

GUIDE FOR BEGINNING A LOCAL

CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

Written by
Charles Jones

Assisted by
Neron Smith

**Men's Ministry Department
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board**

Revised Edition

INTRODUCTION

Many churches have become aware of their responsibility to minister to persons who have been affected by crime and incarceration. However, most churches need assistance in developing an effective ministry within the criminal justice system. This material will guide the local church planning group in developing an effective ministry in the community.

By using this step-by-step guide, the church planning group will be able to identify the people groups to whom they could minister. They will also be able to identify specific needs which the church could meet. The guide will also assist the church planning group to plan the work effectively, organize for effective ministry, enlist and train volunteers, and report and evaluate the progress of the ministry.

It is our dream that there will be an effective church-based ministry in every jail in our state. We pray that churches will develop comprehensive ministries with all persons in our communities who are affected by crime and incarceration. We also dream of an effective network of criminal justice ministries among the churches of our state. May this guide be used to enable these dreams to come true.

OVERVIEW

OF THIS STEP BY STEP GUIDE

It is recommended that each of the following eleven steps should be carefully completed in the order of their presentation.

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RECOGNIZE...

THE IMPORTANCE OF A CHURCH-BASED MINISTRY

The local church is God's primary agency for ministry. Every ministry needs to be church based. In a church-based ministry the church has the responsibility to plan, conduct, resource, and evaluate the ministry. Being identified as a ministry of a local church gives credibility to the ministry, creates accountability in the ministry, and provides responsibility for the ministry.

Credibility has the quality of *truthfulness*. People are more likely to believe the message when the source has the quality of truthfulness. Another significant factor in credibility is motive. When the ministry is identified with a local church, most people see it as having a worthy motive. People feel that they will not be used or taken advantage of because the ministry is identified with a local church. Also, the fact that the ministry is a local church ministry implies that a significant number of caring people are endorsing and supporting the ministry. The assumption is that there is ample support for the ministry, which enables it to do what it promises.

Being a ministry of a local church creates accountability within the ministry. Accountability is an important factor in maintaining an effective ministry. The people who do the ministry are accountable to the church. The most important aspect of accountability is *control*. The ministry is under the control of the church. Because of accountability, those who do the ministry are able to receive direction and discipline from the church. The church gives direction to the ministry by designating the materials to be used, scheduling activities, and setting guidelines and requirements for participation. Because of accountability, the church implements corrective measures related to personal behavior and programs.

Being a ministry of a local church provides responsibility for the ministry. A great amount of ministry is done by individuals and groups who are either apart from a local church, or who do not have the support of a church. When the local church is responsible for the ministry, necessary resources for the ministry are more readily available. The primary resource for ministry is people. Having a church-based ministry makes the church responsible for providing the volunteers needed to do effective ministry. The Church Missions Development Council or the missions planning group should have a list of people who have expressed an interest in various kinds of ministry. Also the representatives of Men's Ministry, Woman's Missionary Union, and Sunday School can assist in enlisting people for ministry.

MAGNIFY...

THE LOCAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

There are many reasons for magnifying the local criminal justice ministry. For one thing, the incarceration experience begins and ends in the local community. All who go to prison spend some time in the local jail before prison. Most of those in prison will, in time, return to the community. Not all who are in jail will go to prison; however, this doesn't mean that the problems those who are jailed experience will be less than those who go to prison for an extended period of time. Prisoners are more vulnerable in the local jail before they go to prison; therefore, they are open to ministry as well as other influences during this time.

A local ministry gives the church a greater opportunity to minister effectively to those affected by incarceration.

Consider what a local ministry provides:

1. Greater opportunity for ministry to the family of the prisoner;
2. Greater accessibility to the prisoners;
3. More time available for ministry;
4. Stronger credibility in ministry;
5. More personal ministry;
6. Less restrictions on materials used in ministry.

The church is more effective in local ministry because:

1. More church people can be involved in ministry;
2. The church can meet more needs and offer a more comprehensive ministry;
3. The church offers a more consistent care team of pastor and caring people;

4. The church can build on what happens in the beginning of the incarceration experience.

Criminal Justice ministry contains several facets. Five identifiable people-groups are affected by crime and incarceration. These groups are: 1. prisoners and their families; 2. ex-prisoners and their families; 3. parolees; 4. jailers and prison staff; and 5. victims of crime and their families. All of these people either go to jail and prison or are affected by those who do. Incarceration creates different needs for each group.

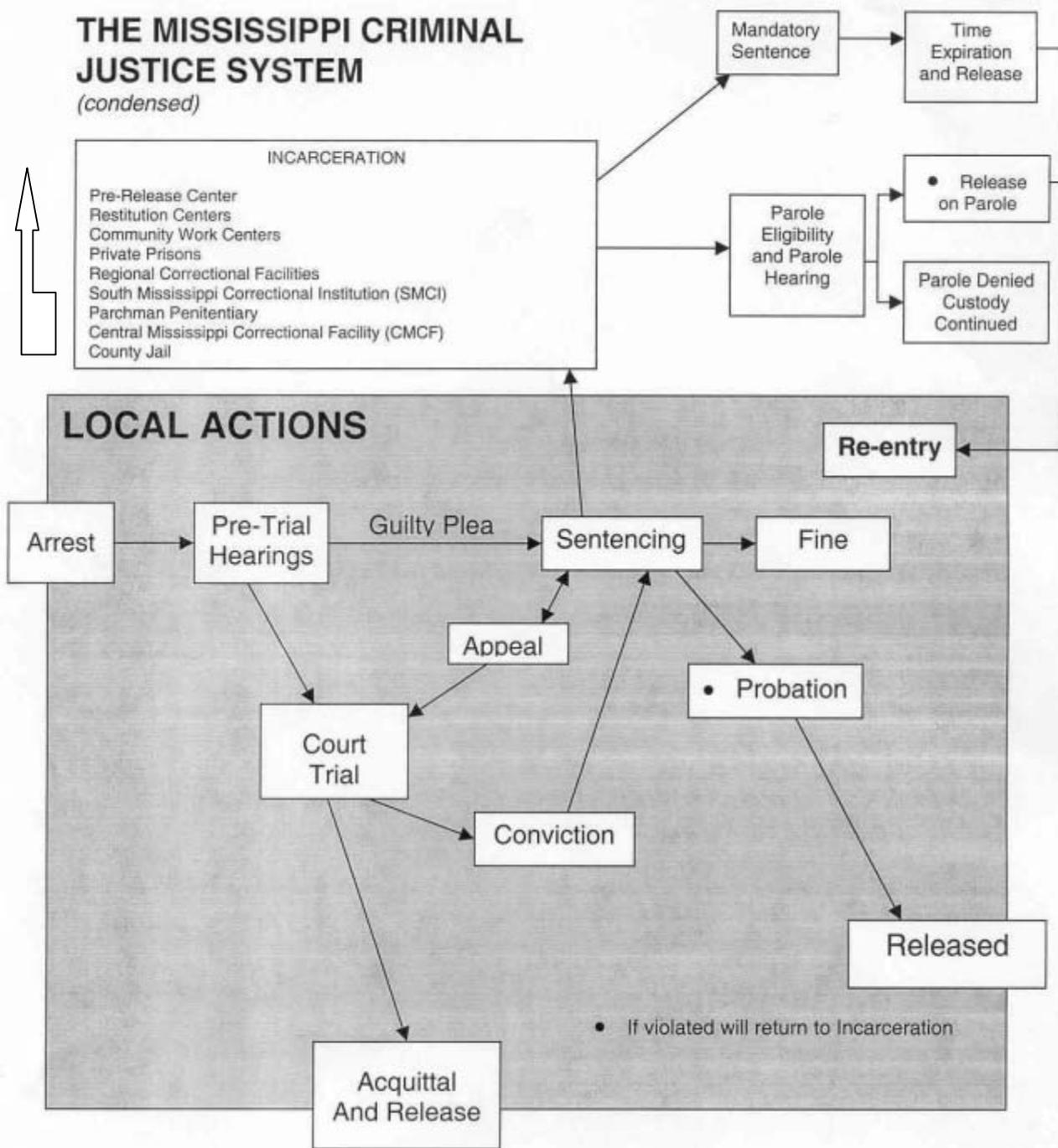
Putting together an effective jail/prison ministry demands that some of the special needs of all these people-groups be identified, especially the needs of the particular group to whom the ministry is focused. To identify needs talk with the people who can provide the kind of information needed to develop an effective ministry. Complete the list on page 10 and contact as many of these people as possible to get a comprehensive view of the needs the church may begin to meet. Start with the Church Missions Development leaders.

They may have already obtained information concerning the needs related to criminal justice ministry. If the church does not yet have a Church Missions Development Council, talk to the pastor about the possibility of a Criminal Justice ministry.

Begin the contacts outside the church with the sheriff or the chief of police. (You may be referred to the jailer or chaplain). Ask the appropriate official to help fill in the remainder of the list. Ask for permission to use that person's name in contacting the people on the list. This is important and will make communicating easier and more effective.

THE MISSISSIPPI CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

(condensed)



SEE THE BIG PICTURE

My wife enjoys putting together jigsaw puzzles. She's quite good at it. I noticed two things that contribute to her effectiveness in putting it together. One, she always looks at the picture on the box to get a firm vision of what the puzzle will look like when she puts it together. The second thing she does is identify the various parts of the puzzle; ie, trees, houses, sky, water, people, etc. She groups the pieces accordingly, which makes the task of putting them together much easier.

Putting together an effective Criminal Justice ministry is much like putting together a puzzle. First. Look at the big picture by getting a comprehensive view of the whole criminal justice system. Second, identify the various parts of the system and see how they relate to each other. Criminal Justice ministry can be done more effectively when incarceration is seen as it relates to the big picture of the criminal justice system.

SELECT...

A CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Someone must be responsible for "getting it together." This person should be chosen based on carefully selected criteria. Some of the qualities needed to give directions to the ministry are:

1. Feel a strong sense of God's calling to this ministry;
2. Genuine concern for the focus group;
3. Convinced that God can change lives;
4. Committed to this ministry;
5. Strong people skills;
6. Be able to get things done;
7. Strong organizational skills;
8. Ability to communicate clearly;
9. Strong motivation and determination even when things don't go as planned;
10. Delegates responsibility to others when appropriate;
11. Team player supports the team, trains others to do the ministry;
12. Flexible; adapts to unforeseen events.

Effective ministry will depend greatly upon selecting the right person to give direction to the criminal justice ministry. Some possible procedures used in choosing the director are:

1. The Missions Development Council may ask the ministry director to be responsible for the criminal justice ministry.
2. The Missions Development Council may select the criminal justice ministry director for church approval.
3. The Missions Development Council may work with the Nominating Committee in the selection of the criminal justice ministry director.

Whatever procedure is used, evaluate the strengths of the persons considered by using the form on the next page.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRY DIRECTOR SELECTION GUIDE

(Example only, Missions Development Council develops its own form)

Evaluate the strength of each person in each area. 1=low, 5=high

CRITERIA	NAME							
BURDEN FOR THIS MINISTRY								
CONCERN FOR FOCUS GROUP								
FLEXIBLE								
SUPPORTS THE TEAM								
COMMITTED TO THIS MINISTRY								
WILLING TO SHARE THE LOAD								
WORKS WELL WITH OTHERS								
CAN GET THINGS DONE								
TOTAL POINTS								

CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRY DIRECTOR'S WORK WITH THE INSTITUTION

The director of the criminal justice ministry becomes responsible for planning the work with the institutional personnel.. Each institution will have its own way of involving volunteers. In small jails the jailer or the sheriff will probably be the person with whom the planning is done. In larger jails and prisons a volunteer coordinator or a chaplain will likely be the person with whom the director will plan the work of the volunteer group.

Three factors in planning are important to the director:

First, the director must have a clear understanding of the work to be done. The institutional person will know specifically what the institution is asking the volunteers to do. The director will be responsible for communicating this information to the volunteers. It is vital that each person involved know exactly what they are being asked to do.

Second, the director must be sure that he understands the policies and procedures of the institution. The director is responsible for informing the volunteers of these policies and procedures and interpreting them to the group. The ministry of the volunteers will be greatly affected by their understanding of and compliance with the rules of the jailor prison. Included in this information will be:

What you may and may not do, and why Where you may and may not go, and why When you may and may not do your work, and why

Third, the director should seek to involve the institutional personnel in the training and orientation of volunteers. This will help strengthen the volunteers' relationship with the institutional personnel and will also make a greater impression on the volunteers because the institutional personnel can speak with authority.

Use the principles of good planning. Good planning answers: Why? What? Who? When? Where? How much? In planning the work of the ministry with the institutional person- nel, remember the principles:

1. *Why?* Discuss the objectives. Make sure that all agree to the objectives and goals of the ministry.
2. *What?* Clarify the tasks and relate them to the goals.

3. *Who?* Identify the person who will do each task.
4. *When?* Schedule the time each action will be done.
5. *Where?* Determine the location of each activity.
6. *How much?* Determine the amount of time, materials, etc., needed to do the work.

Planning the work of the ministry with the institutional personnel assures that everyone agrees with the objectives and goals. Joint planning also allows each one to know exactly what is expected, when, where, and who will do it. One final point about ,planning the work (a general principle to always keep in mind) is KEEP IT BITE-SIZED! In other words: make sure the work you plan to do can be accomplished with the resources (people, time, money) available to the ministry.

OUTLINE...

THE STEPS NEEDED TO HAVE A CHURCH-BASED MINISTRY

Step	What to Do	By Whom	By When	Date Done
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				

COMPILE...

A CONTACT LIST FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

POSITION	NAME	LOCATION	PHONE
Church Missions Development Dir.			
Pastor			
Assn. Director of Missions			
Sheriff/Chief of Police			
Jailer			
Chaplain			
Parole Officer			
Volunteer Coordinator			
Volunteer			
Ex-Prisoner			
Family of Prisoner			
Victim and Family			

CONDUCT INTERVIEWS...

While talking with the people on the contact list, use the following questions and chart to help identify and record needs.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What do you see as some needs of prisoners: Physical? Social? Spiritual?
2. What are some needs of the prisoners' families?
3. What are some needs of ex-prisoners and families?
4. What are some needs of jail staff?
5. What are some needs of victims and families?
6. What do you think a church could do to help meet some of these needs?

CHART OF NEEDS			
	PHYSICAL	SPIRITUAL	SOCIAL
Prisoners			
Prisoners' Families			
Ex-Prisoners and Families			
Criminal Justice Staff			
Victims and Families			

Once the needs have been identified, the next step is to decide what type of ministry is needed to help meet these needs. Use the chart on the next page to help determine the kind of ministry the church should consider. If the church has a Missions Development Council, they should make this decision.

SELECT...

START-UP MINISTRIES

What are the needs?

What ministry will meet this need?

PRISONERS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

FAMILIES

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

EX-PRISONERS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STAFF

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

VICTIMS /
FAMILIES

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ENLIST...

THE VOLUNTEERS

After the work has been planned with the institutional personnel, then answer the question, "Who is going to do the work?" The criminal justice director along with the Missions Development Council should devise a strategy for enlisting volunteers to do the specific tasks of the criminal justice ministry. Prior to outlining the strategy, some basic questions must be answered:

1. *Who can do this ministry?*

Limitations must be considered. There may be restrictions related to the age or sex of the volunteers. Persons with certain handicaps may not be able to participate in this ministry. Because of the inaccessibility of the facilities, a person who has been convicted of a felony may not be permitted to participate in the ministry. Other limitations may need to be considered.

2. *Why should someone want to do this?*

This question must be answered in an acceptable manner if you expect people to give their most valuable commodity to the ministry...their time. Be sure to explain in detail the rewards of participating in the ministry. Begin with the biblical reasons for participation, and remind them of the joys of Christian service. Tell them about specific needs of the focus group.

3. *What skills or interests will they need in order to do this ministry?*

Make a list of the skills and personal qualities needed to do each area of ministry. For example, list the skills needed to do effective ministry in:

Bible Study / Worship

After Care

Mentoring

Job Placement

Family Ministry

Literacy Ministry

Any other ministries identified

4. *What training is needed?*

It is unfair to ask anyone to do anything if we are not able to provide some training related to the task we ask them to do. Consider the ministry areas listed above, and outline possible training topics related to each area of ministry.

5. *How many volunteers do we need to do this work?*

It is unfair to ask people to volunteer for a task if we really don't need them. Time is too valuable to waste. Carefully analyze the ministry tasks and determine how many people are needed to begin an effective ministry.

6. *How long will they be expected to serve in this particular area of ministry?*

Be able to tell the volunteer exactly how long you are asking for their involvement. Some areas of ministry demand much longer commitments than others. Building relationships takes time, but is extremely important in most areas of ministry.

Answering these basic questions will give the information needed to do an effective job of using volunteers. Next, set an agenda for getting this information to the volunteers. Give them the information and tell them exactly how they can be a part of the ministry.

An application for ministry involvement affirms the importance of the ministry and provides valuable information in deciding where each person can be most effective in the ministry,

CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRY INFORMATION

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ Church _____
_____ Pastor _____
Marital Status _____ Spouse's Name _____
Age of Children _____

Educational Background: _____

Type of Employment: _____
Church Involvement: _____
Community Interests: _____

Hobbies/Recreational Interests: _____

Why do you want to be involved in Criminal Justice Ministries? _____

Indicate the areas of ministry in which you are interested:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jail visitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Family ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Funds |

TRAIN...

THE VOLUNTEERS

Once volunteers are giving their most valuable commodity, their time, to jail/prison ministry, provide quality training in order that their investment of time will be used effectively in ministry. Training will, of necessity, vary greatly according to the kind of ministry and skills needed to do the ministry. Remember, quality training:

- is imperative for effective ministry
- affirms the importance of the ministry
- helps the volunteer to understand the ministry to be done
- provides skill development opportunities for the volunteer
- gives a thorough orientation to the institution and its policies and procedures
- stresses accountability for doing ministry
- assures the volunteer of continued support and training

Avoid shortcuts!

Allow adequate time for training.

Secure adequate resources (materials and people)

to do quality training.

Limit the time spent getting ready! Don't wait too long to start!

Avoid doing more than you can do!

Develop a detailed training agenda.

SUGGESTED TRAINING AGENDA

Time Allotted	Item	Person Responsible	Resources Needed
1 hr.	Overview	CJ Director	Video
	Objectives & Goals	CJ Director	Handouts
	Actions	CJ Director	Posters
	Schedule of Activities	CJ Director	Handouts
	Materials	CJ Director	Books
30 min.	Policies and Procedures	Inst. Staff	Handouts
2 hrs.	Tour Facility	Inst. Staff	
1 hr.	Accountability	CJ Director	Handouts
	In-Service	CJ Director	Handouts
	Recognition	CJ Director	Certificate
	Commitment Service	Pastor/Chaplain	

REPORT REGULARLY...

TO THE CHURCH AND INSTITUTION

The church and the institution have a right to know what is happening in the criminal justice ministry. Accurate reporting helps to maintain and strengthen the ministry.

Reporting confirms the volunteer's accountability. Each volunteer is accountable to the church for efforts done as a ministry of the church. Likewise, the church is accountable to the institution for the ministry of its volunteers. Accountability reminds the volunteer of the importance of the tasks. Being accountable provides motivation for consistency in ministry.

Accurate and regular reporting should:

1. Provide information needed to evaluate the volunteer's work;
2. Confirm the church's responsibility for the ministry;
3. Remind the church to support the ministry in prayer and to provide resources.
4. Remind the church of its responsibility to provide training for those who do the ministry;
5. Give the church opportunity to recognize the efforts of those involved in the ministry;
6. Affirm the participation of those involved in the ministry; 7. Maintain the institution's accessibility;
8. Enable the institution to see the church as a valuable ally in its tasks of corrections.

Use creative and effective ways of reporting the work of the ministry. Some ideas worth considering:

- Personal testimonies of volunteers;
- Testimonies of families of inmates;
- Testimonies of institutional personnel;
- Testimonies of ex-prisoners.

EVALUATE AND RECOGNIZE...

THE WORK AND THE VOLUNTEERS

Regular, systematic evaluation provides insight for improving the ministry. Everyone wants to know how they are doing and if they are contributing toward reaching the goals and objectives. Good evaluation will confirm the participation of the volunteers. Evaluation should be done as a group and as individuals.

A sample self-evaluation form for personal performance in ministry may be seen on the next page. After completing the evaluation form the volunteer then discusses it with the criminal justice ministry director. This gives both the volunteer and the director the opportunity to address any problems which are revealed in the evaluation.

Page 21 gives a list of questions for an evaluation of group activities. This evaluation will assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the ministry and should be done periodically as determined by the local church leadership.

Close analysis of this evaluation should provide information related to:

1. Continuing the ministry;
2. Changing the focus of the ministry;
3. Changing the style of the ministry;
4. Changing the goals of the ministry;
5. Training needs for the ministry.

Special recognition for faithful service enhances the ministry of the church, the institution, and the volunteers. Recognition is vital for continuing participation. List some ways the church could give special recognition to volunteers for ministry activities done by the group.

SELF -EVALUATION

Personal Performance in Criminal Justice Ministry Volunteer Work

Volunteer _____

Self -evaluation for period of From: _____ To: _____

Responsibility _____

*Instructions: Use this key for evaluating your work. Mark the appropriate column as follows:
1-Inadequate; 2-Just getting by; 3-O.K.; 4-Pretty good; 5-Effective and useful; 6-Does not apply*

In my volunteer work in Criminal Justice ministries, I see my service as indicated below:

I. Personal work habits:

- A. Arrive on time.
- B. Keep appointments.
- C. Make arrangements for my absences.
- D. Really involved while I'm with individual or group.

	1	2	3	4	5	6

II. Preparation:

- A. Preparation underway before day of ministry activity.
- B. Avoid the "same ole activity" routine.
- C. Follow through on tasks started.
- D. Go beyond minimal requirements.
- E. Plan for individual's needs.
- F. Learn about individual or group needs.

III. Working with individuals and groups:

- A. Get passive individuals involved.
- B. Avoid over-dependency.
- C. Include individuals in decisions.
- D. Keep cool with problem individuals.
- E. Express warmth and relating with interest.
- F. Look out for individual's special needs.
- G. Relate comfortably to inmates/families.
- H. Over-identifying with inmates/families.

IV. Relating to institution:

- A. Understand purpose of institution.
- B. Accept institutional programs and limitations.
- C. Positive contribution to institution's public relations.
- D. Handle confidential information responsibly.
- E. Work comfortably with institution's personnel.

V. Relating to Criminal Justice Ministry director, chaplain, etc.:

- A. Communicate frustrations to director, chaplain, etc.
- B. Share positive feelings with director, chaplain, etc.
- C. Seek help from director, chaplain, etc.
- D. Have adequate time to talk with director, chaplain, etc.

Comments: _____

EVALUATION OF GROUP MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

1. Were our plans adequate?
2. Were the members of our group adequately prepared?
3. Were our techniques suitable and well used? Would other techniques have been better?
4. Did we encounter problems which we were unable to cope with adequately?
5. What further training or resources do we need to do the work more effectively?
6. Did we establish or build meaningful relationships with the persons helped?
7. What values were derived by those helped?
8. In what ways was there evidence of spiritual growth on the part of the helped and the helpers?
9. What were our goals and did we accomplish them?



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

Men's Ministry Department

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Enabling churches and associations
to do missions and ministries
in their settings

A Ministry of the Cooperative Program