



# Touchstone

## Best Practices to Expand Your Reach



**Best Practice (BP)** | Best practices are specific, discrete ministry activities that measurably increase program scale, effectiveness, and/or efficiency, and can be replicated by other National Ministries. Best practices should be supported by evidence (data).

## BP#4: Incorporate Prison Orientations Into Volunteer Training Plans

### Benefits:

The idea of visiting a prison can be intimidating. Providing volunteers with a prison tour or opportunity to observe other volunteers in advance creates confidence, safety, and security for new volunteers. Creating safety for volunteers increases the likelihood of their long-term commitment.

### Planning Considerations (*How to do it*):

#### 1. Prepare

- Create and send invitations for volunteers to visit a prison and attend a course.
- Assign your team (Board, Executive Director, Program Manager) to serve as hosts, rather than relying on current volunteers.
- Ask the prison leadership to be a part of the orientation: to present to the volunteers and to lead a tour of the facility.
- Travel with the volunteers to the prisons. This allows you to get to know the volunteers, to understand how they are approaching the visit and provides you an opportunity to set expectations.
- Walk the volunteers through the security vetting process – let them know what to expect upon arriving at a prison.
- Develop a role shadowing program for potential volunteers, provide flexibility and multiple opportunities for potential volunteers to join.
- Provide a copy of the prison dos and don'ts to review prior to visiting the prison.

#### 2. On-Site

- Detail the roles of the prison staff.
- Introduce volunteers to prison staff so that they begin to know names/faces and vice versa.
- Lead the volunteers through all the processes – entering a prison, security screening, finding the classroom, rest rooms, etc.
- Tour the facility.

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## NM with Demonstrated Experience in this BP

 Canada

 Czech Republic

 Liberia

- Pair up new volunteers to build volunteer teams that can work together and support each other.
- Attend a TPJ or STP course.
- Learn safety regulations.

### 3. Follow-up

- Debrief the course with the volunteers and course leaders.
- Debrief the visit with the volunteers.

## Required Resources (What you need to do it):

### 1. Human Resources.

- The National Ministry leadership will need to be available to host potential volunteers.
- Someone will need to communicate with potential volunteers and prisons to arrange visits.
- Someone will need to arrange transportation.

### 2. Collateral.

- Invitations (print and web-based)
- Copies of prison dos and don'ts

### 3. Time.

- Develop a role shadowing program
- Volunteer coordination
- Time to visit prison(s)
- Time to debrief

**4. Prison Access and Space.** You will need the ability to enter a prison and space to observe courses.

**5. Cost.** The cost varies. Considerations include travel expenses and types of communication (email, phone, text).