

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



MAY 2026

Dear Mentor,

I nearly panicked when the unexpected happened. Our church group had visited a Honduran prison multiple times, and we believed it was important to bring fun and laughter with us. This prison is a hard place for both staff and the incarcerated men, surrounded by tall concrete walls. Many of the interior walls were made of tin-like metal sheets, as were the roofs.

On previous visits, we played highly competitive wiffleball, but this time we brought two large watermelons. In the middle of the concrete prison yard, we set up two stations as a large, energetic crowd gathered around. Two teams formed with a simple task: stretching rubber bands around the middle of a watermelon standing on end. Band after band was added, and as the pressure increased, the melons began to bulge and stretch. The crowd grew louder with every rubber band put in place.

Suddenly, the first watermelon exploded into pieces, and moments later, the second followed. Juice splashed over the competitors as bits of rind flew. Laughter filled the yard.

Life rarely goes according to plan. Just as we carefully set up the watermelon game knowing the melons would explode, the unexpected can still happen. I believe all of us have felt pressure like a rubber band squeezing tightly around us when life does not go as planned. Sometimes the unexpected turns out better than we had hoped.

Our students know disruption well. At the time of their arrests, prison was likely not part of what they envisioned for their lives. Our hope is that, over time, they discover who they are and that blaming others or circumstances transforms into taking ownership of what led to their incarcerations. Our hope is also that they grasp that, no matter how big or small our plans are, God is with us and desires to be invited in (Psalm 37:5).

"The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand" (Psalm 37:23–24).

As you prepare to write your letter, reflect on a verse you may know well. Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." What does this mean in your life today? How do you live this out when plans change or pressure builds? What happens when the rubber bands in life start to squeeze you? Is your tendency to push God away, or is it an opportunity to grow closer and more reliant on Him (Isaiah 41:10)?

"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps" (Proverbs 16:9).

What began as harmless fun quickly turned into something we hadn't planned. The prison yard erupted into chaos as the crowd began whipping rinds at each other. The prison echoed with the sound of rinds striking the tin walls and roofs. With every loud "ting," the pressure in my chest tightened, and I felt as though we were complicit in starting a prison riot. In that moment, everything felt out of control. But eventually, it settled, and laughter once again filled the air. What began in tension ended in relief—a reminder that even when life feels chaotic, peace can return.

Your letters remind students that even when life feels like it's under pressure, God has not abandoned them.

Serving alongside you,



Douglas Cupery

Director of Church Engagement

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

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NEWS & NOTES

May Mentor Q&A Gathering: Spring Speaker Series

Please join us as we hear from Brian Kamstra, Senior Director of International Ministries. Crossroads partners with national representatives to help bring the Crossroads program to prisons around the world. Brian will highlight several international leaders and share how God is at work globally, along with current challenges and prayer requests.

If you have specific questions about Crossroads' international ministry, please send them in advance to GatheringsQA@cpministries.org.

Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. ET

Open your phone's camera to scan the QR code and register online.

We look forward to seeing you there!



REGISTER

Mentor Reminders

Reviewing a Crossroads Lesson

Remember to write a note or comment on every page of the lesson. This shows your student that you have carefully reviewed their work. Many students are deeply encouraged by this feedback. If you're unsure what to write, even a simple word of encouragement or affirmation can mean a lot.

Writing a Letter

Personal letters are what set Crossroads apart from other correspondence prison ministries. They make Bible study more relational and meaningful. For many men and women in prison, your letters are their only opportunity to study with another believer and may be their only connection to life outside prison. This is why we ask you to write a full-page, individualized letter with every lesson.

A Note from Doug

Our students are asking the Church to walk with them—to open God's Word, encourage their faith, and remind them they are not forgotten. At the heart of Crossroads Prison Ministries is a simple calling: to connect the Church with men and women in prison as we share in Christ's work of making disciples.

One of the blessings of this ministry is learning about your church. These conversations often reveal ways we can come alongside your congregation—strengthening its ministry and equipping its members to reach those behind prison walls. I would love to continue this conversation and learn more about your church. Please consider reaching out to me at dcupery@cpministries.org. I look forward to connecting with you.