



Prodigal Sons and Daughters: Easing the Transition from Incarceration to Home

Education and Action

1. Host an educational event in your parish with one or more of the following: an ex-offender, a Diocesan Justice & Peace staff person, a deacon involved in prison ministry, a professional from the criminal justice system (perhaps a parishioner), a staff person from an agency that serves people recently released from prison. (see "Local Resources on Prisoner Reentry")
2. Hold a book discussion night, using The Convict Christ by Jens Soering (discussion questions are included at the end of each chapter).
3. Hold a movie night using either
 - 1) Hard Straight, a documentary about the lives of 3 ex-offenders recently broadcast on PBS's 'Independent Lens' and now available from New Day films (www.newday.com/films/AHardStraight.html) or
 - 2) Available from the Diocesan AV resource center.: Beyond Prison: Seeking Justice for All, When Kids Get Life and Prison Town, USA.
4. Implement the JustMatters "Prison Reform: The Church of the Second Chance" 6-week educational module in your parish, or with several parishes. For a description of the program, visit www.justfaith.org/JF1252.html or contact your regional justice and peace staff.
5. Become a pen pal or a prayer partner with an inmate.
6. Regularly pray for prisoners and those recently released in your liturgies.
7. Participate in the Judicial Process Commission's mentoring training and become a mentor to a man or woman who is transitioning from incarceration to life in the community. Contact JPC at (585) 325-7727 or <http://www.rocjpc.org/>
8. Monitor public policy issues that relate to reentry, and keep others in your parish informed about possible advocacy opportunities.
9. Learn more about restorative justice and alternatives to incarceration. Invite a speaker from Partners in Restorative Justice (www.pirirochester.org) to speak at your church, or attend their upcoming conference in October 2009.
10. Start a reentry ministry in your parish, combining several of these suggestions.

Source: Re-entry Subcommittee, Diocesan Public Policy Committee, Rochester, NY, 2009