



**Kolbe Prison Ministries Ongoing
Faith Formation Guide**

March, 2026

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Kolbe Prison Ministries

Ongoing Formation Guide

March 2026

1. Goals of Ongoing Formation

(Following the Kolbe Prison Ministries Retreat)

Ongoing formation helps retreat participants continue growing in faith and personal transformation after attending a Kolbe Prison Ministries retreat. The goals of this formation include:

Strengthening Relationships with the Church

- Build relationships with local dioceses and archdioceses to support a strong Catholic presence in prison units.
- Share volunteers and Catholic resources available through Kolbe Prison Ministries.
- Support prison chaplains and diocesan prison ministry coordinators in expanding ministry opportunities.

Deepening the Spiritual Life of Inmates

Encourage inmates to develop a deeper relationship with Christ through:

- Establishing a consistent prayer life
- Building relationships within the Catholic community inside the prison unit
- Continuing the spiritual work begun during the Kolbe retreat
- Studying Sacred Scripture
- Learning about Church history
- Discovering the beauty and truth of the Roman Catholic Church

Encouraging Christian Living

- Practicing forgiveness and reconciliation
- Rebuilding family relationships where possible
- Developing discipleship and love of neighbor
- Addressing personal addictions and destructive behaviors
- Growing in self-discipline and a Christ-centered moral life

Supporting Sacramental Preparation

- Prepare individuals seeking full communion with the Catholic Church.
- Provide guidance for participation in the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA).

Providing Ongoing Learning Opportunities

Offer self-paced opportunities for continued spiritual and theological growth through:

- Scripture study
 - Study of the Catechism of the Catholic Church
 - Christian literature and conversion stories
 - Podcasts and video-based learning programs
 - Participation in Mass and the celebration of the Sacraments
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2. Overview

Kolbe Prison Ministries (KPM) conducts three-day Catholic retreats within correctional facilities. These retreats provide inmates with an opportunity for spiritual renewal and encounter with Christ.

Following the retreat experience, KPM seeks to support continued spiritual growth by connecting participants with ongoing Catholic formation programs, resources, and ministries available within the prison unit.

This guide outlines various formation opportunities currently implemented across prison systems. It is intended to help Core Team members, prison ministry volunteers, and diocesan partners identify and establish programs that support the ongoing faith journey of incarcerated individuals.

For additional information about implementing formation programs, contact:

- The Criminal Justice Director or Prison Ministry Coordinator for your diocese
- The Kolbe Prison Ministries Core Team Formation Coordinator
- The prison unit chaplain

These leaders can assist with establishing regularly scheduled worship services, spiritual formation programs, and theological studies.

Ongoing formation is essential to:

- Strengthening the spiritual lives of inmates
 - Supporting personal transformation
 - Reducing recidivism
 - Helping rebuild family relationships that were damaged prior to incarceration
-

3. Ongoing Catechesis and Primary Worship

Best Practice

Develop a consistent schedule of ministry activities that can be sustained week to week. When recruiting volunteers, consider inviting retreat volunteers to continue serving regularly within the prison unit.

Suggested Formation Activities

Formation opportunities may be introduced before or immediately following a Kolbe retreat, including:

- Weekly or biweekly Mass or Communion services
 - Monthly Sacrament of Confession
 - Monthly Eucharistic Adoration
 - Weekly Bible studies
 - Weekly book studies
 - Weekly OCIA preparation or apologetics classes
 - Catholic personal development programs
 - Retreat reunions
 - Renew gatherings
-

4. Mass and Sacramental Life

Mass

Best Practice:

Schedule Mass at least once per month at a consistent day and time.

Access to Catholic Mass varies widely between correctional facilities. In many prisons, the availability of Mass depends on the availability of priests willing to serve in prison ministry.

While volunteers cannot celebrate Mass, they can assist by:

- Coordinating schedules
- Communicating with clergy
- Organizing the Catholic community for worship

In many states, participation in primary worship services is a protected right for incarcerated individuals.

Volunteers should consult the unit chaplain to determine available opportunities to schedule Mass.

Communion Services

Best Practice:

Offer Communion services on alternate weeks when Mass is unavailable.

These services may be conducted by a deacon or authorized minister.

Confession**Best Practice:**

Schedule confessions with the same frequency as Mass whenever possible.

If priest availability is limited, confessions may be offered during Communion services.

Eucharistic Adoration**Best Practice:**

Schedule Adoration monthly with a priest or deacon present.

Suggested elements include:

- Sacred music or chant
 - Silent prayer
 - Eucharistic adoration
 - Followed by a Communion service when appropriate
-

5. Liturgical and Worship Support

Mass and the Sacraments remain the central form of catechesis and spiritual formation.

Important liturgical opportunities include:

- Solemnities and Holy Days of Obligation
- Ash Wednesday
- Holy Thursday
- **Good Friday (Veneration of the Cross)**
- Special sacramental Masses
- Adoration services
- Communion services

Suggested Liturgical Resources

- **General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)**
- Mass kits and liturgical vessels
- Monstrance
- Thurible with incense
- Altar table and cloths appropriate to the liturgical calendar
- **Candles (if permitted by the facility)**

Volunteers must obtain approval from the warden for items such as lighters or candles.

6. Sacred Music

Sacred music plays an important role in Catholic worship. Its purpose is to give glory to God and encourage full participation of the assembly.

Sacred music may include:

- Traditional hymns
- Chant
- Psalm responses
- Liturgical music appropriate to the Church calendar

Music licensing and resources may be available through Kolbe Prison Ministries.

7. Holy Days and Liturgical Preparation

Preparation for Holy Days may include:

- Announcements during previous gatherings
- Reflections on the significance of the feast
- Incorporation of liturgical colors
- Special prayers or litanies

If Mass is unavailable, volunteers may organize:

- Liturgy of the Word services
 - Communion services
-

8. Role of Priests and Deacons

The parish assigned to the prison unit typically oversees:

- Religious services
- Sacramental celebrations
- Sacramental recordkeeping
- Communication with inmates' home parishes

Volunteers should coordinate closely with the diocesan prison ministry director when preparing individuals for the Sacraments.

9. Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA)

OCIA provides formation for individuals seeking to enter the Catholic Church.

It is common for inmates to begin exploring the Catholic faith during incarceration as they reflect on their lives and seek spiritual renewal.

Volunteers should be prepared to support this journey.

Best Practices

- Offer introductory apologetics or faith study classes for inquirers.
- Introduce OCIA soon after a Kolbe retreat when interest is high.
- Utilize both outside volunteers and qualified inmate facilitators when appropriate.

Initial Steps

1. Provide facilitators with a current copy of the OCIA study edition.
 2. Complete required diocesan training.
 3. Establish administrative processes for collecting sacramental information.
 4. Coordinate schedules with clergy for rites and sacramental celebrations.
-

10. Recommended OCIA Resources

Suggested study materials include:

- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- YOUCAT (Youth Catechism)
- Catholic Bibles

- Catholicism series
- Symbolon: The Catholic Faith Explained
- Augustine Institute resources
- St. Paul Center materials
- Video-based catechetical studies
- The Thomistic Institute - CREDO

Whenever possible, donated materials should be used to reduce costs.

11. Personal Catholic Development Programs

Various programs may support holistic personal development.

Journeyman Program

This Catholic life-skills formation program helps incarcerated participants develop:

- Self-awareness
- Faith-based decision making
- Community responsibility
- Preparation for reentry into society

Modules include:

- Adoration
 - Community
 - Theology
 - Service
-

That Man Is You

A program addressing the challenges men face in modern culture, particularly in their roles as fathers, husbands, and leaders.

It combines Church teaching with insights from social and medical science.

Fulton Sheen – Life Is Worth Living

This 50-lesson video series introduces participants to the deeper meaning and purpose of life through the teachings of Archbishop Fulton Sheen.

Dominican

Benedictine Lay Formation

Some prison units offer opportunities for long-term spiritual formation following traditions of religious orders.

Participants focus on:

- Prayer
 - Study
 - Community life
 - Proclaiming the Gospel
-

12. Retreat Reunions

Retreat reunions allow former Kolbe retreat participants to reconnect and continue growing in faith.

Reunions may be scheduled:

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Periodically after retreats

Activities may include:

- Communion services
 - Testimonies from participants
 - Small group discussions
 - Prayer (Rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet)
 - Faith-based videos
 - Music
 - Fellowship and refreshments when permitted
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13. Renew Gatherings

Renew gatherings are similar to reunions but occur on a regular schedule and are open to all former retreat participants.

These gatherings encourage:

- Faith sharing
- Spiritual accountability
- Continued prayer and formation

Typical activities include:

- Scripture reflection
 - Rosary or chaplet prayer
 - Eucharistic Adoration
 - Preparation for upcoming retreats
-

14. Scripture Study Programs

Scripture study programs have proven highly effective in prison ministry.

The Bible Timeline Study

This program presents the story of salvation through a structured study of Scripture.

Typical session structure:

- Welcome and introduction
- Group discussion
- Video presentation
- Closing prayer

Participants receive personal study materials and prepare for each session through assigned readings.

Facilitators should prepare in advance by reviewing Scripture and study questions.

15. Additional Study Programs

Other recommended studies include:

- The Mass
- The Creed
- The Sacraments
- Eucharist studies
- Conversion stories
- Catholic history and theology studies

Many of these programs offer video-based lessons with accompanying workbooks.

16. Life Skills Programs

Faith-based life skills programs help inmates prepare for successful reintegration into society.

Suggested topics include:

- Personal values
 - Motivation
 - Anger and conflict management
 - Communication skills
 - Stress management
 - Parenting
 - Financial responsibility
 - Goal setting
 - Healthy living
 - Employment readiness
-

17. Catholic Leadership Development

Formation programs can also develop Catholic leaders within the prison community.

Catechist Training available with Catholic Distance University on EDOVO App

Catechesis is the process of handing on the teachings of Christ and the Church.

Certified catechists help guide others in their relationship with God and support the spiritual development of the prison community.

Certification typically includes three progressive levels of formation and study.

Because qualified instructors are limited in prison settings, expanding catechist training remains an important goal for Kolbe Prison Ministries.

18. Conclusion

Kolbe Prison Ministries seeks to support the ongoing spiritual growth of incarcerated individuals through continued formation, community, and access to the Sacraments.

By offering consistent opportunities for prayer, study, and fellowship, prison ministry volunteers help participants deepen their relationship with Christ and experience authentic transformation.

Ongoing formation not only strengthens faith but also contributes to personal responsibility, restored relationships, and hope for a renewed future.

19. Volunteer Opportunities

Kolbe Prison Ministries depends on committed volunteers who are willing to serve incarcerated individuals through retreats, ongoing faith formation, and pastoral support. Volunteers may assist with retreats, catechesis, music ministry, sacramental preparation, mentoring, and ongoing faith formation programs.

Individuals interested in volunteering should contact their local diocesan prison ministry office.

Florida

Diocesan Prison Ministry Offices

Archdiocese of Miami

Detention Ministry

<https://www.miamiarch.org/CatholicDiocese.php?op=Detention>

Diocese of Orlando

Prison Ministry

<https://www.orlandodiocese.org/ministries-offices/prison-ministry/>

Diocese of Palm Beach

Prison Ministry

<https://www.diocesepb.org/offices/prison-ministry/>

Diocese of Pensacola–Tallahassee

Prison Ministry

<https://ptdiocese.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of St. Augustine

Prison Ministry

<https://dosaf1.com/offices/prison-ministry>

Diocese of St. Petersburg

Prison Ministry

<https://www.dosp.org/prisonministry/>

Diocese of Venice

Prison Ministry

<https://dioceseofvenice.org/offices/prison-ministry/>

- Kolbe Prison Ministries Retreat
 - Catholic Bible Study Programs
 - OCIA Formation
 - Journeyman Catholic Life Skills Program
 - Eucharistic Adoration and Communion Services
 - Retreat Reunions and Renew Gatherings
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Texas

Diocesan Prison Ministry Offices

Archdiocese of San Antonio

Prison Ministry

<https://archsa.org/prison-ministry>

Archdiocese of Galveston–Houston

Correctional Ministries

<https://archgh.org/correctional-ministries>

Diocese of Austin

Criminal Justice Ministry

<https://www.austindiocese.org/criminal-justice-ministry>

Diocese of Dallas

Prison Ministry

<https://www.cathdal.org/prison-ministry/>

Diocese of Fort Worth

Prison Ministry

<https://fwdioc.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Corpus Christi

Prison Ministry

<https://diocesecc.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Brownsville

Prison Ministry

<https://www.cdob.org/offices/prison-ministry>

Diocese of El Paso

Prison Ministry

<https://www.elpasodiocese.org/prison-ministry.html>

Diocese of Laredo

Prison Ministry

<https://www.dioceseoflaredo.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Lubbock
Prison Ministry
<https://www.catholiclubbock.org/prison-ministry/>

Diocese of San Angelo
Prison Ministry
<https://sanangelodiocese.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Tyler
Prison Ministry
<https://www.dioceseoftyler.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Victoria
Prison Ministry
<https://www.victoriadiocese.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Amarillo
Prison Ministry
<https://amarillodiocese.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Beaumont
Prison Ministry
<https://dioceseofbmt.org/offices/prison-ministry/>

Approved Formations for This State

- Kolbe Prison Ministries Retreat
- Eucharistic Adoration and Sacraments Mass
- OCIA Formations
- Ascension Bible Timeline Scripture Study
- Symbolon Catholic Faith Formation
- Catholic Leadership and Catechist Training
- Journeyman Life Skills Formation
- Dominican Lay
- **That Man Is You (Some units)**

Louisiana

Diocesan Prison Ministry Offices

Archdiocese of New Orleans
Prison Ministry
<https://nolacatholic.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Alexandria
Prison Ministry
<https://www.diocesealex.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Baton Rouge
Prison Ministry
<https://diobr.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Houma–Thibodaux
Prison Ministry
<https://htdiocese.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Lafayette
Prison Ministry
<https://diolaf.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Lake Charles
Prison Ministry
<https://lcdiocese.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Shreveport
Prison Ministry
<https://dioshpt.org/prison-ministry>

Approved Formations for This State

- Kolbe Retreat Program
- Catholic Scripture Studies
- OCIA Formation
- Eucharistic Adoration and Sacramental Formation

Kansas

Diocesan Prison Ministry Offices

Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas
Prison Ministry
<https://archkck.org/prison-ministry/>

Diocese of Dodge City
Prison Ministry
<https://dcdiocese.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Salina
Prison Ministry
<https://salinadiocese.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Wichita
Prison Ministry
<https://catholicdioceseofwichita.org/prison-ministry>

Approved Formations for This State

- Kolbe Prison Ministries Retreat
 - Catholic Bible Study
 - OCIA Formation
 - Leadership Development
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Oklahoma

Diocesan Prison Ministry Offices

Archdiocese of Oklahoma City
Prison & Jail Ministry
<https://archokc.org/prison-ministry>

Diocese of Tulsa
Prison Ministry
<https://dioceseoftulsa.org/prison-ministry>

Approved Formations for This State

- Kolbe Retreat Program
 - Scripture Study Programs
 - OCIA Formation
 - Catholic Leadership Development
-

How to Volunteer

1. Contact the Prison Ministry Office in your diocese.
 2. Connect with Kolbe Prison Ministries to learn about upcoming retreats.
 3. Attend volunteer training and regular faith formation.
 4. Complete correctional facility volunteer clearance requirements.
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20. How to Start an Ongoing Faith Formation Program

This checklist provides practical steps for establishing an ongoing faith formation program within a correctional facility following a Kolbe Prison Ministries retreat. These steps may be implemented by Kolbe Core Teams, diocesan prison ministry leaders, chaplains, and trained volunteers.

The goal is to create consistent opportunities for prayer, study, sacramental life, and Christian community within the prison unit.

Initial Planning

Before beginning a formation program, ministry leaders should:

- Meet with the prison chaplain to discuss the proposed program
- Confirm facility rules regarding volunteer access and program scheduling
- Identify available meeting spaces and approved materials
- Determine how many inmates may participate in the program
- Recruit trained volunteers to assist with facilitation

Establish Spiritual Foundations

The first priority of any formation program should be prayer and sacramental life.

- Schedule regular Catholic worship services when possible
- Coordinate with clergy to provide Mass at least monthly
- Provide Communion services when Mass is unavailable
- Offer Confession opportunities when priests visit the facility
- Schedule Eucharistic Adoration when permitted

Launch a Weekly Formation Gathering

A regular weekly gathering provides the structure necessary for continued spiritual growth.

- Establish a weekly or biweekly meeting time
- Create a consistent schedule participants can rely on
- Begin each gathering with prayer and Scripture reading
- Encourage respectful discussion and faith sharing
- Close each session with prayer

Introduce Structured Faith Studies

After a weekly gathering has been established, introduce structured Catholic formation programs.

Possible studies include:

- Bible studies
- Catechism study groups
- OCIA preparation
- Catholic apologetics or theology studies
- Video-based formation programs

Develop Leadership Within the Prison Community

Long-term sustainability depends on forming inmate leaders who assist in ministry.

- Identify participants who demonstrate maturity and leadership
- Provide catechist or facilitator training when possible

- Encourage inmate leaders to assist with leading prayer or discussions
- Develop peer mentoring relationships

Schedule Ongoing Retreat Reunions

- Schedule reunions periodically after retreats
- Encourage testimony sharing and faith reflection
- Offer opportunities for prayer and fellowship
- Invite new participants who may attend future retreats

Provide Personal Development and Reentry Formation

Faith formation programs may also incorporate life skills that support successful reintegration into society.

Suggested topics include:

- Personal responsibility
- Conflict resolution
- Communication skills
- Family relationships
- Addiction recovery support
- Financial responsibility
- Goal setting and vocational preparation

21. Sample Weekly Faith Formation Meeting Agenda

A consistent meeting structure helps participants develop habits of prayer, reflection, and faith sharing. Weekly gatherings typically last 60–90 minutes.

Opening Prayer (5–10 minutes)

- Sign of the Cross
- Scripture reading
- The Lord's Prayer
- Spontaneous prayer offered by participants

Scripture Reflection (15–20 minutes)

Suggested format:

- Proclaim a Scripture passage
- Allow silent reflection
- Invite participants to share insights
- Provide brief explanation or teaching

Formation Teaching or Study Program (25–35 minutes)

Possible formats include:

- Bible study programs
- Catechism discussions

- OCIA preparation sessions
- Catholic video-based study programs
- Apologetics or theology discussions

Small Group Discussion or Testimony (10–15 minutes)

Participants may share reflections related to the study topic, including:

- How the lesson applies to daily life
- Personal experiences of faith
- Spiritual challenges and growth

Announcements and Retreat Preparation (5 minutes)

- Upcoming retreats
- Reunion gatherings
- Special liturgical celebrations

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

- Rosary
 - Divine Mercy Chaplet
 - Intercessory prayer
-

22. Volunteer Training and Screening Requirements

Volunteers play a vital role in supporting the mission of Kolbe Prison Ministries. Because prison ministry takes place within correctional facilities, volunteers must complete training and screening requirements established by both the diocese and the correctional system.

Diocesan Safe Environment Training

Training typically includes:

- Protecting vulnerable persons policies
- Appropriate ministry boundaries
- Reporting procedures for misconduct
- Ethical conduct in pastoral ministry

Background Screening

Volunteers must usually complete a criminal background check through the diocese or correctional system.

Requirements may include:

- Identity verification
- Criminal background screening
- Approval from correctional facility administration

Correctional Facility Orientation

Facility orientations may include:

- Security procedures
- Approved items that may be brought into the facility
- Emergency protocols
- Volunteer conduct expectations

Kolbe Prison Ministries Volunteer Formation

Kolbe volunteers may also receive formation related to retreat ministry, including:

- Understanding the Kolbe retreat model
- Small group facilitation training
- Testimony preparation
- Pastoral listening skills

Ongoing Volunteer Support

Healthy ministry teams provide ongoing support for volunteers through:

- Regular team meetings
- Spiritual formation opportunities
- Retreat preparation gatherings
- Communication with diocesan prison ministry leaders

Kolbe Prison Ministries
Ongoing Formation Guide