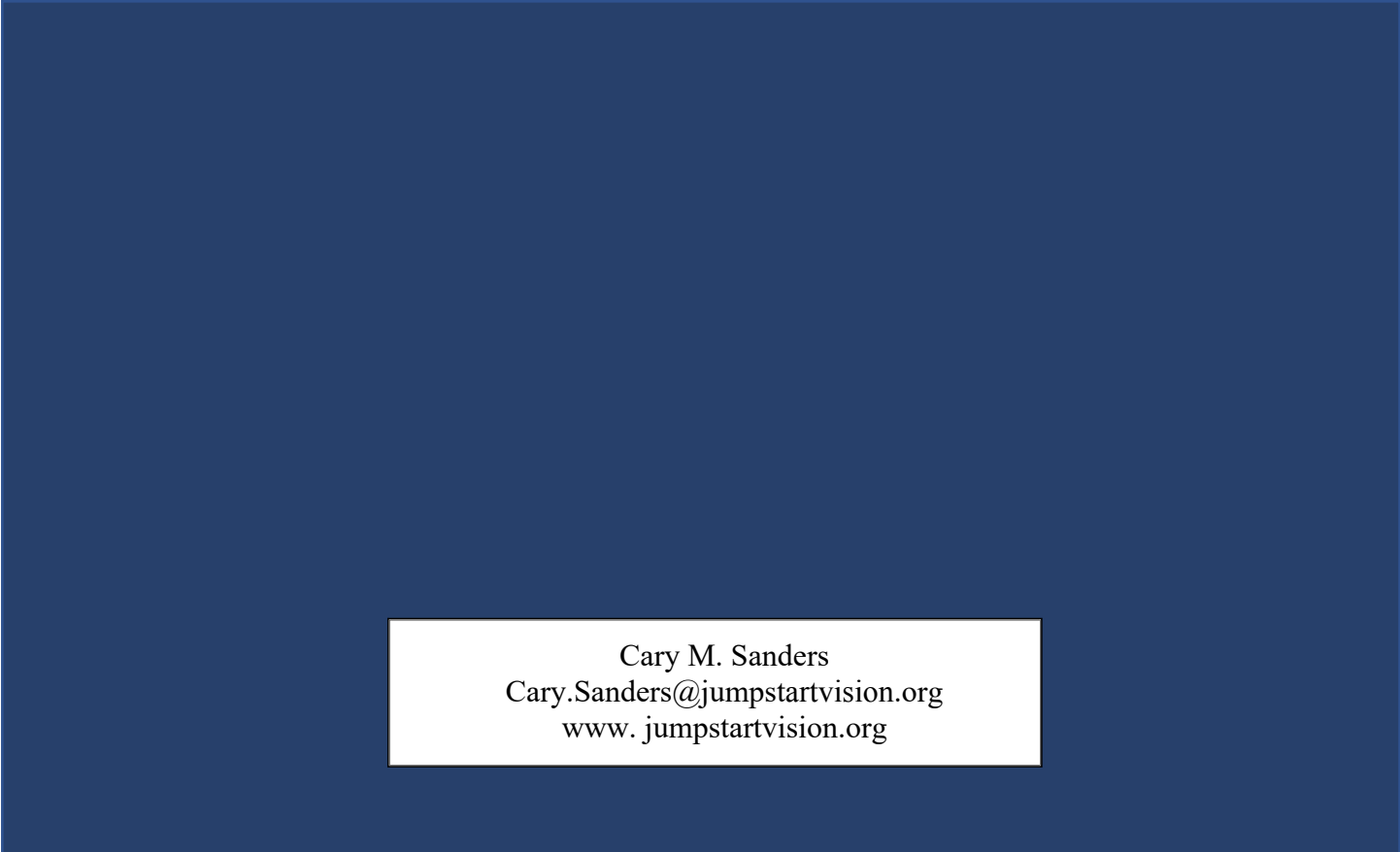




JUMPSTART[®]

Transforming the lives of prisoners from the inside out

**JUMPSTART INSIDE PROGRAM:
*A REVIEW OF DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS***



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Introduction

JUMPSTART® is a 501c-3, Non-profit organization that is headquartered in Spartanburg, South Carolina. While the organization is not governed by any denominational organization, their statement of faith reflects and is in agreement with conservative, orthodox Christian beliefs. Funding and volunteers for their work is provided by grants, private donors, and partnerships with Anglican, Episcopalian, Methodist, Non-Denominational, Presbyterian, and Southern Baptist affiliated churches. Revenue for funding the program services is also generated by economic engines managed by JUMPSTART.

The Outside Program is a yearlong transitional program that provides housing, case management, transportation, mentoring, employment, life-skills training and other evidenced based services that have demonstrated benefit in helping prisoners return to society as productive citizens.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of JUMPSTART's Inside Program. Preparation of leaders and volunteers, class curriculum, assessment process, and the requirements and expectations of participants will be analyzed. The primary question that will be answered is: How does JUMPSTART theologically form disciples who live for Christ while incarcerated and after their release?

Preparation of Leaders and Volunteers

Well-trained volunteers and inside leaders are instrumental in overseeing and facilitating the JUMPSTART discipleship process. Volunteers are primarily members of local churches who have committed to serving with the program at least once per week in a prison near their home. Inside leaders are incarcerated men and women who have successfully completed the program in a previous year and have been selected and trained to participate as leaders. The Inside Leaders

are in many ways the genius of the program design. Each week outside of class they are working with the participants one-on-one in coaching sessions and by helping them complete their workbooks and answer questions or discuss the material as needed. They are serving as missionaries behind the razor wire sharing the Gospel and discipling others daily.

All volunteers and inside leaders are required to successfully complete a six-week training program prior to volunteering. Typically, the trainings are completed with inside leaders and volunteers discussing the content and developing as a team before the program begins each year. Prior to class each week, inside leaders and volunteers work through six individual lessons that are focused on developing and practicing the spiritual disciplines that are essential for believers and especially Christian leaders. Then in a group class, the inside leaders and volunteers review the spiritual discipline and go through the JUMPSTART specific leadership lessons together. Each week the group classes is structured to discuss the content, share their responses to the questions, and hold each other accountable to the practical application exercises in each chapter. The six spiritual disciplines emphasized are: Personal Bible Intake, Personal Prayer Life, Fasting, Life-Long Learning, Accountability, and Worship (see Appendix A for sample page). The six JUMPSTART specific topics are: Leaders Own the Cause (of Christ), Leading Group Discussion, Coaching Using Assessments, Completing Bible Study Worksheets, Leading by Listening, and Final Preparations (for leading program). Volunteers and Inside leaders also receive additional content regularly to equip them to serve well in their roles.

JUMPSTART Discipleship Process: Key Ideas

JUMPSTART's discipleship process can be better understood by considering several key ideas that shape their curriculum and approach. The first key idea is the organization's core belief that fuels their mission and vision. This core belief is, "With Christ, anyone's future can be

greater than their past.” “With Christ” is intentionally first because discipleship and life transformation begin with Christ. JUMPSTART is not a self-help program. From the outset, participants are taught that life transformation can only begin when one has a healthy relationship with Christ. In the initial weeks, the Gospel is articulated clearly through preaching, teaching, conversation, and other communication tools to help participants understand and respond to Christ’s offer of salvation. Second, “with Christ” is important because Christ’s sacrifice ensured that anyone can be justified and transformed to live a life worthy of Christ (Rom. 5:1 & 2 Cor. 5:17). Furthermore, while JUMPSTART understands that one’s choices prior to Christ have real consequences that do not disappear just because one accepts Christ, it is still true that one’s future will be greater than their past once they have repented and surrendered to Christ. While someone may have a life sentence for their crimes that will not be overturned on this earth, their immediate and eternal future is still greater than their past because of what Christ has accomplished for them and the relationship they have access to with Him.

A second key idea that shapes JUMPSTART’s approach is the power of God’s truth to transform lives and set people free from maladaptive behavior and addictions. Good theology empowers disciples to think correctly and live rightly. What one does or does not do flows from what they believe. Sound theology shapes what one believes and helps them think clearly, properly, and, most importantly, biblically about God. Maturing theologically as a disciple involves, “both deprogramming (exposing, critiquing, and correcting the pictures and stories we live by) and reprogramming (replacing the “old self” and the social imaginaries that funded our former way of life with the social imaginary generated by Scripture and the gospel.”¹ Therefore, JUMPSTART is structured so that participants to learn ho to live out and apply this verse daily,

¹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers: A Pastor’s Guide to Making Disciples through Scripture and Doctrine* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 15.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12:2). As participants are theologically formed by comprehending God’s truth and how He defines life and reality, their daily lives will be shaped by this knowledge as they assimilate it into their lives.

A third key idea is that small groups are essential for nurturing life change and growth in Christ. Small groups provide a format where the Christian life can be nurtured and experienced in a loving community.² Small groups are conducive for developing self-awareness, allowing for greater participation, and they provide the structure needed for accountability, assessments, and feedback. This will be discussed in greater detail after the curriculum is reviewed.

A fourth key idea is the power of stories to shape and influence the direction of individual’s lives. The time, energy, and money we spend during our time on the world’s stage is largely a function of the stories and images of human flourishing in which we believe and put our trust.³ JUMPSTART structures the program so that throughout the year participants are exposed to the biblical narratives, the life experiences of inside leaders and volunteers, and the stories of previous participants who have done well after returning to society. In the context in which JUMPSTART works, ex-offender testimonies by those who have been transformed by Christ are extremely effective and influential in motivating and teaching valuable lessons to the participants. Therefore, JUMPSTART desires for the participants to be theologically formed by biblical stories, images, and personal testimonies as this helps them learn to connect the truth of God with their personal story and how they live with Christ as Lord moving forward.

² Jeffrey Arnold and Stephanie Black, *The Big Book on Small Groups* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992).

³ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers*, 3.

Curriculum Overview

The JUMPSTART program curriculum consists of four primary components. The first component is *The Purpose Driven Life* written by Rick Warren. The second component which supplements and complements *The Purpose Driven Life* is JUMPSTART's *Participant Lifebook*. The third component is a Bible study worksheet that participants are required to complete every week. The fourth component is a collection of forty-character traits that participants must learn and interact with during each week of the program. The following sections will outline and describe these components and how they are utilized to theological form the participants and nurture their growth in Christian maturity.

The Purpose Driven Life

The Purpose Driven Life centers around the Greatest Commandment (Matt 22:37-40) and the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). Out of these two directives, Rick Warren draws five purposes that apply to every believer. The first purpose is that every believer is designed to love God with all of their heart. Since everyone was created for God's pleasure, their purpose is to love God through worship. The participants learn that authentic worship is not about pursuing what pleases them, but about living for what makes God smile. God smiles when one loves Him, trusts and obeys Him, worships Him, and uses their abilities for His glory. In this section, Warren gives practical suggestions for growing as a worshipper through prayer, meditation, honesty, and obedience. This is a core truth for JUMPSTART participants to learn since many of their destructive behaviors and addictions are rooted in the worship of idols.

The second purpose is that every believer is directed to love their neighbor as themselves. Warren makes the case that everyone has been given a personal ministry that allows them to serve others well and put God's love on display. The participants learn from the book that

ministry is not an option for those who have surrendered their lives to Christ. They learn that serving others is a significant part of what gives one's life meaning and significance. In this section they also take an assessment that helps them understand their SHAPE: Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experience (pg. 236-256). This core truth for JUMSPTART participants is central because prior to incarceration many lived as if life was all about finding personal satisfaction and fulfillment, and many were not concerned with how their behavior impacted others.

The third purpose is that every believer is responsible for living with the commission to "go and make disciples." Since discipleship begins with receiving the Gospel, Warren makes the case that every believer has a mission in the world to share the Gospel with those they meet and know. Warren teaches that, "fulfilling the evangelistic mandate God has given you will require abandoning your life agenda for God's, and that failing to fulfill this mandate is equivalent to wasting one's life" (pg. 285). Participants learn about sharing their life message, which includes their testimony, the greatest life lessons they have learned, how to articulate the Gospel in a winsome way. This truth is important for those in JUMSPTART because this God given purpose will reorient every aspect of their lives. When one lives with the mission of helping others come to know Christ, then their words and actions are directed towards this overarching purpose.

The fourth purpose finds its roots in the phrase "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This purpose is primarily about identifying with a local church in Biblical fellowship and living as a member in God's family. In the *Purpose Driven Life*, the participants learn that fellowship is a wonderful privilege one begins to experience as one joins the family of God in a local church. Participants are expected to attend the local church within their prison and a local church after they are released. They learn that real fellowship is

characterized by authenticity, mutuality, sympathy, and mercy. In this section, participants learn that cultivating this kind of community takes honesty, humility, courtesy, and confidentiality. They also learn how to resolve conflict, restore broken relationships, love others well, and protect the unity of a local church. It is critical for those in JUMPSTART to learn how to be a contributing family member in a local church. In the local church they are nourished and developed, they place themselves in a position to be accountable to other believers, and join together with other believers for encouragement as they serve God well in their community.

Lastly, the fifth purpose that JUMPSTART desires for the participants to grasp is the directive to, “teaching them to do all that I have commanded you.” Everyone redeemed by God has the purpose of growing into maturity and usefulness for the Kingdom through discipleship (Rom. 8:29). In the *Purpose Driven Life*, participants learn that: Discipleship is about taking on [God’s] values, attitudes, and character by allowing God to transform the way we think through His Spirit and our repentance, by abiding in God’s word, and by persevering through trouble and temptation. JUMPSTART’s first key to success is, “Live daily surrendered to Jesus Christ.” As participants posture their life with living surrendered to Christ as their primary objective, they will fulfill all of the purposes for which they were created.

JUMPSTART Participant Lifebook

Each chapter of the *JUMPSTART Participant Lifebook* is designed to complement and supplement a chapter of the *Purpose Driven Life*. After reading a chapter of the *Purpose Driven Life*, participants complete a worksheet related to each chapter. Each worksheet has five to eight questions that are designed to measure the participants comprehension of the material, help them discover whether they are living out the truth they have learned, and develop specific plans for

implementing and living out God's truth in their day-to-day life. A sample workbook page can be viewed in Appendix B.

Additionally, it should also be mentioned that many of the questions in the workbook are designed to be relevant and helpful for those JUMPSTART serves. Research has revealed that the majority of the incarcerated grew up in unhealthy home and community environments.⁴ Many have experienced numerous adverse childhood experiences including verbal, physical, and sexual abuse⁵, and many have experienced injustice that has led to a distrust and even hate of authority. Furthermore, a large majority have used alcohol and drugs since early adolescence. These and other life experiences have contributed to the development of a worldview that is far from biblical. Therefore, for JUMSPTART's discipleship process to be effective, it is critical that participants process and resolve these issues if they are to move forward and mature as disciples. The workbook questions are designed to help the participants begin processing and resolving the issues these type of life experiences have created. A portion of the workbook questions are intended to help the participants become self-aware of how their life experiences have shaped their thinking and behavior. Then, they are encouraged to share about these experiences in their small groups and allow their fellow participants, inside leaders, and volunteers to help them process their pain, find comfort in God's healing, and be directed and formed by His truth.

Bible Study Worksheet

Each week, participants are required to complete a Bible Study Worksheet (Appendix C). The participants are assigned a passage of Scripture and are required to complete the worksheet

⁴ Lorraine E. Cuadra, et al., Child maltreatment and adult criminal behavior: Does criminal thinking explain the association?, 38 Child Abuse Neglect 1399 (2014), available at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1652&context=-_psychfacpub

⁵ Nancy Wolff & Jing Shi, Childhood and Adult Trauma Experiences of Incarcerated Persons and Their Relationship to Adult Behavioral Health Problems and Treatment, 9 Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 1908 (2012), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3386595/pdf/ijerph-09-01908.pdf>

before each week's class. The questions are grouped under three headings: Head, Heart, and Hands and Feet. The questions are structured so that participants first learn truth, then internalize the truth, and then allow the truth to direct their behavior, words, and actions.

Head – God's Word Transforms My Thinking

1. What is the context of the passage? Who was the author writing to? Why was this written?
2. What does this passage teach me about God's Character?
3. What truths does this passage reveal that I need to believe?

Heart – God's Word Defines Healthy Emotions & Affections

4. What does this passage teach me to love? To hate? To Feel?
5. What decisions are being made in this passage? Why are they being made?
6. What temptations in my heart does this passage reveal?

Hands and Feet – God's Word Directs My Actions

7. Do I have sin to confess and make right? Please explain
8. Is there an example in the passage I need to follow? Please explain
9. How does this passage show that I can serve God & others?

As part of the participants theological formation disciples, there are multiple reasons they are required to complete the bible study worksheet every week. First, the goal is not for participants to just learn what is necessary to avoid returning to prison. Rather, the objective is for them to live as disciples who are productive members of society and difference makers for God's kingdom. Therefore, participants must learn to personally understand and apply God's Word in every aspect of life. While there is no expectation that they understand God's Word at the level of a professional scholar or clergyman, it is imperative that they learn the basics of how to interpret and apply God's Word. It is a huge win for the participants to learn how to personally examine the stories, principles, commandments, etc., and then synthesize these truths into theological knowledge that can be applied practically in their lives as they live with Christ as

Lord of their life. In John 8:31-32, Jesus said to those who believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

As participants learn to abide in Christ and live out His truth, they will not only avoid returning to prison they will be equipped to serve God faithfully.

Character Traits

Each week in the *JUMPSTART Lifebook*, the participants complete a lesson on a specific character trait. In each lesson they learn the definition of a character word, five keys for developing the character trait, and write responses to five applications questions that are designed to demonstrate a working knowledge of how to put the character trait into action. The purpose of the character studies is to help the participants learn pro-social behavior, develop a framework for acceptable ethics, become self-aware about their own character flaws, and discover practical tips that will help them respond in a healthy manner when they are confronted with things that challenge their character. One of the more helpful aspects of the character studies are the opportunities the participants, inside leaders, and volunteers have to share life lessons they have learned when their character has been tested. As discussed in detail previously, these personal testimonies and stories are helpful, influential, and formative. Most people comprehend and synthesize knowledge better through stories rather than through abstract principles.

In many instances the character studies reinforce what participants are learning through the *Purpose Driven Life* content, *JUMPSTART Participant Lifebook* and Bible Study Worksheets. When one exhibits and develops godly character in their lives, this is equivalent to bearing fruit for God’s glory. In Gal. 5:22-23, nine fruits of the Spirit are listed and in 2 Peter 1:5-8, believers are directed to accompany their faith with seven-character traits. Both of these

verses point out the importance of developing solid character traits. How all of the curriculum is affecting life change, developing solid character, and preparing participants for success upon release is measured using the JUMPSTART Re-Entry Assessment which will be discussed in further detail in an upcoming section.

Purpose and Process of Small Groups in JUMPSTART

Each week after reading a chapter of the *Purpose Driven Life*, completing their JUMPSTART Lifebook worksheet for the week, a bible study worksheet, and the character trait worksheet, the participants attend class. During the class a review of the lesson is provided to reinforce the content, but the majority of the class time is spent in small groups. All class members are required to actively participate in small groups to discuss what they have learned from the weeks content and how they have applied and/or struggled to apply the truth in their daily lives.

Effective small groups are an essential component of the JUMPSTART discipleship program for several reasons. First, developing self-awareness and engaging in personal discovery often happens best in a small group setting. In a small group setting, individuals can ask questions, receive feedback, involve themselves in the lives of others, and generally learn to be vulnerable among other people who are going through the joys and challenges of life with them. Additionally, people are more likely to share about their struggles and challenges, and enter into biblical fellowship in a small group setting.

Secondly, small groups allow for maximum participation. In a large gathering, typically only a few people will have the opportunity to share. However, lecture style learning is often not the most effective way to impart knowledge. Small groups allow for each participant to contribute and receive specific guidance and support on their discipleship journey. Also, in a

small group setting, every participant is allowed to share and reflect on personal stories that are connected to what they are learning. This not only helps them develop self-awareness personally it also edifies the group as they learn from others struggles and learnings.

Thirdly, organizing the participants into small groups with trained inside leaders and volunteers allows them to be shepherded well and held accountable for completing their work and their behavior. Week after week the participants are revealing what they are learning, the challenges they are facing, and setting action steps with their group leaders. As the year progresses, and trust and relationships are developed, then the volunteers and inside leaders better understand how to help those in their care grow in Christ. This structure is also conducive for gathering info and insight to help with completing the JUMPSTART Re-Entry Assessments.

JUMPSTART Re-Entry Assessments

Three times during the course of the program the participants are assessed to measure growth and receive specific feedback for areas in which they need to grow. The participants are assessed by inside leaders, volunteers, and the institutional chaplain using the JUMPSTART Re-entry Assessment (Appendix D). Using a Likert scale for twenty-five questions, the assessments are designed to measure how well the participants are putting into action what they are learning in the program. The first two times the assessments are completed they are used as a coaching tool to help the participants understand specific areas in which growth is needed. After the first two assessments are completed, each participant has a meeting with an inside leader to discuss their assessment. The primary purpose of these meetings is for the participant to understand where they need to grow, be encouraged for where they are doing well and receive specific coaching for how they can finish the course successfully. The assessments are also valuable for theological formation. If the participants are not doing well in a particular area, the assessments

help provide insight into which concepts the participant has not learned and assimilated into their life. This provides inside leaders and volunteers with information that is helpful for shepherding each participant.

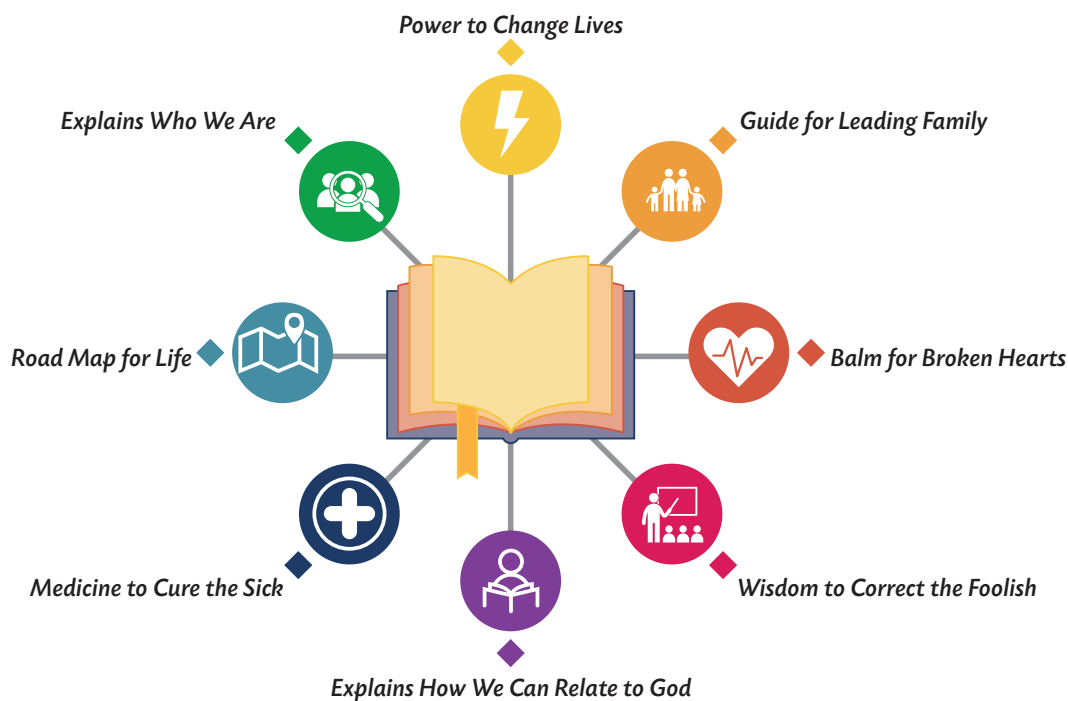
The final assessment determines the participants grade for the class. On average, approximately 1000 participants take JUMSPART each year, but only 40% complete the course successfully. If they are not actively living out what they have learned, then they do not pass the course. The final assessment for each participant is completed by JUMPSTART staff, inside leaders, volunteers, and the institutional chaplain (if the chaplain is able and willing). This corroboration as assessments are completed ensures that participants are examined carefully before he or she is determined to have successfully completed the program.

Conclusion

While no discipleship process is the perfect process, over the past 10 years JUMPSTART has developed a track record of proven results. To date, 3,361 participants have completed the program successfully and have been released from incarceration. Just over 96% of these participants have not returned to prison and are living as productive members of society. Contrast JUMPSTART's recidivism rate of 4% with the national recidivism rate of just over 70%, and a strong case can be made that contextualized and life-on-life discipleship produces life transformation, even inside of a prison. JUMPSTART's emphasis on theological formation and discipleship through quality curriculum, teaching participants to do personal Bible Study, creating an environment of transparency and nurture in small groups, and providing coaching and feedback through assessments is producing disciples that are living lives of purpose that bring God glory.

Appendix A

The Bible is Not Just Another Book



Further Questions to Consider:

1. When and where each day will you make time to read and study God's Word?

2. Are there any books available to you that will help you learn how to study God's Word better? If so, when will you read them?

3. How have you witnessed the power of God's Word in the past?

Write out a closing prayer, asking God to help you use what you have learned to serve others for His glory.

Appendix B

Week 27

DEFEATING TEMPTATION

Biblical Keys to Defeating Temptation:

- R your attention on something else.
- R your struggle to a godly friend or support group.
- R the devil.
- R your vulnerability.

How have you defeated temptation by using the biblical keys this week?

.....

.....

Are you allowing any “trash” into your mind? If so, what are you going to do about it?

.....

.....

How can having an accountability partner help you defeat temptation?

.....

.....

How can memorizing Scripture help you defeat temptation?

.....

.....

Many think they must be perfect to be considered a mature Christian. Because of this mindset, they do not even want to admit they battle temptation. This is pride. Now and after your release, you will be tempted. Remember, it is not a sin to be tempted. What will be your specific plan of action when you are facing temptation upon your release?

.....

.....

“I have been released from prison for almost 5 years. In that time God has given me a wife, a great job, a church family that loves me, a home, and a lot of great experiences. When I am tempted, I remind myself of how far God has brought me and I follow the biblical keys to defeating temptation.” – Viengxay Phankhaysy, JUMPSTART Graduate

Appendix C

Transformed *by Truth*

Passage Studied:

2. Heart — God's Word Defines Healthy Emotions & Affections

■ What does this passage teach me to love?
To hate? To feel?

■ What decisions are being
made in this passage?
Why are they being made?

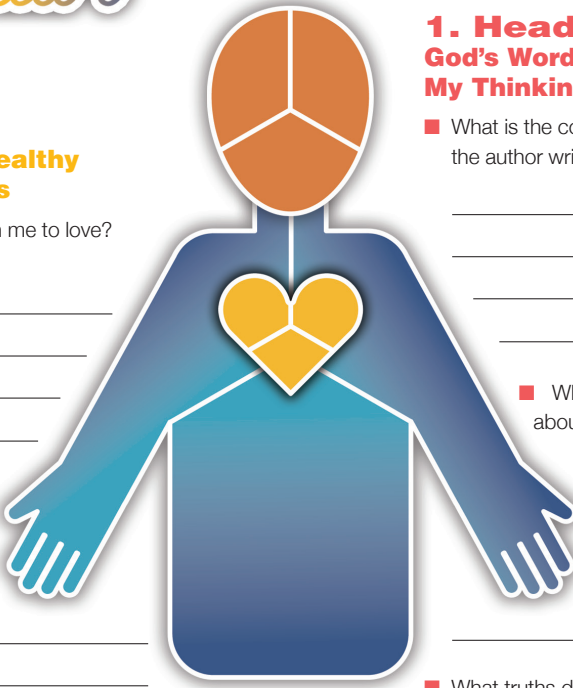
■ What temptations in my heart does this
passage reveal?

3. Hands and Feet — God's Word Directs My Actions

■ Do I have sin to confess and make right? Please explain.

■ Is there an example in the passage I need to follow? Please explain

■ How does this passage show that I can serve God & others?



1. Head — God's Word Transforms My Thinking

■ What is the context of the passage? Who was
the author writing to? Why was this written?

■ What does this passage teach me
about God's Character?

■ What truths does this passage reveal I need to
believe?

Appendix D

JUMP START RE-ENTRY ASSESSMENTS

Based upon Purpose Driven Life Health Assessment

Inmate's Name: _____ SCDC #: _____

Mentor: _____ Assessment: _____

Date: _____

**Score 1-5
(5 highest)**

CONNECT: You were formed for God's Family	
Member is developing authentic community within the Christian family (interpersonal relationships)	
Member is more loving, grace giving and forgiving to others than when the class began	
Member is intentionally cultivating their relationships with Christian friends and spiritual mentors	
Member is sharing about attempts to restore or enhance immediate family relationships	
Member is resolving conflict in a Biblical manner and supporting the leadership of Jump Start	
Membership Total	
GROW: You were created to become like Christ	
Member is sharing with Jump Start family about their growing relationship with God through His Word and prayer	
Member is responding to challenges with peace and faith rather than anxiety and fear	
Member is avoiding using addictive behaviors (food, television, busyness, cigarettes, etc.) to meet personal needs	
Member has a relationship with someone that encourages spiritual health	
Member is honoring God by tithing to His Work with whatever means they have	
Maturity Total	
SERVE: You were shaped for serving God	
Member is expressing their unique God-given design as a way of life (dorm, work assignment, institution)	
Member is open and praying to be used by God and express their unique S.H.A.P.E. for ministry	
Member is serving in a regular (once a month or better) ministry in the chapel or institution	
Member is sharing group ownership by assuming a small responsibility or facilitating a discussion group	
Member is honoring Christ by respectfully submitting to authority	
Ministry Total	
SHARE: You were made for a Mission	
Member is actively praying for and cultivating relationships with unsaved friends and family	
Member is inviting seekers (unsaved people) to Christian events or chapel and sharing their spiritual journey with them	
Member is being a good witness by imitating Christ in their attitudes and behaviors	
Member is actively using his or her gifts, talents, resources, abilities to serve others for God's glory	
Member is regularly investing in the spiritual life of another person or group (becoming a disciple maker)	
Mission Total	
WORSHIP: You were planned for God's pleasure	
Member is attending chapel (with the local body of Christ) at least once per week	
Member has a personal plan and process to help them achieve their goals and dreams (spiritual health plan)	
Member has a growing heart for worship to God through music and praise (personal, group, & chapel)	
Member is honoring God with their physical and personal health (exercise and nutrition)	
Member is pleasing God with every dimension of their life by balancing God's purposes in their life	
Magnification Total	
TOTAL ASSESSMENT SCORE	

Well Developed: (21-25) Very Good: (16-20) Getting Going: (11-15) Getting Started: (6-10) Just Beginning: (1-5)

Revised January 2017