Jesus is the Way Prison Ministry is two-fold - we are an evangelistic ministry, but also a transitional housing aftercare facility. We work with a challenging and diverse population of men coming directly to us from prison. The population is unique and complex, prison life is very different than society and our men need to slowly integrate into society to be successful at not ending up back in prison. The ministry staff appreciates your interest and heart for our men and want to help you foster safe relationships for any volunteering you may choose. Therefore with the help of past residents, volunteers, employees and the Dept. of Corrections we have come up with a list of useful “do’s and don’ts” we hope are helpful to you.

DO’S

1. Residents must be transported directly to and from activities unless previously authorized. If driving a resident please ask the office for a transport sheet to fill out necessary information for our records. Remember that in our aftercare facility you may be confronted by residents whose intentions are less than honorable, if asked to just “swing by _______” on the way here or there is asked; deny the request. When with our residents be constantly aware of your surroundings and stay with the residents or escorting staff person.

2. Be friendly but firm. It is part of your job to be honest and objective, disproving when warranted. Remember to have a Christian disposition: Proverbs 18:24 says “Show yourself friendly.” Find ways to encourage and give hope.

3. Show respect. You must respect the resident’s individual and basic rights as a human being. There’s no room for narrow prejudices or feelings of superiority. Respond to the resident’s needs and interests.

4. Win respect for yourself. The resident will never respect you until it is clear that you cannot be conned or manipulated. For residents, manipulations may include request for you to influence the staff. They may also involve your willingness to bring contraband into the facility. If a resident asks you to do something that you believe is “borderline”, check with the appropriate staff before you act. For residents, these manipulations could be to staff split, ask for a gift or to borrow money, or break rules expecting special privileges. All assistance of any kind must be pre-approved by Jesus is the Way Prison Ministry staff.

5. There will be times when a resident who is overwhelmed by troubles will confront you with hostility. In such instances, retain your composure and ask the resident to withdraw for a while. To respond in a hostile, sarcastic manner will only feed into the resident’s hostility. Report any incidents to staff immediately.

6. No resident can leave the facility without permission. Permission is granted by administrative staff during office hours of 9am-5p.m. Mon – Friday only. Residents fill out a request which is reviewed by staff. Volunteers must contact the office during regular business hours to get authorization for a resident to leave the property with them; we need at least 3 days notice. Our facility must adhere to our transitional housing aftercare facility rules in addition to each residents individualized orders of parole, therefore in the best interest of our resident’s spontaneous decisions on movement are not granted.

7. If something seems odd or out of place, let staff know immediately. If the need is more immediate, contact 911.

8. Please remember that you are working as unto the Lord and HE will reward you.

9. Please be prepared and prayed up.
10. Help ex-offenders with clothing, finding a job, and housing. If after a period of time, he still isn't helping himself, you are released from your obligation. (If the ex-offender doesn't work, show him II Thessalonians 3:10—"If a man doesn't work, he won't eat").

11. Be very careful about taking ex-offenders to your home or even letting them know where you live, unless the Lord tells you to.

12. Men minister to men and women minister to women.

DON'TS

1. Don’t argue with staff or question staff decisions. Support staff 100% at all times.
2. Don’t talk of drinking alcohol, using drugs or wearing hats or shirts etc. that are in reference to alcohol or drugs this is not allowed. Alcohol, tobacco and drugs are not allowed at our facility.
3. Don’t give any money, gift or gratuity to any resident. Gifts to residents are never expected from any volunteer, and sometimes can have an ill-effect on the relationship. Always check with staff before giving a resident ANYTHING. All gifts must be approved by the office staff and go through the office.
4. Don’t say you are going to do something you cannot follow through with. Never be persuaded to give an instant reply of “YES or NO”, instead report you will have to check with staff first.
5. Don’t take residents to unapproved sites. Only take residents to previously approved places.
6. Don’t allow or initiate physical contact beyond shaking of hands. Within Jesus is the Way Prison Ministry aftercare facility we ask that you always be on the cautious side of how your action could “change the relationship”, in the mind of the resident.
7. Don’t be persuaded by a resident to do something different from the established program guidelines. Don’t play into their possible efforts to “shock you”; rather stay in good spirit and calmness. Any questions relay to staff thereafter.
8. Don’t forget the reason you are here. Stay on the topic that you have volunteered to help with. Don’t argue with a resident over doctrinal questions or anything else. We ask volunteers to rather focus on sharing the love of Christ which may include their personal story of how Christ changed their life.
9. Don’t discuss policies or procedures with residents. Please ask staff if you have any questions and if a resident questions you refer them to staff. Residents may have strong views on curfew or handling of money. It is best to avoid such “hot topics” and concentrate on Christ.
10. Don’t take any items from residents for any reason such as a letter to mail on his behalf or a phone number to call someone with a message and please do not allow them to use your cell phone.
11. Don’t forget that staff is well qualified and available to assist you in your volunteer effort. We value your effort and time and take your needs or concerns seriously.
12. Don’t over commit or let serving get in the way of your family and other personal obligations; Keep in balance, it is a privilege to serve.
13. Don’t ever underestimate the value of your relationship to the resident. Planting seeds is a wonderful thing, whether the resident takes care of the seed is neither your responsibility nor your decision. 1 Corinthians 3:6.
14. Don’t ever show favoritism. Do not offer anything to one resident that you are not willing and able to give to every resident in the facility.

Jesus is the Way Prison Ministry Revised 2/1/2018