

## Pen-Pal Guidelines

### Requirements:

- You must be at least 18 to be a pen-pal with an inmate.
- Generally, females should be pen-pals with females and males should write to males (Opposite sex pen-pals can lead to romantic overtures).
- Use your local church address or a post-office box, not your home address.
- You can use your own name if you feel comfortable or you can use a pseudonym.
- Try to write at least once or twice a month.

### Do's

- When in doubt, contact the prison office at 615-870-1126 or email at [office@tnprisonministry.org](mailto:office@tnprisonministry.org) with questions.
- Be a Christian friend to inmates. Share your faith with inmates.
- Be dependable. Be patient. Be honest. Be a good listener.
- Do be aware of con games.
- Do be trustworthy when someone shares with you personal or confidential information.
- Try to encourage and give hope.

### Don'ts:

- Don't make promises you cannot keep.
- Nothing is to be given to the inmates through the mail. There is a procedure by which inmates may receive items they need. If they ask for Bibles, study guide books, clock etc, do not send it to them or give them money. Contact Thomas Snow or the local chaplain if they make a request. There are proper channels which must be followed.
- Do not give you home or cell phone number. You can give them the local church address and phone number.
- Don't ask why a person is or has been in prison.
- Don't criticize staff or an institution.
- Don't enter into personal or business transactions with inmates. It could be a FELONY and you could be prosecuted.

- Don't contact judges or family members for them. If they request this, contact your coordinator or the prison office for any necessary visits.
- Don't send personal pictures to inmates.
- Don't enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope unless approved by the institution. Some prisons and jails consider extra stamps to be contraband.