

# JUST FOR MENTORS

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



JANUARY 2023

Dear Mentor,

For the first five weeks of my prison sentence, I was housed in a facility filled with barred cells that rose six stories high. From my fourth-floor cell, I could look down upon the tables and chairs that were bolted to the main floor. This floor included open showers where we all bathed twice a week. I could also look across and see the segregation section on the second floor, but I couldn't see who was living within those cells. I had no television or radio. A book cart came by with old, tattered books to choose from in the evenings. The lights were always on, and a distinct smell and the sound of yelling were constant.

Twenty-three hours a day were spent within a tiny cell that contained a metal toilet, sink, and thin mattress atop a concrete platform. A sense of loneliness quickly overwhelmed me as I contemplated what had been permanently altered in my life and the deep uncertainty of my future. My heartache grew deeper every day. One morning, as I stared into the darkened upper corner of my cell, I cried out, "Lord, please send me an angel to show me You are real!"

Even the most faithful believers can find themselves wrestling with doubt and fear. In these moments of hurt, loss, or weariness, God may seem distant, uninvolved, or even not real. The way we respond in these circumstances can be critical to our faith journeys. When we encounter others who are struggling in this way, we are called to be kind and compassionate.

As you write to your students this month, consider sharing Psalm 23. This psalm describes the beautiful and comforting truth of who God is, even as we face struggles and doubts. Ask your student to try reading this psalm slowly, painting a picture in their mind as each verse transitions into the next:

*The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

*He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.*

*He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.*

*You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

*Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

When I spoke those words in my prison cell, I had just begun my walk with Jesus. I cried out for assurance and comfort within my shame and grief. It was not the last time I asked God where He was when the cracks in my faith revealed themselves. Whenever I struggle to feel God's presence, I hold on to the hope and truth within this psalm. Encourage your students to do the same!

*(Continued on next page)*

Serving alongside you,



Douglas Cupery  
Church Mobilization Director

**Have a question?** You can contact the mentor support team at [mentor@cpministries.org](mailto:mentor@cpministries.org) or 800-668-2450.

## NEWS & NOTES

### Postage Rates Set to Increase on January 24

Please note that postage rates will increase on January 24, 2023.

The new 2-ounce postage rate, the amount required for a standard lesson packet, is \$0.87. The 3-ounce rate is \$1.11.

### Mentor Community Gatherings

Join us as we gather virtually to equip and empower one another to serve our students well!

Tuesday, January 17th, at 8:00 p.m. (EST)

Wednesday, January 18th, at 3:00 p.m. (EST)

URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84182956475?pwd=QWs1OGlYZTZlejVOSkcyOEc5NW9SUT09>

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

### Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association (CMCA) Summit

CMCA will be hosting a correctional ministries summit in May at the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. The summit will be a time of learning, worship, and networking. Please consider joining your mentor support team and others from Crossroads as we gain tools and confidence for our ministry outreach. Details for this event can be found here:

[www.cmcainternational.org/event/cmca-2023-correctional-ministries-summit-3/](http://www.cmcainternational.org/event/cmca-2023-correctional-ministries-summit-3/)

CMCA Correctional Ministries Summit | May 19-20, 2023 | Wheaton College, IL



"May the God of HOPE 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