

Content for ALL Pre-Season Meeting

Season Prep Portion:

○ Culture Shift

- *MAs need to understand that the way things are within each prison system: The past is the past. If you remember the “good old days” you must develop amnesia because it will never be like that again.*
- *While states are open to volunteers, the states we deal with have given much more latitude and autonomy to individual wardens. The wardens of these facilities can squash a visit – even in the face of the state being “open” - for staffing reasons, for lingering Covid illnesses or if they are still not still comfortable enough with having large group volunteers.*
- *Paperwork requirements have become much more stringent, and things like NY’s policy on Covid testing are now considered part of completing the necessary requirements for clearance. Everything we ASK of an MA is because it is REQUIRED by the state. Be more diligent and thorough than ever before because any omission can cause a delay and delays can result in someone not making a prison visit.*
- *Not being invited or being canceled last minute are now much more a product of staffing issues than they are Covid-related. This carries over to paperwork and clearances as well. The days of adding a guy – even a guest pastor or one-time observer – are also long gone. Once the roster and paperwork is submitted, that’s it. If there is someone who didn’t get paperwork back to Jimmy in time, he just isn’t going to go – period. Don’t even ask because the prison systems we deal with on a regular basis won’t even take that call.*
- *The previous point carries over to another practice from the past: getting a last minute replacement for a cancelled event is going to h. Mostly for coaches but everyone should understand, if you get the call that says “visit cancelled”, don’t even bother asking if we have tried to replace it with something else (i.e. called on of our old friends on short-notice). It simply won’t happen, and if ever again there is ever any place that might consider it you, can assume Jimmy contacted them before pulling the plug.*

Correct Paperwork a priority

- Must be completed and sent to Janice by appointed time for verification. If she sends it back to you for corrections, please correct what needs attention and send back promptly. Prisons are no longer as flexible with adding people once the forms have been sent in, one month prior to visit.
- Prior to submission, review thoroughly for any missed signatures, check boxes left unchecked and missing notaries.
- If you need additional assistance...ask! No harm in asking the coach or captain to review your paperwork. Having multiple eyes on your forms will reduce the chance of needing correction.

- I can provide samples of correct/complete paperwork for anyone.
- ***Commitment level. We are going into a new season and need everyone. When you receive your schedule, please make it a point to commit to the dates listed, as many as possible**
- **Put your phone away – no pictures OR scans from a phone will be accepted. The submission must come from either a desktop scanner or office machine, in .pdf format only.**

Individual support amounts

- **2023 brings us back to business as usual. Support levels will be enforced, including prayer partners, and everyone needs to be supported to get on the bus for game 1. Be sure everyone is aware and hold each other accountable**
- Back to before-COVID individual support totals. \$600 for veterans, \$250 for rookies **DISCUSS**
- Everyone will be expected to hit the minimum of 10 prayer partners. **DISCUSS**
- Because of very limited usage in recent years (even pre-Covid years), we are phasing out the cardboard support cards.
- Reminder that if you have not begun the process of raising support, please do so as soon as possible.

Uniforms/parts

- NGA/MGA – getting new shirts this year/ Please keep old style, as we will be using these for crusades
- NE Meeting - Current unis will be used for both season and crusade
- ****Not sure what to do about WV, they do not have old style shirts****
- Regarding uniform parts (hats and belts), please make sure to indicate what you need on the SPM application. If it is not there, it will not get ordered and I base quantities on what I see on the applications.

Equipment and Literature

- Equipment folks, please let me know your inventory of bats, balls, etc. In addition to softball equipment, each team should have a back-up indoor activity in case of rain (ex: whiffle ball set, kickball/rubber base mats). If your team does not have this, please acquire one and send the receipt to me.
- I have requested literature counts. We distributed a ton of literature over the summer in 2021, and have already given out quite a bit on the recent church crusade to FL, so please let me know these number soon. Need to make sure we have plenty of literature for every team. Literature consists of: English Gospels (blue), Tracts, MVP Book (FCA New Testament) and Umpire books (Johnny Hunt testimony books) **DISCUSS**

TRIP RELATED

Everything we do is based on respecting the officers, administration, inmates, and visitors – it is what shapes our testimony and reputation

GAMEDAY RELATED

Travel

- Be on time – we print a meeting and a departure to allow for the importance of the time spent in prayer before we leave. Do not assume that is a window for your arrival.
- Departure time is important - the scheduled departure means pulling out of the parking lot, not getting to the vehicle(s). Schedules each morning are tight – be aware of the importance of paying attention to the times, especially at meal stops.
- Physically show your driver's license before leaving the parking lot
- Be sure you are ready to go when we arrive – in uniform, glove in hand, etc.

Arrival and unloading

- If carpooling or meeting teammates, always arrive at the prison together. If you are meeting someone “at the prison”, find an offsite location nearby as the meeting spot. NEVER actually meet at the prison.
- Gather at the back of the SPM van to help carry materials into the prison
- Everyone will walk to the security building together
- One person (Coach?) will take the lead and everyone else waits for direction from him for check-in procedures.
- While waiting for direction, keep any conversations to an absolute minimum – and what needs to be said should be done so quietly.
- If you leave the van carrying something, it is your responsibility to see that it gets to our dugout area and back to the van
- Keep our materials and equipment confined to a small space in the security area or lobby; ensure we are not blocking any walkways or causing visitors/staff to navigate our gear. Once at the field, keep the gear in one place close to our bench to help security account for it.

Game Time Logistics

- One person will be getting the ground rules and will be repeating them in the team circle prior to the game
- Your coach/designee will be handling time management and monitoring the prison procedures. If, during the day, something happens other than what we discuss in advance, just react as instructed – don't question the information.
- **In the case of both of the above** – if you feel you have new information or have heard conflicting information while walking the yard, go directly to your coach with it and they will determine how to proceed. Do not take any action on your own, regardless of how credible your information may be.

Game Activity

- We are putting our best foot forward so come prepared to play your best game. The prison is expecting a show so don't disappoint.
- Do not decide for yourself to change positions, come out of the game, make an intentional out, or take your foot off the accelerator – that is the coach's decision based on their view of the big picture.
- 3rd base coach -- only do it if you are willing to be engaged in the game. Be animated using both visual and audible cues.
- Be available to go into the game if you are not already. Do not wander off without the coach knowing exactly where to find you.

Ministry Activity

- Be certain the speakers are prayed up *in advance*. Be available if asked to pray for one or the other speaker.
- Have the PA system ready to go when we approach the break – on occasion, time is a factor so we must maximize the minutes we have.
- We can see hundreds of men at some facilities, so never stop moving. Constantly be either checking to see that everyone has received literature or get engaged in conversation with inmates who don't appear to be listening. It is unlikely that you will get to hear the speakers because there will be too many men to minister to away from the field – this is a good thing!
- If you do find yourself in the area of the speaker, be sure to sit or stand with the inmate population – do not gather with other Saints

- There should not be anyone hanging around our dugout during the ministry time. The equipment will be secured, which frees everyone up to “be about our Father’s business”
- Do NOT be a distraction when anyone is on the microphone:
 - Do not put the literature bag right in front of the person speaking
 - Do not walk behind the person speaking
 - Do not engage in a conversation close to the field
- When collecting cards, be absolutely sure they are legible. If you are unsure, read it back to the individual to ensure the card is complete and spelling is right.
- Continue collecting cards for as long as we are not playing – do not stop just because the men you gave pencils to are finished.
- All response cards are to be given to one person to be sorted, counted, and marked correctly. This is a priority so that person should be considered unavailable to start a second game.

Postgame Activity

- Shake hands with the opposing team, encouraging them to join us around pitcher’s mound. This is not the time to congratulate each other on a great play or big hit – ministry is not over.
- Someone should get the necessary award books and deliver them to the center of the circle for the presenter.
- When in the circle at the center of the field:
 - MVPs
 - When awarding MVP books, know the name of the inmate not just what they did or where they played
 - Have fun with this and always remember to thank the administration
 - Be vocal in supporting inmates who receive awards
 - Hand off to the closer
 - CLOSING
 - Do not cross arms right away, wait to be instructed
 - Do not “help” the speaker – he has a method and timing to maximize impact. Help the man to your left or right if necessary, but do so without being a distraction
 - DO look for opportunities to pray 1-on-1 after the circle breaks up

Exiting the prison

- If there are Gospels left, a few MAs should have a handful to handout on the way out – if allowed by the escorting officer
- Remember, we are still be watched even as we exit. Be aware of your conversation or being loud when going through administration buildings.
- NEVER change clothes or even undress in the parking lot.
- Always circle behind the vehicle(s) and thank God for allowing us the privilege of being part of His plan. This should never be skipped unless weather or travel to a second prison make it impractical – in which case it should happen inside the vehicle(s)

