



Serving Time Jail Ministry

A 501(c)3 Christian Ministry

STARTING A LOCAL JAIL MINISTRY

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Overview – Getting Started

[Serving Time Jail Ministry](#) (STJM) was launched in 2014 from a small accountability group that wanted to share their witness more consistently for Christ. The ministry grew such that 50+ men and women volunteers have made as many as 940 visits per year while serving jail venues located in the counties surrounding Augusta, GA.

Enclosed is the start-up guide we developed for our jail ministry. We want to share this tool to make it easier and more fruitful for other Christian organizations to also serve this unique “people group.” As detailed within, there are 5 main areas we address in this process:

Appointing A Jail Point Of Contact

Gaining Jail Access Approval

Securing Partner Church(es)

Identifying & Screening Volunteers

Equipping & Training Volunteers

Jail Point Of Contact Role

Thank you for your willingness to serve as the primary Point of Contact (POC) to a county jail or Federal/State transition center for STJM. Your role is pivotal in creating, developing, and maintaining a productive relationship with law enforcement leadership in order that our team member volunteers can effectively share the Gospel and the love of Christ with detainees.

A key focus of the Jail POC is upon frequent communications and coordination with jail officials, local partner church(es), and volunteers that visit within that facility. Below are several support elements that will assist in this process.

Jail POC Role – Securing Jail Access

1. Identify and then contact the County Jail Administrator to schedule a brief call or meeting to introduce STJM and its mission. (Below is an [email or letter draft](#) to consider using.) When you connect with them, share that our focus would be in serving detainees with the provision of Bibles, Christian books*, reading glasses, and our [Departure Package](#), along with leading weekly Bible Studies within cell blocks.
2. To maximize the effectiveness of the meeting, follow the instructions within the [Jailor Questionnaire](#), and document the important points of your conversation.
3. Seek to obtain approval for distributing Bibles, Christian books, Departure Packages, and reading glasses to detainees.
4. Identify required actions for how STJM volunteers can obtain their security clearance to enter the county jail and lead Bible studies with their detainees.



5. With Jail Administrator approval, order an initial supply of Bibles, reading glasses, and Departure Package copies, scaled to the size of the facility. Ask if the Departure Packages can also be offered within a lobby kiosk.
6. Ask the Jail Administrator whether local Christian churches have members that visit.
7. Submit e-mail address(es) of the County Jail Administrator to [Randy Ourt](#) for them to receive Departure Package materials and reporting metrics.
8. Periodically reach out to the Jail Administrator to share how the program is going and confirm reordering needs. Attending events sponsored by the jail or inviting the Jail Administrator for a meal is a great way to do this.

** Typical jail guidelines do not allow hardback books or anything containing staples or other metallic fasteners. We also do not take Sunday school lessons material, quarterly student or teacher's books, or devotional pamphlets. All materials are reviewed for content, and any written notes or names need to be redacted. If not, the books are discarded.*

Email / Letter Draft To Jail Administrator

Greetings,

My name is _____ and I am a volunteer with the Serving Time Jail Ministry in Evans, GA.

We provide free Bibles, Christian books, and reading glasses for those incarcerated in local jails, including such County Jails near you as _____ .

We also provide an extensive list of resources for detainees and their family to consider for assistance called a *Departure Package*. Please see more about this on our website homepage at servingtimejailministry.org and click on Departure Package.

It is our understanding that there are few, if any, volunteers available for your jail to teach Bible lessons. Over the years our ministry has found that people in jails are very receptive to the Gospel. We have the financial capacity to provide Bibles, Christian books, and reading glasses for those in your jail; we just need volunteers that can teach the Bible and reach out in love to those in your facility.

In your capacity as Jail Administrator, please let me know If you have any contacts for local churches or people who may be interested in teaching the Bible in your facility. I would be glad to reach out to them about our ministry and the opportunities to serve. Please e-mail me at: (insert email address).

Thanking you for your service and for your time in considering this opportunity for your detainees. May God richly bless you.



Jailor Questionnaire

Facility Name _____

County _____ **State** _____

Contact Information

Name _____ **Phone** _____

E-mail _____

Street Address _____

City _____ **ZIP** _____

Mailing Address* (if different) _____

Chaplain Information? _____

Ministry Opportunities

Would like Bibles? **NO** ___ **YES** ___ (If yes, # per month) _____

Would like Reading Glasses? **NO** ___ **YES** ___ (If yes, # Per Month) _____

Would like Departure Package? **NO** ___ **YES** ___ (If yes, # Per Month) _____

Would like Christian Books? **NO** ___ **YES** ___ (If yes, # Per Month) _____

Please identify any local information that would enhance the Departure Package

Do you have enough volunteers that participate in weekly religious instruction? **NO** ___
YES ___

If no, would you like STJM to recruit volunteers? **NO** ___ **YES** ___

Are you aware of any local churches that may desire to support a Jail Ministry?



Jail POC Role – Securing A Partner Church

1. Contact the Pastor or Discipleship Leader of local churches that are already involved with this jail and ask if they would be willing to partner with us. This would involve having their members lead Bible studies and distribute Bibles, reading glasses, and Departure Packages.
2. If no churches are serving in the targeted jail, use such techniques as a Google Search, Church Association directories, or other networking methods to identify 2-3 prospective local churches to contact.
3. Contact the Pastor or Discipleship Leader of each prospective church and inquire whether any of its discipleship groups would be interested in learning more about a new local mission opportunity and STJM.
4. If there is interest, arrange to present this through a meeting, a Zoom video call, a conference call, or a detailed e-mail message.
5. When confirmed as a Church Partner, forward the Church POC e-mail address to [Randy Ourt](#) for them to receive STJM outreach materials, Departure Package, and reporting metrics.
6. Provide the actions required for their Believers to get their jail security clearance. Share the STJM New Volunteer Training Guide found on our [website home page](#) to initiate the orientation process. Follow up with them until their clearances are issued.
7. Once a new volunteer is cleared for service, e-mail [Randy Ourt](#) with their name and e-mail address. They will then be entered into the STJM Reporting System and our team member distribution list to receive monthly updates.
8. Reconnect with volunteers and partner churches about the STJM visit reporting system and confirm how they prefer to receive feedback.
9. Periodically reach out to all partner churches and its volunteers to provide outreach tools and to get program feedback. Annual presentations to the Pastor and their ministry staff are an effective way to do this. Participation in Mission Fairs also provides an opportunity to engage church leadership and members.



Partner Church Point Of Contact Role

Thank you for your willingness to serve as the primary Church Point of Contact (POC) to a county jail or Federal/State transition center for Serving Time Jail Ministry. Your role is critical in identifying, equipping, and maintaining enough volunteers for meeting the visitation needs within your local detention center(s).

The list below summarizes actions, that if taken by the Partner Church POC, will be instrumental in helping men and women find Christ as their Savior, and grow as disciples in following Him.

Church POC – Jail Ministry Support Role

1. Review the [STJM website](#) and [presentation](#) to understand its Mission, ministry impact and credentials to make your church leadership comfortable in communicating to its congregation about STJM.
2. Provide prayer support for church members that are visiting in local jails in conjunction with STJM.
3. Communicate the need for volunteers to Life Groups or other Discipleship Groups that may be interested in the Lord using them in jail ministry. Recruit interested church members and provide their contact information to the Jail POC for follow-up.
4. Periodically meet or teleconference with the Serving Time Jail POC to receive updates on how Christ is being shared within the local jail and how detainees are responding.
5. Review STJM visitation reporting quarterly to confirm that the level of church volunteer involvement is meeting identified needs.
6. Determine whether your church should begin consideration of placing jail ministry under the umbrella of its local mission program.
7. If your church leadership is interested in adopting STJM into its local mission outreach, identify methods for them to do so (e.g., purchasing Bibles and reading glasses). A budget forecast can be provided for this by contacting the STJM Treasurer.



New Volunteer Screening Process

Expectations

Before contacting a new volunteer, there are very important expectations that must be considered during the initial steps of the screening process:

1. The ideal candidate is a born-again disciple of Jesus Christ who is being led by the Holy Spirit to serve within this ministry.
2. If you are not confident that the volunteer is a Believer, and/or is properly motivated for this type of service, gracefully recommend that they not pursue involvement in the ministry.
3. If you are confident that the volunteer is a Believer but they appear isolated and without a solid connection to a local group of Believers, gracefully recommend they establish that first, and then discuss being a STJM volunteer in the future.

6-Step Volunteer Screening Process

When a new volunteer expresses interest in sharing the Gospel in jails and/or transition centers, it is important for all parties that each candidate be properly screened. A diligent and consistent vetting process yields greater gains in spiritual impact, visit quality, and volunteer satisfaction.

Meeting face-to-face with a STJM leader is always a best practice for implementing this screening process. Steps 1 and 2 can be accomplished by phone or e-mail, while the remaining steps require a follow-up personal interview.

1. Share the ministry's mission, goals, and objectives, how it operates, and how you have been personally blessed by your service. Candidly answer all questions they may raise.
2. Ask what is motivating them to get involved in a jail ministry.
3. Ask them to share their testimony about their salvation experience.
4. Ask them to share their past and current walk with the Lord, their spiritual growth, and their current involvement with Believers.
5. Share the [STJM Volunteer - Covenant Agreement](#). Inform them you will be connecting with the Point-of-Contact for the jail to be visited, who will provide them with the required steps to gain approval to visit. Touch upon the need for consistency in visits being made once they are cleared.
6. During the jail's approval period, encourage them to become familiar with STJM; in particular, to review each section of the [website](#) and go through the [ministry presentation](#).



Step	Recommended Getting Started Training For New Volunteers	Resource / Reference
1	Begin your orientation to the jail ministry by connecting with a Brother / Sister in Christ that is already visiting in the local jail. Get their insights on the jail ministry, answers to your questions, etc.	Jail Ministry Contact
2	Review the Serving Time Ministry Presentation, Mission, and Goals to become familiar enough to verbalize to detainees a quick summary on what this Ministry is all about.	<u>Serving Time Ministry Presentation</u>
3	Complete required Detention Center visitation forms, including your permission for them to conduct a background check. (It typically takes several weeks for this process to be completed and for you to be contacted with an update.)	Forms Provided By Jail
4	Attend Detention Center training if it is offered, and invest time to fully read and understand all their visitation guidelines.	Guidelines Provided By Jail
5	Connect with a Brother / Sister in Christ once you are cleared that is already visiting in the jail. Accompany them on 1-2 "In Pod" Bible sessions to observe their ministry approach. This should be helpful to you with respect to confidence level and reference points for when you begin lading visits on your own.	Jail Ministry Point Of Contact
6	Go to the STJM website then download and print the Departure Package that is highlighted on the Home Page. During your jail visits refer to the free resources that can help a detainee and their family.	<u>Download & Review Departure Package</u>
7	Prepare to teach on the Plan of Salvation during your first visit. Download a 1-Hour In-Pod lesson on this topic from our website and make 10-15 two-sided copies to share with those that attend. (Note that staples and/or paperclips are not allowed in Jails). If led by the Lord, share your personal testimony on how you were saved.	<u>1-Hour In-Pod Lessons</u>
8	Make sure you are "prayed up" for every visit you make. Remember....it is not our thoughts but HIS THOUGHTS and the Holy Spirit that will make the difference.	Holy Spirit-Led Preparation
9	Take 1 minute, following each visit, to enter your visit information within the STJM Reporting System.	<u>Reporting Link</u>
10	For your second visit, download any other 1-Hour In-Pod lesson you feel led to use from our website. If the Jail you visit allows a hard copy to be left behind, make enough two-sided copies to give out to those that attend. (Note: Leaving hard copies obviously further enables the Word to be shared even when we are not there). Following this 2nd visit, feel free to begin teaching lessons from any sources you feel led to use.	<u>1-Hour In-Pod Lessons</u>
11	Refer new Christians soon to be paroled or released to the "Starting With Christ" section of our website.	<u>Starting With Christ Video Tools</u>
12	Refer more mature Christians being paroled or released to the "Discipleship In Christ" section of our website.	<u>Discipleship Video Tools</u>



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Creating A Local Jail Ministry

Resource Links For Starting A Jail/Prison Ministry

[Prison Fellowship – How To Start A Prison Ministry](#)

[9 Steps For Starting A Correctional Ministry From Your Church](#)

[How This Promotes Church Growth](#)

[A Quick Start Guide](#)

[How To Approach A Jail Or Prison.](#)