

The Urban Ministry Institute: Prison Ministry Lessons Learned
March 29, 2012

1. TUMI sites must be operated consistent with the **Prison Ministry's** culture, vision, and operating procedures while adhering to the requirements of The Urban Ministry Institute. It is the task of the Prison Ministry to find and release leaders, while it is TUMI's job to resource the Prison Ministry to carry out this work (we like to say "you can do it, we can help"). Both ministries must be flexible, staying open to the Spirit, and aware of the enemy's schemes to bring division.
2. TUMI's leadership development principles have produced bona fide pastors. Students must have demonstrated leadership qualities in the church before they can be accepted into the program. By design, the program is rigorous and selective. TUMI is not a Bible study or a follow-up curriculum for the general prison population, but for those who have demonstrated leadership in the church. Therefore, the source of potential TUMI students is the "church on the inside" rather than from the general prison population or discipleship programs.
3. A TUMI site inside a prison requires at least two committed volunteers, and in some cases three volunteers. To keep the schedule of classes moving, there must be a backup facilitator/mentor to lead the classes in case the other mentor cannot attend. Lockdowns and other unforeseen scheduling challenges make it mandatory for there to be no class cancellations due to the mentor being unavailable.
4. There must be at least one volunteer who can serve as a site coordinator outside the prison.
5. The Prison Ministry needs to follow procedures for getting the appropriate prison credentials or clearance, as well as any required facility training for the volunteers and/or staff for entrance into the prison.
6. A Prison Ministry needs to be aware of prison protocols for educational credit and factors that may affect an inmates' length of sentencing. Upon completion of each module appropriate facility records should be completed for each student completing the module as documentation in the inmate's files. This may be completed by the site coordinator or facility staff member as per facility protocol. Documentation should include name, DOC#, module name, completion date & grade.
7. Storage and handling of physical materials is best done in close proximity to the prison itself. Ideally, materials should be stored within the prison, but if that is not a secure or efficient option, they should be stored nearby where the site coordinator has ready access.
8. It is better to start a class with students who have a sentence that is long enough for them to finish the program. Having students leave in the middle causes the program to be unstable, makes it difficult to administrate and hinders the probability of success.
9. Sharing books at a central prison library has proven to be unrealistic in many prison settings. The safest scenario is to issue a full set of books to each student during their coursework, administered according to that prison's regulations, and then returned to the Prison Ministry, to be re-used by the next group of students.
10. It is easier to staff, budget, and administrate if the class size is fixed from the beginning, and students are added only as students leave the program. The maximum recommended class size is 30.
11. There are two recommended models for duration:
 - A. Four-years
 1. One 2-3 hour session per week

2. Pre-release training interspersed between modules to give students a break from Capstone intensity and prepare them for life on the outside
3. Allowance for lockdowns
- B. Two-years
 1. Five days a week
 2. Other training to break up Capstone intensity
 3. Additional praxis for Spiritual Formation for additional TUMI credit
12. A physical location is needed for making copies of quizzes, exams, course syllabi, etc. Each group of 30 graduates will require making over 26,000 copies over the cycle from start to graduation.
13. If the Prison Ministry intends to operate at multiple locations, training for new site coordinators and mentors should be conducted using written, video, and other media that does not require face-to-face meetings that limit growth and cost money.
14. There must be a good relationship between the ministry and the prison officials (for Prison Fellowship, this is the Field Director). Sometimes the key relationship is with a warden; other times the chaplain; other times other officials. Each state and each prison have their own culture and ways of operating, so the Prison Ministry must be experienced in these relationships before TUMI begins (preferably for at least one year). TUMI is not the best program for initial prison ministry relationships.
15. Existing TUMI sites must request permission to start classes in a prison. TUMI International must provide permission before classes can begin.
16. Before permission is granted for a Prison Ministry to be a TUMI site, the Prison Ministry must demonstrate experience in prison ministry and culture.
17. Before approaching a prison to add TUMI to existing prison ministries, take the necessary time to become well-versed in TUMI's vision before attempting to approach the prison. This includes acceptance as a TUMI site, reading basic information, watching training videos, and understanding administrative procedures. After that, the site can approach the prison officials and recruit volunteers.
18. Time and space issues are a potential factor depending on the prison. In some cases, classifying TUMI as an educational program may help in creating more opportunities for time/space.
19. Within a network of multiple TUMI sites, a central administrator can support some of the site coordinator's duties (see Appendix A). Prison Fellowship has found that such an administrator can support up to 450 students and then an equivalent person will need to be hired before further expansion can occur. Some of the responsibilities of a central administrator might be:
 - A. Training site coordinators or mentors
 - B. Ordering curriculum
 - C. Keeping track of grades
 - D. Planning graduations
 - E. Submitting quarterly reports to TUMI
 - F. Responding to inquiries from the public, prison officials, and other ministries
20. Since most prisons do not allow hardback books into the prison, some of the Required Texts will need to be special ordered. TUMI can assist with this detail.
21. Since inmates cannot afford to pay any part of the cost of their training, it is important to secure funding before beginning the TUMI program.

22. Most TUMI prison sites will collect textbooks and the completion of each course and store them for the next round of classes. This is because some prisons put a limit on the number of books an inmate can own at one time.

Appendix A: TUMI Tasks for Site Coordinators/Central Administrators

1. Initial relationship with chaplains and prison officials to seek a new site
2. Relationship with chaplain and prison officials after start-up
3. Site coordinator recruiting
4. Site coordinator training
5. Mentor recruiting
6. Mentor training
7. Student application processing
8. Student application printing and distribution
9. Ordering Required Textbooks
10. Ordering Mentor Guides and DVDs from TUMI
11. Storing Required Textbooks
12. Ordering student workbooks
13. Printing quizzes and exams
14. Setting up and maintaining transcripts
15. Conducting graduations
16. Getting prison permission to bring in books
17. Helping released inmates continue training
18. Explaining TUMI to interested parties (chaplains, churches, other prison ministries)
19. Internal organizational duties (check requests, reimbursements, reports, monitoring finances)
20. Setting up new sites including functional computer with password access
21. Developing new operating procedures for the Prison Ministry
22. Quarterly reports to TUMI
23. TUMI Summit attendance
24. Payment of annual fee
25. Replacing lost or damaged Required Texts
26. Replacing lost or damaged DVDs
27. Set up classroom facilities
28. Acquire equipment (DVD player and projector minimum)
29. Interface with TUMI International
30. Interface with the prison ministry's national organization
31. Respond to theological questions
32. Respond to administrative questions
33. Respond to questions from prison officials