

ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION PARK CITY, UTAH



JAIL MINISTRY PACKET

FAQ | HOW TO | LECTIO DIVINA | GUIDELINES

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STMARYSPARKCITY.COM/JAIL-MINISTRY

ST. MARY'S AND ST. LAWRENCE JAIL MINISTRY

VISION STATEMENT

To reflect the mercy and compassion of Jesus Christ within the walls of incarceration, bringing light, healing, and hope to those who long for freedom of the heart. We envision a community where every person, no matter their past, encounters Christ's redeeming love and begins a new journey of conversion, dignity, and reconciliation.

MISSION STATEMENT

Moved by the Gospel call, "I was in prison and you visited me" (Matthew 25:36), our Jail Ministry seeks to:

- **Bring Christ's Presence to the incarcerated** through prayer, Scripture, and the Sacraments, especially Reconciliation and the Eucharist.
- **Offer Pastoral Care by listening** with compassion, encouraging repentance, and walking alongside each person in their journey toward healing.
- **Foster Spiritual Growth** through catechesis, Bible study, and faith-sharing that renews hope and moral strength.
- **Build Bridges of Mercy** between the incarcerated, their families, and the parish community to promote forgiveness, understanding, and reintegration.
- **Proclaim Human Dignity** by witnessing that every person is a beloved child of God, created for freedom and communion with Him.

CORE VALUES

COMPASSION	<i>We meet each person with the heart of Christ, seeing beyond their mistakes to their God-given worth.</i>
MERCY	<i>We bring the forgiving love of God to those who feel forgotten or unworthy.</i>
CONFIDENTIALITY	<i>We safeguard the trust and privacy of all we serve.</i>
FAITH	<i>We root our ministry in prayer, Scripture, and the sacraments.</i>
SERVICE	<i>We offer our time and presence as a sign of God's nearness to those who suffer.</i>
HOPE	<i>We proclaim that no one is beyond redemption and that God makes all things new.</i>

Ministry Coordinators

For Men: Shawn Broderick

For Women: Marisa Lopiccolo

HOW TO PREPARE FOR JAIL MINISTRY

1. BEGIN WITH PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT

Before anything else, begin on your knees. Jail ministry is not a project — *it is a vocation within your vocation.*

Ask the Holy Spirit: “*Lord, do You want me to go there? Am I ready to be Your presence in that place?*” Spend time in Eucharistic Adoration or the Liturgy of the Hours, offering your ministry to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and entrusting it to Mary, *Mother of Mercy.*

2. UNDERSTAND THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE WORK

Remember, you are entering a place of human suffering — often marked by guilt, shame, trauma, and despair. Your role is not to judge or fix, but to reveal that Christ has not abandoned them. “*The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.*” (Luke 19:10) Ask for the grace to see each inmate as **a soul loved by God**, not as a case or a criminal.

3. RECEIVE PROPER TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

Every diocese or correctional facility has **orientation requirements** that include: *Background check and security clearance ; Orientation on safety, rules, and dress code ; Confidentiality and reporting protocols.*

Take these seriously — they protect both the minister and the inmate. *Remember: obedience to rules is a form of love and witness.*

4. PREPARE SPIRITUALLY AND EMOTIONALLY

Go to Confession regularly. Attend Mass frequently, ideally before visits. Read Scripture daily — especially the Gospels and Psalms. Keep a spiritual journal. Pray for the inmates before and after each visit.

Also, prepare your heart emotionally: some stories will be heavy. Ground yourself in prayer, community, and rest.

5. STUDY THE WORD AND KNOW THE FAITH

Inmates often have deep questions about: *Suffering and forgiveness ; God’s justice and mercy ; Why the innocent suffer ; Whether they can be forgiven.*

Be rooted in Scripture and Catechism so you can “*give a reason for the hope that is in you*” (1 Peter 3:15). Simple, clear, compassionate answers touch hearts more than theological debates.

6. WORK AS A TEAM

Never do jail ministry in isolation. Serve under Church authority — your pastor, chaplain, or diocesan coordinator. Meet regularly with your ministry team for: *Shared prayer ; Debriefing difficult encounters ; Ongoing formation.*

“*Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I.*” (Matthew 18:20)

7. RESPECT THE INSTITUTION AND ITS OFFICERS

Correctional staff are not your adversaries; they are your partners in maintaining safety. Always: *Follow the chain of command ; Respect the schedule and security procedures ; Be courteous and calm.* Your credibility depends on your reliability.

8. PREPARE MATERIALS WISELY

If allowed, bring: *Approved Bibles (large-print preferred)* ; *Rosaries (soft cord, no metal)* ; *Prayer cards or printed reflections* ; *Simple songs or Scripture sheets*.

Avoid any item that could be misused, written on, or passed around without permission. **Check every item through the chaplain or officer in charge.**

9. PRACTICE PASTORAL PRESENCE

The greatest gift you bring is not your words, but your presence. Be attentive, compassionate, and nonjudgmental. Listen more than you speak. Offer Christ's love simply — in a look, a word, a prayer. *"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted."* (Psalm 34:18).

10. END EACH VISIT WITH PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

After leaving the facility: *Thank God for the grace of the encounter* ; *Pray for each inmate by name if possible* ; *Ask the Holy Spirit to heal what you cannot* ; *Never take emotional burdens home; place them at the foot of the Cross.*

A SIMPLE DAILY PRAYER FOR JAIL MINISTERS

Lord Jesus, Prisoner of Love,
You entered the depths of human misery to redeem us.
As I go to meet my brothers and sisters in confinement,
give me eyes to see You in them,
words that bring peace,
and a heart that forgives and loves.
Protect us all and let Your mercy be our freedom.
Amen.

10 THINGS TO AVOID IN JAIL MINISTRY GUIDELINES FOR CATHOLIC VOLUNTEERS

1. DO NOT PROMISE CONFIDENTIALITY YOU CANNOT KEEP

While pastoral confidentiality is sacred, correctional facilities have legal and safety obligations. If someone discloses a plan to harm themselves or others, or to escape, you must report it.

- *Say instead: "What you share with me is private, but if it concerns your safety or someone else's, I am obliged to help by informing the right person."*

2. DO NOT BRING OR EXCHANGE PERSONAL ITEMS

Never give or receive personal objects (letters, money, books, food, or religious medals) without official permission. Even a small gift can be seen as favoritism or manipulation.

- *Follow institutional protocols for approved materials only.*

3. DO NOT DEVELOP EXCLUSIVE OR OVERLY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Avoid favoritism or emotional over-identification with a particular inmate. Jail ministry is not friendship—it is pastoral accompaniment in Christ.

- *Maintain professional, compassionate boundaries that protect both you and the inmate.*

4. DO NOT ENGAGE IN THEOLOGICAL OR POLITICAL ARGUMENTS

Avoid debates that create division, especially on politics, other religions, or personal ideologies. The ministry's mission is conversion of hearts, not winning arguments.

- *Focus on Scripture, mercy, and hope in Christ.*

5. DO NOT ASSUME EVERYONE SHARES THE SAME FAITH

Even in a Catholic service, participants may come from various backgrounds.

- *Be inclusive, respectful, and invitational, never coercive. Faith must be proposed, not imposed.*

6. DO NOT PROMISE QUICK FIXES OR UNREALISTIC OUTCOMES

You cannot "fix" a person's life overnight. Avoid saying things like "God will get you out soon" or "Everything will be fine."

- *Instead, offer steady hope: "God walks with you, even here, and He can make something new out of your life."*

7. DO NOT NEGLECT YOUR OWN SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES

Prison ministry can be emotionally heavy.

- *Bring everything to prayer, use supervision, and have a support system. A minister who does not pray risks carrying others' crosses without the strength of Christ.*

8. DO NOT IGNORE INSTITUTIONAL RULES OR STAFF

Always respect the authority of correctional officers and the institution.

- *Never enter areas unaccompanied, and always wear your badge or pass. Obedience builds trust and ensures long-term access for ministry.*

9. DO NOT USE THE VISIT FOR PERSONAL AGENDAS

Your role is not to collect stories, record testimonies, or use visits for personal projects or publicity.
- *Ministry is about presence, not performance. Never post or share inmate information or photos.*

10. DO NOT FORGET THAT YOU REPRESENT CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Your attitude, tone, and conduct preach louder than your words. Never act impatient, superior, or judgmental.

- *You are an ambassador of mercy — go with humility, joy, and reverence.*

Summary Reminder (Simple Rule of Thumb):

“Be prayerful, be prudent, be present — not personal, political, or possessive.”

DO NOT...

Promise total confidentiality you cannot keep.

Bring or exchange personal items

Form exclusive or emotional attachments

Argue about theology or politics

Assume everyone is Catholic

Promise miracles or early release

Neglect your own prayer life

Ignore officers or rules

Use ministry for personal projects

Forget you represent Christ

DO INSTEAD

“*The truth will set you free.*” (Jn 8:32) Explain your duty to report safety concerns.

“*Let all things be done properly and in order.*” (1 Cor 14:40) Follow facility rules for all materials.

“*Do all for the glory of God.*” (1 Cor 10:31) Maintain healthy pastoral boundaries.

“*A gentle answer turns away wrath.*” (Prov 15:1) Listen more than you speak.

“*That they may all be one.*” (Jn 17:21) Welcome all in the spirit of respect and mercy.

“*We walk by faith, not by sight.*” (2 Cor 5:7) Offer realistic hope in God’s timing.

“*Come away and rest a while.*” (Mk 6:31) Take time for spiritual renewal and supervision.

“*Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.*” (Rom 13:1) Honor all facility procedures.

“*Do nothing out of vanity.*” (Phil 2:3) Serve humbly; avoid publicity or self-focus.

“*You are the light of the world.*” (Mt 5:14) Let compassion and peace guide every encounter.

FORMAT FOR A PRAYER SERVICE

THEME: (Choose according to season, feast, or pastoral need — e.g., Mercy, Healing, Forgiveness, Hope, Conversion)

1. GATHERING & WELCOME (2–3 MIN)

- Brief greeting and explanation of the theme.
- Encourage participants to enter into silence and awareness of God's presence.
- Opening song (optional) — e.g., “Amazing Grace,” “Be Not Afraid,” “Jesus, Remember Me.”

2. OPENING PRAYER

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: Loving Father, You search for us when we are lost and heal us when we are broken. Pour out Your mercy upon us gathered here. Open our hearts to Your Word and renew in us the joy of Your forgiveness. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

3. SCRIPTURE READING (3–5 MIN)

Choose one or more readings fitting the theme:

- Gospel (e.g., Lk 15:11–32 – Prodigal Son; Mt 25:31–46 – Works of Mercy)
- Psalm (optional, prayed responsorially)
- Short Reflection (by leader or participant)

4. MOMENT OF SILENCE (2–3 MIN)

Invite quiet reflection: “Let us take a moment to be silent before God, who speaks in the depths of our hearts.”

5. INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

Leader: God of mercy, You sent Your Son to free us from sin and darkness. Hear our prayers.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

- For all who are imprisoned, that they may find hope and healing in Christ.
- For their families, that forgiveness and peace may fill their hearts.
- For all victims of crime, that they may experience justice and comfort.
- For all ministers and volunteers, that they may serve with patience and compassion.

6. THE LORD'S PRAYER

All: Our Father, who art in heaven...

7. CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: Lord Jesus, You entered our world to bring light where there was darkness. Be with us as we go forth; may our words and actions bring Your peace to others. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

8. BLESSING & DISMISSAL

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

(Optional: Closing Song or Moment of Shared Prayer Intentions)

FORMAT FOR LECTIO DIVINA (SACRED READING)

SUGGESTED DURATION: 30-45 Minutes

PURPOSE: To encounter the living Word of God personally and communally.

1. OPENING PRAYER

Come, Holy Spirit, open our hearts to Your Word.

Help us to listen with faith, receive with love, and respond with trust.

May Your Word transform us and lead us closer to Christ. Amen.

2. READING THE WORD – LECTIO

Select a short Gospel or Epistle passage (8–12 verses).

- One person reads the text slowly and clearly.
- Pause for a moment of silence.

Example passages: Luke 15:11–32 (Prodigal Son) ; John 8:1–11 (The Woman Caught in Adultery) ; Matthew 5:1–12 (Beatitudes)

3. MEDITATION – MEDITATIO

Read the text again (a second person). Invite each person to reflect silently:

- *“What word, phrase, or image touches my heart?”*
- *“What is God saying to me personally in this passage?”*

Allow 3–5 minutes of silence.

4. PRAYER – ORATIO

Read the text a third time. Invite participants to respond to God in short, spontaneous prayers of thanksgiving, repentance, or petition: *“Lord, I thank You for...”* ; *“Jesus, help me to...”*

5. CONTEMPLATION – CONTEMPLATIO

Silent rest in God’s presence. Encourage participants to simply be still and dwell in the love of Christ.

- *“Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10)*

6. SHARING (OPTIONAL)

If appropriate, invite brief sharing: *“What did you hear the Lord say to you today?” (Remind participants to share simply, not to teach or analyze.)*

7. CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You are the Word made flesh and the light of our hearts.

May Your Word dwell richly within us and bear fruit in our lives.

Bless all whom we have prayed for today.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

HOW TO DO JUVENILE MINISTRY

“LET THE LITTLE ONES COME TO ME.” (MARK 10:14)

1. UNDERSTAND THE MISSION

Juvenile Ministry is not about “fixing troubled teens.” It is about **revealing Christ’s love** to young people who often have never truly known love, stability, or forgiveness. You are there to **accompany**, not to correct. Your presence tells them: “You are not forgotten. God still believes in you.”

2. PREPARE WITH PRAYER AND TRAINING

Before entering any juvenile facility:

- *Pray for purity of intention and gentleness of heart.*
- *Complete all background checks and juvenile facility orientation.*
- *Familiarize yourself with developmental stages of adolescence and trauma-informed care.*

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you “*see with the eyes of mercy and speak with the voice of hope.*”

3. APPROACH WITH COMPASSION, NOT AUTHORITY

Many young offenders have been hurt by adults who misused authority. They may distrust priests, teachers, or any figure of power. So, avoid lecturing or moralizing.

- *Be a loving presence, not a moral policeman.*

“*The bruised reed He will not break.*” (Isaiah 42:3) Smile. Listen. Treat them with dignity. They notice authenticity more than eloquence.

4. CREATE A SAFE, RESPECTFUL SPACE

If you lead group sessions:

- *Begin with a short prayer or reflection.*
- *Establish clear but gentle rules: respect, no interrupting, confidentiality.*
- *Use names, not labels (“John,” not “offender”).*
- *Avoid questions about crimes or past mistakes.*

A sense of safety allows the Holy Spirit to work in the heart.

5. MAKE THE WORD COME ALIVE

Teens respond to stories and symbols, not lectures. Use Scripture passages that speak to their experience:

- *Luke 15:11–32 – The Prodigal Son*
- *Luke 19:1–10 – Zacchaeus*
- *John 8:1–11 – The Woman Caught in Adultery*
- *Psalms 139 – You knit me in my mother’s womb*

Ask open questions:

“*Where do you see yourself in this story?*”

“*What do you think God is trying to say to you today?*”

This is the heart of *Lectio Divina* for youth — personal, real, and full of mercy.

6. USE SIMPLE AND INTERACTIVE METHODS

Juveniles have short attention spans and carry emotional stress. So, make your ministry engaging and sensory-based:

- *Short reflections (5–7 minutes)*
- *Music, journaling, or drawing (if permitted)*
- *Scripture-based activities: “Write a letter from the Prodigal Son to his father.”*
- *Prayer circles with intentions in their own words*

Let them participate, not just observe.

7. SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF HOPE

Avoid moralistic or fear-based language. Replace “*You should...*” with “*You can...*”; Replace “*God is disappointed in you*” with “*God still believes in you.*”

“For I know the plans I have for you... plans for peace and not for harm.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Be the voice that awakens hope — many have never heard one before.

8. RESPECT BOUNDARIES

Never give out personal contact information. Do not hug unless permitted by facility policy. Avoid private conversations without staff nearby. Never promise help you cannot give. Always work as part of a team, under Church and facility supervision. **Boundaries protect you, them, and the ministry’s credibility.**

9. INVOLVE FAMILIES AND FOLLOW-UP WHEN POSSIBLE

If permitted, coordinate with chaplains or counselors to support reintegration. Encourage family reconciliation through prayer, letters, or spiritual direction. If they return to parish life, **welcome them visibly and joyfully** — it’s a sign of grace and healing

10. LET EVERY ENCOUNTER POINT TO CHRIST

End every session with prayer — calm, reverent, and simple: “*Jesus, You love me. You forgive me. Help me start again.*” Remind them that **Jesus Himself was arrested, falsely accused, and humiliated, and yet forgave everyone.** You are not there to preach perfection, but to witness redemption.

A DAILY PRAYER FOR JUVENILE MINISTERS

Lord Jesus, Friend of the Young,

You know the hearts of those who are wounded and searching.

Bless the young souls we meet in confinement — those who carry pain, anger, and regret. May our words bring peace, and our presence reflect Your mercy. Teach us to listen more than we speak, to sow hope more than advice, and to trust that Your grace is stronger than their past.

Amen.

The 5 Golden Rules of Juvenile Ministry

1. Pray before and after every encounter.
2. See each youth as a soul, not a case.
3. Be patient — growth takes time.
4. Keep boundaries firm and compassionate.
5. Always leave them with hope.

HOW TO DO A PRAYER SERVICE FOR JUVENILES

“LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME; DO NOT HINDER THEM.” (MARK 10:14)

1. PREPARE THE ENVIRONMENT

Goal: create a safe, reverent, and peaceful atmosphere.

- *Keep it simple — a cross, small Bible, candle (if permitted).*
- *Sit in a circle if possible (no “front” or “back”).*
- *Avoid heavy symbols of guilt; focus on light, hope, and mercy.*
- *If allowed, play soft reflective music during gathering.*

You are not creating a liturgy of penance — you are creating a moment of grace.

2. THEME AND INTENTION (2–3 MINUTES)

Choose one **simple theme** such as: *God’s mercy ; Forgiveness ; Hope and new beginnings ; God never forgets you; Jesus understands suffering*

Begin with a heartfelt introduction: *“We are gathered here to remember that God loves each one of us. No matter what we have done, He has not stopped believing in us. Let us take a moment to open our hearts to Him.”*

Short silence.

3. OPENING PRAYER

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Lord Jesus, You are our friend and our Savior. You never give up on us, even when we fall. Bless us today as we listen to Your Word. Help us to believe that You still have a plan for our lives. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

4. SCRIPTURE READING (2–3 MINUTES)

Choose a passage that speaks to identity, hope, or mercy. Some examples: *Luke 15:11–32 – The Prodigal Son ; John 8:1–11 – The Woman Caught in Sin ; Psalm 139:1–10 – “You have searched me and known me” ; Jeremiah 29:11 – “I know the plans I have for you” ; Luke 23:39–43 – The Good Thief*

Read it slowly and clearly. If possible, invite one youth to read a short section.

5. REFLECTION OR SHARING (5–7 MINUTES)

Keep it conversational, not homiletic. Ask simple questions: *“What word or phrase stood out to you?”*
“How do you think the person in the story felt?” *“What do you think God is saying to you through this?”*

Affirm any sincere answer — there are no wrong ones. Highlight one central truth: *“God never stops waiting for us to come home.”* *“Jesus understands our pain.”* *“You are more than your mistakes.”*

Avoid abstract theology; focus on heart language.

6. SILENT REFLECTION (1–2 MINUTES)

Invite them to close their eyes or lower their heads. Say softly: *“In your heart, talk to Jesus right now. Tell Him what you’re sorry for, what you’re thankful for, or what you hope for. He is listening.”*

Keep silence.

If permitted, play soft music or light instrumental background.

7. INTERCESSORY PRAYERS (3 MINUTES)

Leader: Lord, You are our light and our strength. Hear our prayers.

Response: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

- *For all young people here, that they may find peace and hope.*
- *For their families, that forgiveness may heal what is broken.*
- *For all victims of violence, that You comfort them.*
- *For those who care for us here — officers, staff, volunteers — that they may be patient and kind.*
- *For each one of us, that we may believe in Your mercy*

8. THE LORD'S PRAYER

All: Our Father, who art in heaven...

Encourage them to pray aloud together — many find comfort in the rhythm of familiar prayer.

9. CLOSING BLESSING

Leader: Lord Jesus, thank You for being with us today. As we go back to our rooms, stay close to us. When we feel afraid, remind us that You are with us. When we feel alone, whisper to our hearts that we are loved. Bless our minds, our hearts, and our families. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

10. OPTIONAL SONG OR PRAYER CARD

If permitted, conclude with:

- *“Amazing Grace,” “You Raise Me Up,” or “Open My Eyes, Lord.”*
- *Distribute small prayer cards with Psalm 23 or The Serenity Prayer.*

MODEL CLOSING PRAYER FOR JUVENILE PRAYER SERVICES

Jesus, my Friend,

You know me better than anyone else.

Sometimes I feel lost or afraid.

But I know You love me, and You have not forgotten me.

Help me start again.

Help me forgive myself and others.

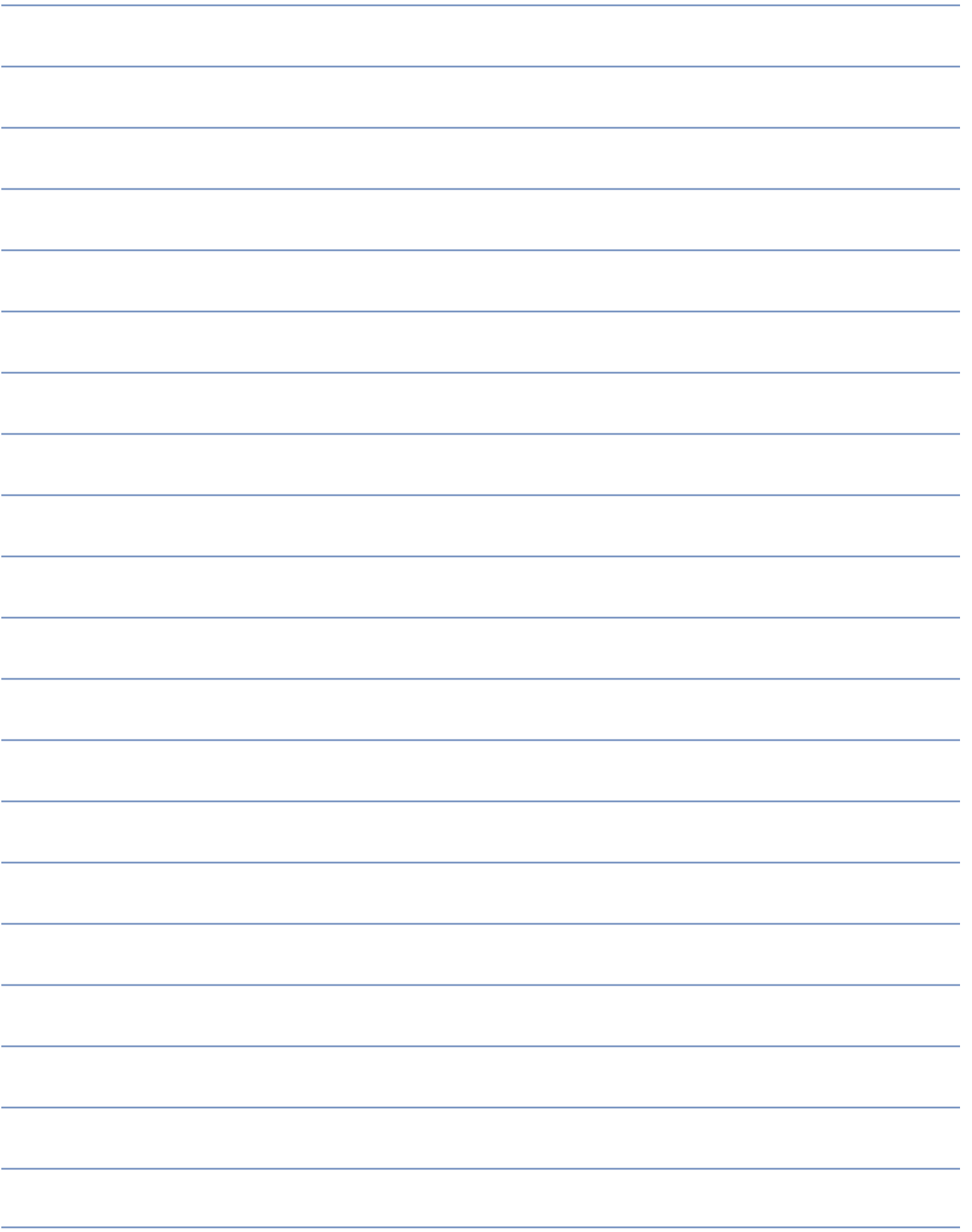
Stay with me tonight and always.

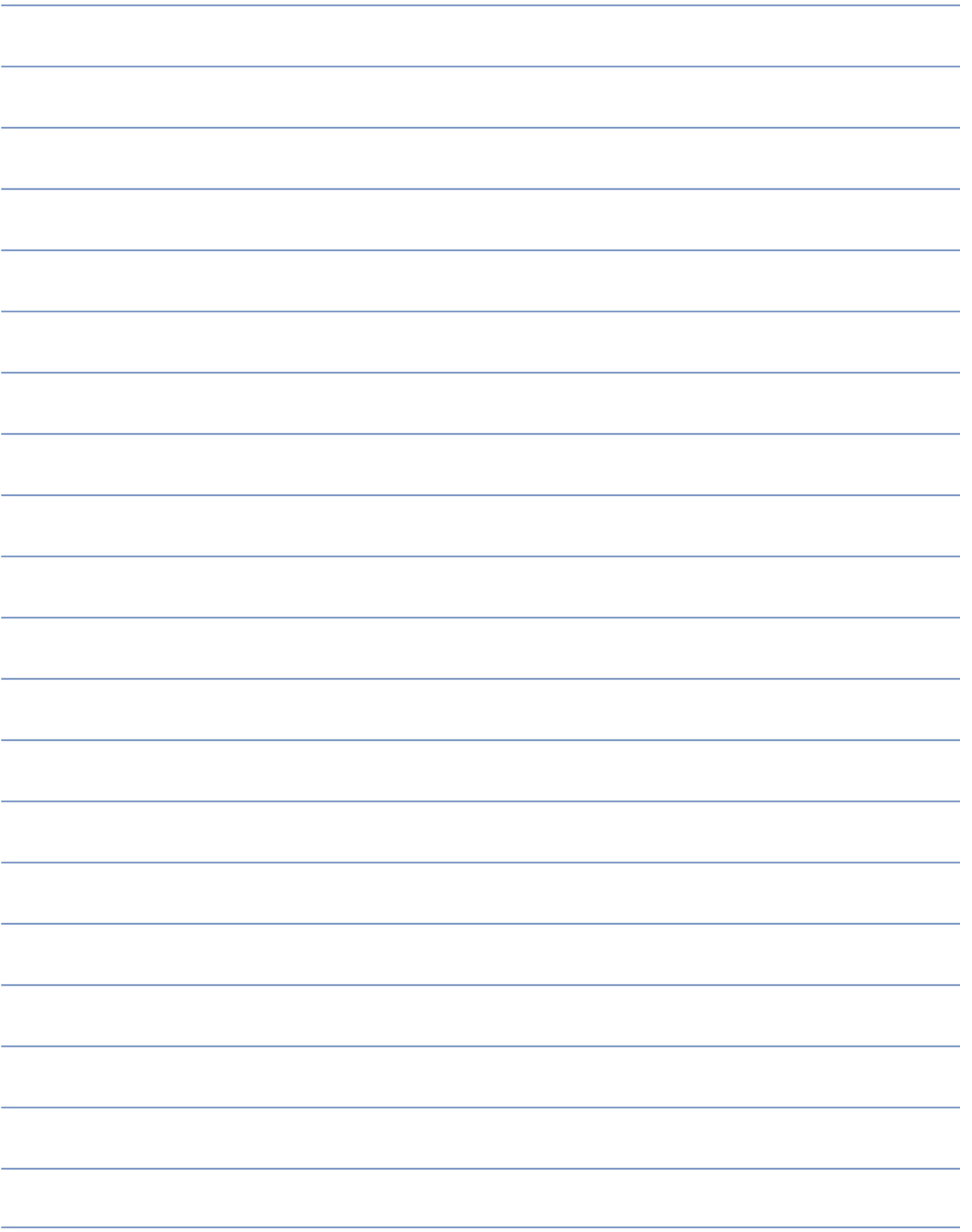
Amen.

Practical Tips for Leading

1. Keep it under 30 minutes.
2. Use simple, hopeful language.
3. Maintain eye contact and warmth, not authority.
4. Allow participation — youth like to read or pray.
5. Never ask about their crimes or background.
6. Always end on hope and blessing.









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