

INMATE LIFE

(15 minutes maximum. Discussion and summary sharing. No poster. This talk is given by an inside team member.)

Please limit your talk to 15 minutes. Try to follow the outline as close as possible. The most important part of this talk is you. Please be as open, honest and sincere as possible.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR TALK: The purpose of this talk is to tell the men how you are making the best of the situation you are in right now. You will tell them what positive things you are doing while you wait for your release. Your life as an inmate is a call from God. Is something that God wants you to do. You didn't choose your call, but once you are in, you have that call. We each have a call from God. Remember what others have said in their talks about their call. Use examples of a person's call from other talks.

Write down the answers to as many of the following questions as you can. You don't have to answer them all. They are only to help you to write your talk. You may answer your own questions if you want. You know better than anyone what positive you are doing with the time you have.

The most important step that you can take towards positive use of your time in prison is to include God in your activities. First, you must establish a relationship with God. Do you worship at Sunday services? Do you receive communion? Have you been confirmed? Do you pray? How frequent? Do you read your Bible? Do you meditate? What do you do to keep in touch with God?

The second relationship that you must establish towards positive use of your time in prison is with yourself. You must try to do whatever you can to build yourself up and to grow as one of the People of God mentioned yesterday. Are you in any program offered in the facility? Literacy, GED, ASAT, Alternatives to Violence, etc.? Are you learning any trade? In which ways are you improving yourself while serving time?

The third relationship that you must establish towards positive use of your time in prison is with those around you. You can't concentrate only in yourself. You don't exist in a social vacuum. You can show others that you have got it together with God and yourself by your actions. Your example is the strongest message you can give. How are you of service to others? There are many ways of helping your brothers (inmates). For instance: sharing a cigarette, a pat on the back, listening, smiling, talking about Jesus, reading the Bible or praying together, etc. Being friendly is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign of christian love. Are you a sign of God? How?

If you have done a REC weekend before you may want to share what was your experience. Ask yourself these questions and write down your answers: What did REC mean to me? Was REC just a weekend? Why? Why did I go to my first REC? Was REC what I expected? How did I feel about me during the retreat? Did REC make me feel different about myself? Did REC make me feel different about my relationship with God? Did REC make me feel different about my relationship with my fellow inmates and for that matter about my relationship with any other people? Am I going to serve time or am I going to use my time to serve God and my brothers? What can I tell to my brothers that are doing this REC for the first time?

GIVING YOUR TALK: Open with a short prayer.

Read what you have written.

NOTE: You must have your talk ready for one of the inside meetings. You will be notified in advance of the date and time. On that date you will read your talk to the teams and they will make suggestions for improvement. Listen to the suggestions and make the necessary changes. Explain your point of view if you don't agree with any of the suggestions. Remember, you are the most important part of this talk, not the words you use or the way to say it.

At the inside team formation meetings the Lay Director will meet on a one to one basis with the assignee for this talk to coach him. The message of using his time in prison positively must be clear. Examples from personal experience must be included as much as possible. The three relationships (God, self and others) that an inmate must establish in order to make the best out of the time served must be clearly defined and explained.

NOTE: With this talk (Inmate Life) we finish covering the Paschal Mystery: death, rising and going forth. We begin now to close the weekend. We have provided the men with enough material to think and make a decision. We will provide them now with tools and examples to put into practice in order to lead a Christ centered life. Very soon we will leave the facility and the men will be left on their own. We will share with them now how to persevere as a christian.

In the previous talk (Inmate Life) the men were introduced to the 3 main relationships that they have to develop in order to persevere in their new life. On the last 3 talks we are going to go deeper into those relationships. We will provide them with the information and the tools of how we have done it; how we struggle and how we persevere.

The Lay Director will make sure that the last 3 talks develop the relationships mentioned in the Inmate Life talk as follows:

Relationship with God: in the Beyond REC 1 talk.

Relationship with my own self: in the Beyond REC 2 talk.

Relationship with others: in the Christian Action talk.