

# Running a Christ-Centered 12-Step Recovery Meeting

## Jail, Prison, and Institutions

*A Practical Guide for Volunteers & Facilitators*

### Recovery In Christ Ministries, Inc.

“Serve faithfully. Speak truthfully. Point always to Christ.”



#### How to Print This Booklet (From PDF)

This PDF is already formatted as a **half-letter booklet**. To print it correctly, use these settings:

##### 1. Open the PDF

Use Adobe Reader or your browser's PDF viewer.

##### 2. Select Print

Choose your printer.

##### 3. Set These Options

- **Print on both sides**
- **Flip on short edge**
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- **Page size: Letter (8.5 × 11)**
- **Page scaling / Size: Actual size** (Do NOT choose "Fit" or "Shrink oversized pages.")

##### 4. Print

Fold the pages in half and staple along the center fold.



## Scripture for the Facilitator:

“I was in prison and you came to visit Me.” — *Matthew 25:36*

“Apart from Me you can do nothing.” — *John 15:5*

“My word...shall not return to Me void.” — *Isaiah 55:11*

Be sure to READ:

Remember Me: A Devotional for the Incarcerated and the Broken -  
Recovery In Christ Ministries

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## Page 12 — Final Encouragement

Correctional recovery ministry is not easy — but it is eternally significant.

Your faithfulness may be the first:

- encouragement
- kindness
- gospel witness
- message of hope

that someone inside those walls has ever received.

Serve with compassion.

Speak with truth.

Point always to Christ.

## Page 1 — Introduction

Leading a Christ-centered recovery meeting inside a correctional facility is a sacred privilege. You are stepping into a place where many feel forgotten, ashamed, angry, or hopeless — and yet you are also entering a structured environment governed by rules, security concerns, and institutional culture.

This guide will help you serve effectively, safely, and in a way that keeps your **Recovery In Christ** meeting Christ-centered, recovery-focused, and fully compliant with facility expectations.

You do not need to spend a lot of money to make a meaningful impact in correctional recovery ministry. If you are able to print and donate '**Reaching Out to a Hurting World**' workbooks, that is wonderful — just remember that some facilities require special binding or specific formats. Always check with the institution before bringing in full workbooks.

A simple and effective approach is to print a single topic from the workbook for group discussion. Often the men or women will tell you what they are struggling with during your previous visit. Listen carefully, pray for discernment, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide your choice of topic. You may also print and share the Table of Contents so they can see the range of subjects available. Make enough copies for the group and allow them to keep the pages afterward. If you are using more than one sheet, remember: **no staples.**

In addition to your topic, you should bring **laminated** copies of your meeting Format and the customary readings — the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, Group Rules, and Closing Prayers — along with your regular Bible. This creates a very economical, lightweight, and easy-to-facilitate meeting. Many volunteers also find that Life Recovery Bibles are helpful, as they include devotionals connected to the Steps that fit beautifully with Christ-centered recovery.

## Page 2 — Know Your Role

You are **not** entering the facility as:

- a counselor
- a legal advocate
- a sponsor
- a provider of outside assistance
- a pen-pal or personal contact

You are entering as:

- a **recovery meeting facilitator**
- a **witness to Christ's restoring power**
- a **model of humility, honesty, and hope**

Your role is to:

- Share honestly about your own struggles
- Testify to how the Lord has restored you
- Encourage recovery through biblical truth
- Keep the meeting focused on Christ and the 12 Steps
- Maintain order, safety, and spiritual clarity

You are not there to fix anyone.

**Transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit.**

## Page 11 — Post-Meeting Debrief

Before leaving the facility:

- thank the Lord for the opportunity to serve
- pray for those who attended
- release the outcomes to God

You are responsible for:

- showing up
- sharing truth
- facilitating faithfully

You are **not** responsible for:

- conviction
- repentance
- recovery outcomes
- spiritual growth

Afterward:

- avoid replaying inmate stories
- avoid emotional entanglement
- watch for fatigue or heaviness
- Re-engage with your family
- rest physically and emotionally

## Page 10 — Pre-Entry Preparation

Pray for:

- humility
- wisdom
- protection
- open hearts
- facility favor
- the Holy Spirit's leadership

**Be ready to briefly share your testimony.**

**Commit the meeting to God's care.**

## Page 3 — Follow All Facility Rules

Every institution has its own policies. Learn them. Respect them. Follow them.

Never:

- Share personal contact information
- Carry messages in or out
- Bring items for a specific inmate
- Give or receive gifts
- Accept requests for outside contact

Violations can result in:

- loss of volunteer access
- disciplinary action for inmates
- removal of the entire ministry

**When in doubt — don't.**

## Page 4 — Contraband Awareness

Bring only what is:

- approved
- necessary
- intended for group use

Typically allowed:

- recovery workbooks
- printed handouts
- approved Bibles
- devotional materials

Do **not** bring:

- ***staples*** or paperclips
- envelopes
- bookmarks
- food or tobacco
- cash
- personal notes or gifts

If unsure, **leave it out.**

## Page 9 — Keeping the Focus on Christ

Every meeting should:

- acknowledge the reality of sin
- identify the problem honestly
- encourage repentance
- offer the hope of restoration
- point to Christ as the source of healing

Share what Jesus has done in your life.

Share how He sustains your recovery.

Share that no one is beyond redemption.

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”  
— *2 Corinthians 5:17*

## Page 8 — Guiding Discussion

Allow:

- honesty
- vulnerability
- personal reflection

Redirect when sharing becomes:

- graphic
- profane
- romanticized
- Off-topic
- disruptive

Always guide the meeting back to:

- personal responsibility
- repentance
- grace
- transformation through Christ

You are not there to control the room —

**but you are responsible to keep it spiritually safe.**

## Page 5 — Healthy Boundaries

Boundaries protect:

- you
- the inmates
- the ministry
- the future of the program

Avoid:

- one-on-one conversations outside staff visibility
- physical contact
- emotional dependency
- personal commitments
- involvement in legal matters

Be friendly — **not familiar.**

## Page 6 — Dress & Appearance

Dress:

- modestly
- professionally
- without distracting logos or slogans
- without excessive jewelry

Avoid:

- tight or revealing clothing
- Open-toe shoes
- flashy accessories
- clothing resembling inmate or officer uniforms

“Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”  
— *1 Corinthians 10:31*

## Page 7 — Meeting Format in a Facility

Institutional meetings work best when inmates are actively involved.

Invite them to read:

- the 12 Steps
- the 12 Traditions
- the Group Rules
- Scripture or devotionals

Participation builds:

- ownership
- engagement
- accountability
- order

You may:

- let the group choose a workbook topic
- select a topic ahead of time
- read one paragraph at a time around the room

Ask simple questions:

1. “What stood out to you”
2. “How does this apply to recovery”
3. “Where do you see God in this”