

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



MARCH 19, 2018

Dear Mentor,

2 Corinthians 5:17 declares, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

This passage is a promise. It is a truth that has transformed my life; I hope it has transformed yours as well. Once we truly believe this in our hearts, our whole outlook on life changes. It impacts who we are, how we approach others, how we view circumstances and how we view God.

For many prisoners I have met, old wounds and circumstances get in the way of their belief in this promise. These old wounds explain why people in prison have little sense of identity and often believe they have never accomplished anything in their lives.

After facilitating group meetings in prison, my wife, Hendrina, and I often discuss this issue. Even if we did not consider their specific crimes, we could see how the men ended up in prison. Here are a few of the challenges many people in prison face:

- Childhood wounds bring a distorted sense of what love, safety and security are. This can lead to telling oneself, “I am no good.”
- Fatherlessness significantly impacts educational achievement, quality of life and physical and emotional health.
- The rate of physical and sexual abuse experienced by prisoners prior to incarceration is very high and has profound effects on how they see themselves.
- According to the Bureau of Justice, 68% of state prisoners did not finish high school.

These men and women wrestle with anger, regrets and forgiveness—especially when it comes to forgiving themselves. It is not terribly surprising that these challenges led to the choices they made.

Our goal at Crossroads remains firm: to help our students understand that the old is gone and that they are new again in Christ. As mentors, we have the incredible opportunity to continually remind our students that they can be made completely new in Christ—not just refurbished or bandaged, but made new!

Change doesn’t happen overnight, but as we faithfully remain present and available to share the Good News, we can be confident that God will make all things new in His timing.

Honored to serve alongside you,



Douglas Cupery
Church Mobilization Director

What to Expect with the New Course

By Dara Nykamp

You probably know by now that we have created a new course called *Who Are You?* that will be released this April. But what is the course about? How will it affect you as a mentor?

Who Are You? is a three-lesson course that new students will take as their first course in Tier 1. It was written with two goals in mind: to introduce students to a God who loves them and cares deeply about them and to help them understand that life change is possible through Jesus Christ. The course explores the big questions that all people have about life from a biblical perspective: **Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?**

Most of the questions in *Who Are You?* are open-ended and have been written in a way that encourages students to share their personal thoughts. This will help you understand where each student is on their faith journey and write a letter relevant to each student's life. The questions will also give you opportunities to share Christ's love with students.

You will see new and updated study tools throughout the *Who Are You?* lessons:



CONVERSATION BOXES: We have included some spaces throughout the lessons that we call **conversation boxes**. These conversation boxes are for students to use to write questions and thoughts they have about the lesson or about life. You can also respond to a student in any space that the student has not filled.



ACTION STEPS: There is a challenge at the end of each lesson called an **action step**. It asks the student to apply what they have learned. If they feel that they need help or encouragement to complete it, they may simply write down what they plan to do. If a student writes down a plan, let them know you are praying for them to accomplish it and encourage them to think about their next step once they have completed it.



ROADMAPS: The new **Roadmaps** that accompany *Who Are You?* are designed to encourage the student to think more deeply about the topics and ideas in the lesson and provide additional passages for reflection that are related to those topics. They also include a memory verse and prompts for prayer. There is no answer key for the Roadmaps in this course, as the passages and topics are provided in the Roadmaps.

Tier 1 mentors will begin seeing the first *Who Are You?* lessons toward the end of April. Tier 2 mentors will see new Tier 2 courses in a similar style beginning next year. You can preview the lessons and learn more about the project on our website at www.cpministries.org/WhoAreYou.

You should receive an answer key for *Who Are You?* (along with some other helpful tools) in the mail during the month of April. If you have not received an answer key packet by the end of April, please let the mentor support team know so they can make sure you receive the resources you need!

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about the course or the new answer key! Email mentor@cpministries.org or call (800) 668-2450.

Dara Nykamp is the curriculum development director at Crossroads.