

## PRISON MINISTRY STARTER STEPS

*Are you interested in prison, jail, and detention center ministry but do not know where to begin? The following steps provide some basic guidelines for getting started. Please remember that this ministry can take many different shapes and forms, both inside the facility and out. From Bible study and RCIA to advocacy and re-entry, you and your parish can play a critical role in the field of criminal justice and in bringing Christ to some of the most hidden and vulnerable members of our society.*

### STEP 1

Visit your parish website or contact your local pastor to find out if prison ministry is already taking place at your parish. Sometimes prison ministry initiatives are well-promoted via bulletins and social ministry fairs, but other times they are not. Usually, the pastor will have insight into whether or not one person or a small group of individuals from his parish visits a facility.

### STEP 2

If no one at your parish takes part in prison ministry and you would like to explore this ministry more, consider visiting a facility as a one-time guest with another group. It is an easy process that simply requires filling out a bit of paperwork. Contact the Office of Social Ministries to find out which prison ministry group closest to you might be a good option, and what their particular ministry consists of.

### STEP 3

If your parish would like to create a prison ministry group, find out which facilities (prisons, jails, and detention centers) are within your parish's canonical boundaries by contacting the Office of Social Ministries. If your parish would like to discern starting this ministry, consider having someone from the Diocese, a Prison Ministry Commission member, or a volunteer visit your parish to facilitate an informational session.

### STEP 4

There are numerous ways to become involved in prison, jail, and detention center ministry. Some may be called to visit the facilities and minister directly to the men and women, while others might find that their gifts and talents lie elsewhere. Help your parish explore all opportunities for involvement including letter-writing, advocacy regarding criminal justice reform, providing support to families of the incarcerated, or sponsoring an individual who is entering back into society.