

Yokefellow Basic Training

Lesson Plan

David N. Canady

I. Lesson title: Basic Introduction to Yokefellow Prison Ministry

II. Preparation of the lesson:

A. Lesson Objective: To introduce each class member to the Yokefellow Prison Ministry's method of Christian Ministry..

B. Learner objectives:

1. Each volunteer will understand that the method of Christian Ministry through Yokefellow Prison Ministry is building relationships of TRUST so that concerns of importance can be shared.
2. Each volunteer will understand that the concept of being yoked together with Jesus Christ and with the inmate.
3. Each volunteer will understand the value and worth of listening in building trusting relationships.
4. Each volunteer will be introduced to seven (7) spiritual disciplines and will make a commitment to follow these disciplines.
5. Each volunteer will be introduced to the following key methods used in Yokefellow Prison Ministry:
 1. One (1) volunteer meets with three (3) inmates
 2. The majority of time spent in a yokefellow meeting will be a time of small group sharing. Volunteers will follow the policy (Rules and Regulations) of the Department of Correction.
6. Each volunteer will be made aware of the following concerns:
 1. We are invited guest into the prisons:
 2. We strive to develop and maintain good relationships with prison personnel.
 3. Should inmates make sexual advances on volunteers, it is the volunteer's responsibility to report this activity to the Yokefellow Coordinator, Chaplain or prison official.

C. Time Required for the lesson: Two (2) hours

D. Instructional Methods:

1. Lecture
2. Lecture topic Discussion
3. Handout topic Discussion

E. Equipment:

1. Chalk
2. Chalk Board
3. Eraser
4. Flip Chart
5. Magic Markers
6. Name Tags
7. Power Point Presentation
8. Additional Visual Aids

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F. Instructional Materials:

1. Learner Objectives
2. "Yoke Sharing" Newsletter (August 2009)
3. "Telling the Yokefellow Story" (Yokefellow News. Sept 1987)
4. "The Yoke's on You" by Max Vestal
5. "Yokefellow Group Covenant" from Yokefellow Prison Ministry of N.C. Guidebook, 03/23/07 page 10 & 11
6. "Forward" to the book, The Listener by Taylor Caldwell
7. "Listening" Morton T. Kelsey
8. "Do you listen with your third ear" June Critcher
9. "Building a Yokefellow Relationship" David N. Canady
10. "Yokefellow Disciplines" from Yokefellow Prison Ministry of N.C. Guidebook, 03/27/07 page 5
11. "The Disciplines"
12. ". . . format for a weekly meeting" Page 11 from Y.F.P.M. of NC GUIDEBOOK
13. "Format for a weekly Yokefellow Meeting" David N. Canady

G. References and Resources:

1. Elton Trueblood, While It Is Day, Harper and Rowe, 1974
This is Trueblood's autobiography where he writes about the conception and beginning of Yokefellow Ministry
2. "Training Manual for Volunteers" May 1976
3. "Yokefellow Prison Ministry of North Carolina Guidebook , March 2007
4. "A Yokefellow Handbook"
5. Holy Bible , Matthew 11:28-31 , 25:31-46
6. "A Tribute to D. Elton Trueblood" , Hal E. Owens
7. "Yokefellow Prison Ministry of North Carolina, Inc" a two (2) page statement about purpose, history, activities, etc of Yokefellows written in 1985.
8. "How a Yokefellow Group Operates" a two (2) page statement about Yokefellow written 1996.
9. A five (5) page packet of material used at Yokefellow meetings as discussion starters. The topics include:
 - 1) Aggression or Anger
 - 2) Hate
 - 3) Fear
 - 4) What do you want most from life?
 - 5) Identity
10. " Yokefellow beginning in North Carolina" Dr Jerry Murray in Yokefellow News, Spring 1998

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III. Outline of Presentation:

Yokefellow Prison Ministry is a Christian Ministry in Correctional Facilities of North Carolina. At present our volunteers number over 800 and are providing ministry in fifty four prisons. Moreover, this year 2009 we have a history of forty (40) years of ministry. Our method of ministry is relational which means we are committed to building relationships of trust so that inmates can/may share concerns of importance and meaning. We image ourselves as being true to our Christian calling of “bearing one another’s burden (Galatians (6:2).

Yokefellow Prison Ministry and it’s method of ministry provides a powerful demonstration of one of our basic beliefs as Christians:

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of us all,
who is above all and through all and is all!”

Ephesians 4:4-6

Yokefellow volunteers demonstrate this truth as they provide ministry. In a Yokefellow group one can see believers from different denominations, male and female, clergy and laity as well as volunteers from different races. In today’s culture where there are so many divisions and labels to separate persons, Yokefellow Prison Ministry proclaims and exhibits unity in Christ.

Yokefellow Prison Ministry acknowledges the value of preaching, Bible teaching, drama, music, films, etc. in communicating the gospel; however, our commitment is to relationships of sharing as we express our care to others out of our commitment to Jesus Christ.

Class Discussion

Present the following question to the class:

As you reflect upon your Christian pilgrimage, what area would you identify as playing the most important role in your maturing as a Christian:

- 1) Listening to good preaching?
- 2) Listening to good teaching?
- 3) Sharing your Christian faith (which would include joys, troubles, doubts, questions, victories, fears, etc) with Christian brothers and/or sisters?

The task, therefore, of this lesson is to present our method and style of ministry. In a newsletter dated August 2009, this focus on caring and sharing and relationship building is presented.

Handout # 2: “Yoke-Sharing” , August 2009 David Guthrie

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A. Choosing The Yoke

The foundation of Yokefellow Prison is choosing to be yoked with/to Jesus Christ and with/to the inmates. This image grows out of Christ's invitation (Matthew 11:28-30) to us. We do not have to pull the load alone; we can partner with Christ our Lord; moreover, we are called to walk with and share our brother's and sister's burdens. Elton Trueblood, a Quaker, was the founder of Yokefellow. He describes his experience of seeing "the yoke" as a symbol of our ministry. This account is found in his autobiography, *While It Is Day* and key pieces of his story are found in the following handout.

Handout # 3: "Telling the Yokefellow Story"

In the early years of Yokefellow Prison Ministry in North Carolina, Max Vestal was a leader. He wrote a brief statement which expressed his understanding of "The Yoke" and is shared in handout #3. Please note his prayer and how he gave thanks for "Jesus Christ."

Handout # 4: "The Yoke's on You" Max Vestal

Handout # 5 "Yokefellow Group Covenant"

B. Importance of Listening

We live in a "busy" world! We, in fact, make it busy and rushed. Such a life style leaves little time to relate to one another. We rush from job to job and we are tired. We hunger for those relationships where we can trust one another and have time to share concerns. In short, we desire someone who will listen to us and understand our struggles, troubles and our victories.

Yokefellow prison ministry knows the importance of listening. We know that persons (inmates included) are hungry for someone to talk to. We have learned the importance of "telling our story" in the presence of caring persons who listen out of care and concern for our well being. Therefore, one of our basic commitments as Yokefellows is to listen to the inmates we meet with week after week. The following handouts speak of the value and importance of listening.

Handouts # 6,7,8

6: "Forward" to the book, "The Listener" Taylor Caldwell

7: "Listening" Morton T. Kelsey

8: "Do you listen with your third ear?" , June Critcher

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C. Building Relationships of Trust

Trust is the building block of love; moreover, it is build over time. Just as Rome was not built in a day, neither is trust built in one day. We nurture and cultivate trust by honesty and dependability, by caring as life and experiences are shared. Telling the truth is a key factor in trust building. Taking risks to share personal and private information takes an act of courage.

As Yokefellows we begin with trusting relationships as our goal. Many key factors in building trusting, loving relationships are found in the next handout.

Handouts # 9 “Building a Yokefellow Relationship” David N. Canady

D. Commitment To Spiritual Disciplines

The importance of spiritual disciplines was a part of the Yokefellow movement from the very beginning. The study of Christian history reveals that Christians throughout the centuries have discovered that discipline is necessary for them to grow into maturity as well as to use the gifts and talents God has given them as Christ’s disciples. In this light Yokefellows make a commitment to seven (7) Spiritual Disciplines and call upon inmates to make this same commitment. These disciplines are reviewed with the volunteers just as the volunteers explain the disciplines with inmates. The commitment to follow these disciplines is affirmed as each individual receives and signs the card bearing these Spiritual Disciplines.

Handouts # 10 “Yokefellow Disciplines” from Y. P. M. of N.C. Guidebook, page 5

Handouts # 11 “The Disciplines”

E. Format For A Weekly Yokefellow Meeting

Many new Yokefellow volunteers have asked the question: “How do you organize a Yokefellow meeting so that its method of ministry can take place?” A quick answer is to say that the majority of the allotted time is scheduled for small group sharing. Ideally one Yokefellow volunteer will meet with two (2) or three (3) inmates. The best way to see this organization of time is to review the following two handouts:

Handouts # 12 “...Format for a weekly meeting” page 11 in the Y. P. M. of NC **Guidebook**”

Handouts # 13 “Format for a weekly Yokefellow Meeting” David N. Canady

F. Important Considerations for Yokefellow Volunteers

1. Always remember that we are invited guest into Correctional Facilities. Moreover, we need to understand that custody issues take precedence over

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programs, even Yokefellow meetings. For example, until counting inmates is completed and cleared, the facility will remain on “lock down status”. Volunteers will not be allowed to enter until “lock down” status is removed.

2. During our forty (40) years as volunteers in our state’s prisons, there have been occasions when volunteers got romantically involved with inmates. When this line is crossed volunteer privileges will be revoked. History has taught us to instruct our volunteers to talk to the Yokefellow unit coordinator, Chaplain, or prison personnel should inmates initiate sexual or romantic advances.
3. There is a temptation for Yokefellow volunteers to step aside from the Yokefellow method of ministry and begin a “preaching service” or a “period of Bible study”. We must resist this temptation and keep on providing /bearing witness to Jesus Christ through our method of ministry.

IV. Evaluation:

Each student will write a three (3) minute statement expressing his/her understanding of the central method of Yokefellow Prison Ministry.

V. Lesson Plan Authentication:

A. Lesson Plan prepared by : _____ / /
David N. Canady Date

B. Lesson Plan approved by: _____ signed _____ 4/30/2010
Nancy Burkette Date
Executive Director
Yokefellow Prison Ministry