
ID#

Will County Adult Detention Facility, T-W
INSTITUTION HOUSING

45 South Chicago St.
STREET ADDRESS OR BOX

Joliet IL 60436
CITY STATE ZIP

WANT TO DO MORE?

Read the Bible chapters listed below. When you are done, write one or two new things you learned from each chapter about God and the world God created.

The book of Genesis is the first book in the Bible.

Genesis 1:

Genesis 2:

1.2.3.4.5.6

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 or 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 do not use the portal to report this. Call the office at (800) 668-2450, ext. 4010, as soon as possible and wait to 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 lesson logs for each tier at the end of their respective sections in this handbook.

Once you have filled the lesson logs in this handbook, you can download and print additional logs from our website. Go to cpministries.org/mentors and click the **Printable Resources** button.

IF YOU DON'T REPORT YOUR STUDENTS' PROGRESS

If you don't report your students' progress for six 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 drastically 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' 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. We recommend purchasing 2-ounce stamps from your local post office. A lesson that includes several additional inserts (multiple Roadmaps, notes from Crossroads to a student, additional pages to your letter, etc.) may require the 3-ounce postage rate.

Insufficient postage on an envelope will cause a 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 usually provide enough postage.

A single "Forever" stamp is not enough postage for any lesson packet.



MINISTRY-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

We serve students in many different prison systems with varying rules and regulations. We have highlighted several guidelines that are consistent among facilities as well as several that are specific to Crossroads' ministry. We deeply desire to serve all students in all correctional facilities, and respecting these regulations will ensure that we can continue to do so.

- 1. Please do not send any materials not provided by Crossroads to your students. Also, please do not use any tape, correction fluid, markers or highlighters on your letter or reviewed lessons.** When a prison mail room finds any extra items in a lesson, they may refuse to accept the lesson and return it to Crossroads, causing a delay in the lesson reaching the student.
- 2. Please do not put greeting cards or note cards in a Tier 1 student's lesson.** Because prison mailing restrictions for cards change often, cards included with a lesson may cause the lesson itself to be rejected. If you would like to send a card to your Tier 2 or Tier 3 student, be sure to check your mentor portal account to verify the facility's restrictions first.
- 3. Please use only your first name when communicating with students.** 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 contact the Crossroads office about this request.** For Tier 1 students, you will not have enough information to advocate for them effectively, so Crossroads will take care of their request. For Tier 2 or Tier 3 students, Crossroads will ask for your input.
- 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 the student, keeping in mind that we don't have control over what the student is experiencing.
- 7. Please avoid controversial topics.** It's not uncommon for students to share political and theological views that are very different from yours. We ask that you avoid engaging in debates or "correcting" their opinions. Try to keep your letters and comments focused on discussing the lesson content and providing encouragement.

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, you will need to place yourself on hold. You will need to do this at least **one week ahead of time** to ensure that you don't receive any lessons when you are not available to review them. You can place yourself on hold via the mentor portal (see page 67). If you need to be on hold for more than six months, please contact the Crossroads office directly.

Questions?

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



Email: mentor@cpministries.org



Phone: (800) 668-2450, ext. 4010



Website: www.cpministries.org

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

Many mentor resources are available on our website at 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.

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TIER 1: LEARNING

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Group Mentoring

As a Tier 1 mentor, you are part of a team of mentors who extend hope and encouragement to Crossroads students all over the country. You will receive a lesson from a different student each week.

Group mentoring gives students a variety of voices that speak grace and truth into their lives. It also gives mentors the opportunity to meet a variety of people.

Approach to Tier 1 Mentoring

Because you interact with a different student each week, you only have one chance to encourage each student. So we urge you to make it count!

Here are a few tips as you get started:

- **Pray before writing your letter.** Open your heart to the Holy Spirit's guidance as you put pen to paper.
- **Lead with love and connection.** You might feel the urge to get straight to the point and share godly wisdom or the Gospel message with them. But we encourage you to begin by connecting with them. Tell your student about yourself and your journey. Compliment them or celebrate something you see in them. This opens up space for you to share wisdom or guidance later in the letter if you choose.
- **Don't be afraid to ask questions.** You will not be able to read their responses, but their next mentor will receive valuable information about the student that will help that mentor offer specific encouragement.
- **Pray for your student.** One of the most powerful things you can do in your letter is to write a prayer of blessing over your student. If your student shared prayer requests, name those requests specifically in your prayer.

Building Trust

Sometimes Tier 1 mentors get frustrated when their students don't share openly about their lives or answer questions completely. Something to keep in mind is that it often takes time to earn a student's trust. When they begin the program, many students are hesitant to share their thoughts, opinions and personal stories. But as they learn that Crossroads mentors can be trusted, they begin to open up. You may find people in prison to be the most refreshingly honest and authentic people you've ever encountered.

Here are some ways we can build trust with students as an organization:

- **Return lessons to students promptly.** When students receive their lessons back quickly, they also receive the message that they are important and haven't been forgotten.
- **Open up about your life.** Relationships are reciprocal. If you share honestly and openly about your life journey with your student, they might be more likely to show vulnerability to their next mentor.
- **Use your student's name.** When someone is sentenced to prison, they are stripped of their identity. They are no longer known by their name but by their prison ID number. So when you use your student's name in your letter, you are helping to restore their dignity and humanity. Try to refer to a student by name multiple times in your letter.

Your Mentoring Matters

Sometimes Tier 1 mentors wonder whether students are really growing in their walk with Christ. They may notice that a student isn't grasping biblical concepts or that they seem spiritually immature.

Keep in mind that each student is at a different stage in their journey. Some are wise and well versed in theology. Others are brand-new to the faith or wrestle with doubts. Others aren't quite comfortable opening up about their spiritual life yet. That's OK. Your job is to meet them where they are and give them encouragement and love.

Tier 1 mentors can also grow discouraged because they aren't sure whether their letters are making a difference. We can tell you—without a doubt—that your mentoring matters. Many people in prison have very little contact with the outside world, so your presence through pen and paper is powerful!

Encouraging words will stay with your student for a long time—maybe for the rest of their life. Students will often return to your letters over and over again as a source of encouragement. They may also share your letters with others around them. Many incarcerated men and women don't have contact with the outside world, so letters are often passed among a student's circle of friends. Your letter might provide encouragement to multiple people beyond your student!

You Are Ready to Get Started!

We are excited to welcome you to the Crossroads mentor team! 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 acts of writing letters and studying His Word through the Crossroads mentorship program.

Now that you have reviewed this handbook, you are ready to get started! **Remember to contact us to let us know that you are ready to start receiving lessons.** You can email us at mentor@cpministries.org or call us at (800) 668-2450, ext. 4010. We will send your first lesson packet as soon as we hear from you!

Next Step

After you have reviewed at least four Tier 1 lessons, we encourage you to consider adding a Tier 2 student. You can continue receiving Tier 1 lessons, but you will also be paired with a Tier 2 student whom you will mentor for at least one Tier 2 Bible study course.

You can learn more about one-on-one mentoring in the Tier 2 section of this handbook (see page 43). To be paired with a Tier 2 student, please reach out to our mentor support team at mentor@cpministries.org or (800) 668-2450, ext. 4010.



**TIER 2:
LIVING**

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One-on-One Mentoring

The biggest difference between Tier 1 and Tier 2 mentoring is that in Tier 2, a mentor stays with the same student for the length of an entire course or longer. This allows you and your student to build a strong friendship and watch as God works in both of your lives.

In some cases, a student and a mentor will stay together for years, studying all the remaining Bible studies together. Friendships sometimes grow into family-like bonds. Some students say that they think of their mentor as a parent or grandparent.

We have found that it is in one-on-one mentoring relationships where the most profound transformations take place—for both the students and the mentors. One of the relationships in the Bible that most clearly demonstrates this is that of Paul and Timothy.

Through a close friendship, cultivated in part through letter writing, Timothy and Paul became faithful disciples of Jesus and pillars in God’s Kingdom.

In the introduction to his first letter to Timothy, Paul referred to his young disciple as his “true son in the faith.” In Philippians, Paul said he had “no one else like him.” When a student and mentor exchange letters regularly, they develop close, familial friendships over the months and years, just like the one Paul and Timothy shared.

Tier 2 is a long-term commitment, so we ask that you consider it prayerfully before undertaking this journey with a student. When you are ready, please contact the mentor support team at mentor@cpministries.org or (800) 668-2450, ext. 4010.

Asking Good Questions

Throughout His ministry, Jesus asked many questions: “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:6); “What do you want me to do for you?” (Mark 10:36); “Why did you doubt?” (Matthew 14:31); “Why are you so afraid?” (Matthew 8:26); “Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:15).

If we want to mentor the way Jesus did, we would do well to model His compassionate curiosity by asking questions that go beyond small talk. You might start with questions about who your student is as a person. What are their hobbies, passions, dreams?

As you get to know your student, you can begin to ask deeper questions about their fears, insecurities and doubts. You might have the opportunity to ask questions that challenge their thinking.

You may be tempted to write your letters as monologues, but we encourage you to turn them into dialogues by asking good questions!

Mutual Growth

As a Crossroads mentor, it's important not to see yourself as "above" your student. Rather, you should take the posture of simply being *with* your student. In Matthew 25, Jesus doesn't call us to "fix" people in prison but to visit them. You are joining them on a journey as you grow closer to Jesus together.

With this posture of humility and mutuality, you will be free to simply enjoy a new friendship. The pressure is off! You don't need to feel the responsibility to "change" them or teach them everything they need to know about God. But as you enter into a friendship that's centered on Scripture and guided by the Spirit, you will notice God working in both of your lives. As you seek to truly know someone else and allow yourself to be truly known, you and your student will open yourselves to the relational and loving heart of God.

This all sounds great, right? But how do you do that? Mutuality starts with you. Be the first to share details about your life—the good, the bad and the ugly. Share your testimony. Share stories about your family and your job. Share your fears and failures, difficulties and doubts. Share what makes you tick—your passions, dreams and curiosities. Share the things that drive you nuts and the things that make you come alive.

When you show vulnerability, you provide an example for your student to do the same. Although it may take time to gain their trust, it is when they express what's on their heart that you might learn and grow the most.

Visiting Jesus

Many mentors say that reading letters from people in prison brings them closer to God. Reading stories of God at work in prison is encouraging and inspiring. And those who have eyes to see and ears to hear are invited into something even greater: meeting Jesus Himself.

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me," Jesus declared (Matthew 25:40). One of the examples He gave was visiting those in prison. When you "visit" people in prison through your letters, you are meeting with Jesus.

By spending time with men and women in prison, you are in the presence of people Jesus loved spending time with. Maybe Jesus enjoyed the company of people on the margins because they were the only ones who were truly honest with Him. They were open about their brokenness, and that allowed Jesus to provide healing.

People in prison are often refreshingly honest about the ugly parts of their lives. They've experienced enough pain and failure that they no longer feel the need to hide from it. The gift of visiting those on the margins is learning how to be honest about our fears, shortcomings and sins. It's only in this posture of humility and honesty that we can fully receive the presence, love and healing of Jesus.

Writing between Lessons

If you haven't heard from your Tier 2 student in six weeks, we encourage you to check in with them by sending a card or a letter. Discouragement, depression or apathy can attack even the most faithful students in a dark prison environment. Your letter can call them back into relationship and back into Scripture. You can also bless your student by sending letters or cards on holidays and their birthday. (Be sure to check your mentor portal account to verify facility restrictions before sending a card).

Disagreeing Well

As you exchange letters, your student might bring up political or theological opinions with which you disagree. Since you can have conversations with students in Tier 2, it's OK to discuss these topics as long as mutual honor and respect are maintained.

When it comes to politics, seek understanding of their position. You can choose to share your opinion respectfully. Please *never* suggest to a student that they cannot be a Christian because they hold a particular political opinion.

If you choose to discuss areas in which you disagree, treat your student with respect and kindness and seek common ground.

If you would rather avoid political talk altogether, that is fine too. It's best to keep your conversations centered on Scripture and how you see God at work in each other's lives.

Tough Questions

As you interact with your Tier 2 student, you will probably encounter some tough questions. Whether it's a deep theological question, a moral dilemma or an indication of depression or trauma, you might feel unprepared to respond.

We encourage you to seek counsel from your pastor or a spiritual leader in your life. If they are unable to help you, don't hesitate to reach out to our mentor support team at mentor@cpministries.org.

Most importantly, remember that it's not your responsibility to have an answer to every question. Your role is to be *with* your student and *for* your student, no matter what they are going through.

10 MEN YOU SHOULD KNOW*

Lesson ID#	Date received	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		
		1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
		5					
		6					
		7					
		8					
		9					
		10					

10 WOMEN YOU SHOULD KNOW*

Lesson ID#	Date received	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		
		1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
		5					
		6					
		7					
		8					
		9					
		10					

ALL IN GOD'S FAMILY

Lesson ID#	Date received	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		
		1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
		5					
		6					
		7					
		8					
		9					
		10					

ALL WORK IS GOD'S WORK

Lesson ID#	Date received	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		
		1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
		5					
		6					
		7					
		8					
		9					
		10					

IT ALL BELONGS TO GOD*

Lesson ID#	Date received	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		
		1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
		5					
		6					
		7					
		8					
		9					
		10					

SERMON ON THE MOUNT*

NOTE: When your student nears the end of the *Sermon on the Mount* course, we will be asking for your recommendation regarding whether or not your student is capable of handling the Tier 3 advanced studies course material.

Lesson ID#	Date received	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		
		1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
		5					

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**TIER 3:
LEADING**

What Is Tier 3?

God calls us to ministry wherever we are. That is true inside and outside prison. Tier 3 provides students with in-depth theological study materials and tools to help them become spiritual leaders in their communities. Tier 3 courses are seminary-level discussions of ethics, hermeneutics (how to interpret the Bible) and systematic theology.

Students who complete and excel in Tier 2 are invited to participate in Tier 3 of the mentorship program.

Mentors are invited to apply for Tier 3 after having reviewed at least four Tier 1 lessons. While there are no specific education or training requirements to become a Tier 3 mentor, we recommend previewing some of the lessons on our website (cpministries.org/mentorship-program/leading) to help you make your decision. Tier 3 is a long-term commitment, so we ask that you consider it prayerfully before undertaking this journey with a student. If you would like to apply, please contact the mentor support team at mentor@cpministries.org or (800) 668-2450, ext. 4010.

How Is It Different?

The lessons are significantly longer than those in previous tiers, include more essay questions and require at least three to five hours of work for a student to complete. Mentors are provided answer keys to help guide and assist students when they do not understand a topic. It takes most mentors one to two hours to review each lesson.

Because of the length and difficulty of the lessons, it generally takes students longer to complete and mail them. Most Tier 3 mentors receive lessons from their students once every six weeks.

Journeying with a Tier 2 Student into Tier 3

Tier 3 is offered to students upon completion of Tier 2 and by recommendation of their Tier 2 mentor. If a mentor would like to continue in their relationship with their student at this level, the mentor needs to fill out a Tier 3 application to be approved. If a mentor chooses not to continue with their student into Tier 3, the student is paired with a new mentor as they transition into these courses.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW II

Lesson ID#	Date received	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		
		1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
		5					
		6					
		7					
		8					
		9					
		10					
		11					
		12					
		13					

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW I

Lesson ID#	Date received	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		
		1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
		5					
		6					
		7					
		8					
		9					
		10					
		11					
		12					
		13					

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW II

Lesson ID#	Date received	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		
		1					
		2					
		3					
		4					
		5					
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		10					
		11					
		12					
		13					



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 a Bible passage.*

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 study 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 lessons in full in order to receive a certificate of achievement for each course.

OTHER MATERIALS AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS

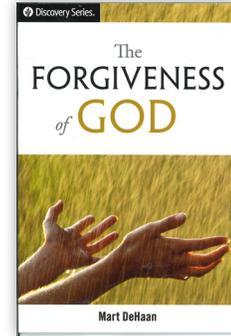
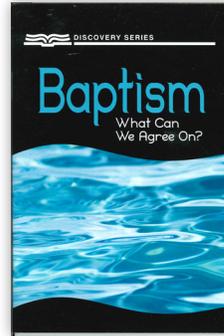
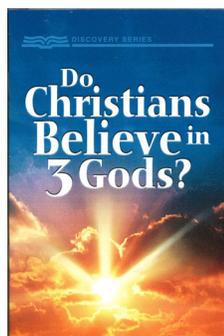
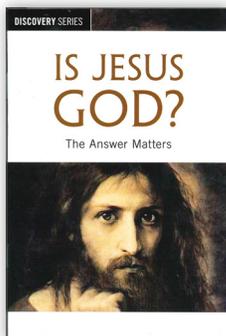
If a student is asking questions about an issue that you do not feel entirely equipped to answer, you can order additional resources for your student from our partner ministry, Our Daily Bread (ODB).

ODB provides books for Crossroads students at no cost. Examples of available books are:



- 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

The list of booklets is subject to change. To order one of these booklets, visit discoveryseries.org. You can send it to your student by entering your student's name and mailing address at the checkout.



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 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.microsoftcrmpartals.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 that are 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.

COMPLETION *

UNDERSTANDING *

APPLICATION *

COMPLETION *

Use the drop-down menus to report your student's progress in the areas of completion, understanding and application.

Lesson-related comments (optional)

You also have the option to leave lesson-related comments in the box under the drop-down menus. These comments should be about the content of the lesson material, such as confusing questions or grammatical errors, not about the student's work. Crossroads staff will review this information when making corrections and revising courses.

Submit

When you have finished filling out the form, you **MUST** click the blue "Submit" button. If you do not click this button, the report will not be saved in our database.

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. You can see more information by clicking on a student's name.

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

To ensure that you do not receive any lessons when you are not available to review them, please use this form to place yourself on hold whenever it is necessary. For the date to stop sending lessons, please select the date that is one week **before** you need your lessons held. For example, if you will be gone from August 2–August 10, you would select **July 26** as the date to stop sending lessons and August 10 as the date to resume receiving lessons. Remember to enter the reason you are taking time off by selecting an option from the drop-down menu.

Please stop sending lessons on:

7/26/2020 

Mentor Status

On hold

I can resume receiving lessons after:

8/10/2020 

Reason

Vacation/personal

Submit

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.

Username

fsmith123

* Old Password

* New Password

* Confirm Password

Change Password

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 *

Home Phone

Last Name *

Mobile Phone

E-mail

Mentor Status

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

Address 1

Address 2

Current Mailing Address

Address 3

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.

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CROSSROADS

PRISON MINISTRIES

PO Box 900
Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900
800.668.2450 | cpministries.org