

FAITH-BASED ADVOCACY GUIDE:

FAMM

Making The Most Out Of Your FAMM #VisitAPrison

FAMM believes that “you can’t know if you don’t go.” For faith communities, visiting a prison is an opportunity to put spiritual values into action by witnessing conditions firsthand and affirming the dignity of those inside.

The vast majority of people who are incarcerated will return to their communities. Prison ministries can serve as a vital source of hope and support during this transition. Many formerly incarcerated people report relying on faith-based communities after release.

Activities to Include in Your Visit: Don’t miss opportunities to dive deeper and interact with those living and working at the facility.

Opportunities for Engagement:

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1. Ask to engage in a private roundtable discussion. Use the questions below to guide the conversation, while allowing space for it to develop organically.
 2. Ask to sit in on a rehabilitative program or class and judge for yourself whether people are receiving quality treatment or education to help them rehabilitate themselves.
 3. Ask to see healthcare facilities and speak to some of the staff and patients about their experience with medical care in prison.
 4. Ask to eat a meal in the prison cafeteria and experience incarcerated people’s daily diet.
 5. Ask to visit the chapel or designated faith space, and consider whether it fosters hope, provides comfort, and supports reflection.



Incarcerated People’s Experiences: Ask to meet with people incarcerated there and ask them about their experiences in the criminal justice system and their rehabilitation.

Questions to ask people incarcerated at the facility:

1. What is the most helpful or transformative class or program you have taken while in prison? How will it help you after you are released?
2. Do you participate in a faith community at this prison? What role has faith played in your rehabilitation?
3. How has prison impacted or changed your family or your relationships with your family?
4. What do you think accountability should look like? How does your faith impact your perspective?
5. If you had an opportunity to be released, what would you do? What are your goals? What programs or resources would be helpful for you to meet those goals?
6. What do you want the communities you’re coming home to to understand about incarcerated people and their potential as returning citizens?

Tips from family members:

Incarcerated people fear retaliation (and may experience it) for speaking negatively about their prison experience. Keep this in mind as you ask questions and listen to their answers. Please respect people’s privacy and don’t publicly share the names of anyone you meet without their permission.

Visiting a prison is only the beginning. FAMM encourages faith communities to return, build relationships, and raise your voice beyond prison walls to advance dignity and justice of those inside.