

JUST FOR MENTORS

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



JULY 2018

Dear Mentor,

My wife, Hendrina, and I recently visited a church in our community. The service was highlighting mental health challenges and the importance of the church's involvement. At the end of her teaching, with a humble spirit, the pastor shared her own journey with anxiety. As her story unfolded, I could see Hendrina lean in, listening intently. If you were to ask us today to articulate the specific points of the pastor's sermon, we wouldn't be able to tell you. But what I could recount to you, in vivid detail, is her story.

Stories have power. Jesus clearly knew this, because He often taught using stories.

I love a good story, and I bet you do too. The stories I appreciate do not always have clean, happy endings. In fact, many stories that we share do not yet have endings—and this is especially true about our faith stories.

I have heard from many people who don't believe they have a story to share. They grew up in a Christian home and went to church each week; Jesus was always part of their lives. There's not much of a story at first glance. But when I ask a few questions, we can always discover a faith story!

Our faith stories should not be kept to ourselves. We should share our stories to encourage and challenge others and invite them into a new way of living. Ultimately, we should share our stories in order to bring glory to God.

Here are some questions you can ask yourself to help you pinpoint pieces of your story to share with your students:

- How did your journey of following Jesus begin? When did you first learn about Jesus? Who taught you about Him?
- What relationships, people or books have helped you grow spiritually or understand more about who God is and who He wants you to be? What are some of your favorite Bible stories or passages?
- What events have shaped your faith journey or brought you closer to God? How has God answered your prayers in the last few weeks or months?
- When have you made mistakes in your life? How did you get through those times?
- When has tragedy struck your life? How did God help you during that time?
- How did you work through times during which you struggled to maintain your faith?
- What things are you doing to help your faith grow? What are some of your spiritual goals?

Honored to serve alongside you,



Douglas Cupery
Church Mobilization Director

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

Sharing your story and the Crossroads story

By Douglas Cupery

God has wired us to hear and tell stories. Stories can inspire action and encourage life change in others. When I was first exploring who Jesus is, it was the Old Testament stories that captured my imagination and drew me deeper into God's Word and a relationship with Him.

So when I visit churches to talk about Crossroads, I don't just rattle off statistics and information about our program. I tell stories! I share stories about my experience as a prisoner and the ways my life has changed. I repeat the stories that many of you are sharing with me about your experience serving people in prison.

I am so encouraged and inspired by your testimonies. Here are some common themes I notice in these stories:

- My heart is changing! As I get to know my students, I see them as children of God, created in His image with a plan and a purpose.
- I have found purpose as I reach into prisons with the hope of the Gospel.
- I have been challenged to view Scripture in a new light based on my student's questions and thoughts about passages.
- I have experienced so much joy as I bring God's light to the darkness.
- I find myself praying more often because I care so deeply for my students.
- I have discovered that I don't have all the answers, and that's okay.

Your story might be similar, or it might be quite different. No matter how your involvement with Crossroads has unfolded, we encourage you to share your journey with others. Many new Crossroads mentors sign up because a friend shared their story and invited them to join the ministry.

We are experiencing a significant increase in student enrollments, so we are in need of more mentors! Will you join us in inviting people to come alongside men and women in prison and encourage them on their spiritual journeys? You have a powerful story to share that may inspire action and encourage others to join you in this important work.

Think of the Kingdom impact that could be made if each one of us would share our story and invite one more person to answer God's call to remember and visit people in prison!

DID YOU KNOW?

In the month of May, we mailed nearly **1,100 Bibles** to prisoners. This is 10 times more Bibles than we mailed in a typical month in 2016, which was before generous donations allowed us to begin providing Bibles to students for free. Praise God that we are able to reach so many more men and women in prison with His Word!

NEW BIBLE STUDY COURSE IS HERE!

The first completed *Who Are You?* lessons have started arriving at our office! Most Tier 1 mentors should begin to receive these new lessons sometime this month. The lessons include mostly short answers and short essays, which allow students to share a bit about their lives. They are easy to read. They are easy to review. You will very rarely need your answer key, but the guidance is there if you need it. And scoring has not changed. Just let us know how many questions the student left blank or answered incorrectly.

If you have any questions when you receive your first *Who Are You?* lesson, feel free to send an email to curriculum@cpministries.org.