

## BINDING BROKEN HEARTS

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### Binding Broken Hearts' Letter Writing Guidelines

Writing letters to inmates is one of our priorities. We would love to have you join us in this outreach, but before you make the commitment to write to an inmate, there are some important things you need to know.

Corresponding with an inmate is a serious, long-term commitment. Because both their society and their family have rejected most inmates, letters they receive are treasured as evidence they have not been entirely forgotten. Although some inmates will respond with frequent long letters, others may only write occasionally. Be patient. The inmate may not be able to respond in the way you expect; for instance, they may not be able to afford postage. Keep writing, keeping the glory of God foremost in your expression and expectations. Even sending just a postcard with an encouraging word will be appreciated.

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| <b>P</b> ayer     | This is the most important prerequisite for any successful correspondence.  |
| <b>R</b> espect   | Treat inmates as you would want to be treated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Let the inmate decide whether or not to volunteer information.</li><li>○ Every inmate who contacts us knows he/she has sinned. Don't dwell on mistakes or focus on hellfire and damnation.</li></ul>   |
| <b>A</b> ffirm    | Letters are avenues for sharing God's love. Nothing an inmate has done removes him or her from the possibility of redemption. God can and will forgive and restore.   |
| <b>Y</b> ardstick | Maintain an emotional distance from your correspondent. Inmates are damaged, wounded people. They are NOT your friends or confidants. Never encourage romantic feelings or hint at a future relationship.   |
| <b>E</b> ncourage | Your letter may be the only mail an inmate receives in weeks, months, or even years. Letters should be positive and uplifting, encouraging forward movement in their relationship with God.   |
| <b>R</b> emember  | 95% of inmates are imprisoned for crimes they <b>have</b> committed. Be careful what you reveal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Avoid sharing information that can be used in identity theft such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete birthdates or birth location</li><li>• Social Security Numbers</li><li>• Any information identifying your parents or children</li></ul></li><li>○ Never track someone down for an inmate. There may be a reason they can't be found.</li><li>○ Never call someone for an inmate and pass along a message. This can be perceived as a threat.</li></ul> |

### Prison Rules

Each Department of Corrections (DOC) facility has unique rules and regulations; however, the following will help you in all facilities:

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| ○ <b>Never</b> send money, stamps, glue, glitter, powdery substances, etc. | ○ Books must come directly from a reseller or publisher |
| ○ Don't send anything with a staple or paperclip                           | ○ Send only paperback or soft cover books               |
| ○ Try to keep under 5 pages in an envelope                                 | ○ No sexual or violent content                          |
|  | ○ Send any pictures in a separate envelope              |