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2nd Edition

EMERGE LIFE EVENTS

# Prison Ministry South Carolina

## 1st Time Volunteer Onboarding Guide

"I was in prison and you came to me" Matthew 25:36





# Welcome to Emerge Life Events (ELE) our Prison Ministry

We are so glad to have you with us. For 40 years and counting, this prison ministry has shared the love of Jesus Christ with people behind the walls. Today, Emerge carries on this work by sharing God's Word, offering hope, and reminding people that they are loved and have a purpose. We are thankful for your heart to serve and excited to see how God will work through you.

This guide will help you take your first steps in our Prison Minstry in South Carolina. Whether you want to serve youth or adults, everyone starts with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) training and approval process. We will explain what to do, what to expect, and how to get help. Becoming fully certified is a journey, and it may take some time. However, you do not have to figure it all out on your own becuase Emerge we will be with you each step of the way!



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# Process Overview

This overview shows the steps to your first service with Emerge's South Carolina Prison Ministry.

**1 Complete Your ELE Annual Volunteer Disclosure and Review Form**

Read through the do's and don'ts manual and the medical and ex-offender notification sections of this guide(pages 8383) and complete the ELE Annual Volunteer Disclosure and Review Form by clicking the link **HERE** or in the email this guide is attached to.

**2 Complete the SC DJJ Online Application**

Use the South Carolina DJJ link **HERE** or in the email this guide was sent in to apply through their online portal. Let Emerge know when you submit it. You can complete this application and your Emerge package in either order.

**3 Wait for DJJ Approval**

DJJ will review your application and complete the required checks. Allow about three weeks for review and onboarding, though it may take longer. Check your email and respond if DJJ asks for more information.

**4 Attend DJJ Orientation**

After approval, DJJ will send you instructions for orientation. This training helps you prepare to serve. They typically offer 3 to 4 online orientations a month. Let Emerge know when you finish.

**5 Receive Emerge's Confirmation**

Emerge will check that all your paperwork and training are complete. We will let you know when you are ready to serve with us.

**6 Sign Up for an Event**

Once Emerge confirms you are ready, visit our **ELE Events Page** to find an upcoming event and register. Let us know when you sign up.

**7 Attend Your First Service**

Follow the event instructions and join the Emerge team! We will help you know where to go and what to expect.

Getting ready to serve takes time, but you do not have to do it alone. Keep us updated along the way. If you have questions or need help, reply to an Emerge email or call 910-375-3088.

# Medical and Ex-Offender Notification

This form which is a part of the ELE Annual Volunteer Disclosure and Review Form (link **HERE**) helps Emerge prepare for your visit and identify anything that may affect facility entry.

Your Privacy
Emerge treats this information as confidential and will share only necessary information with facilities when required by law.

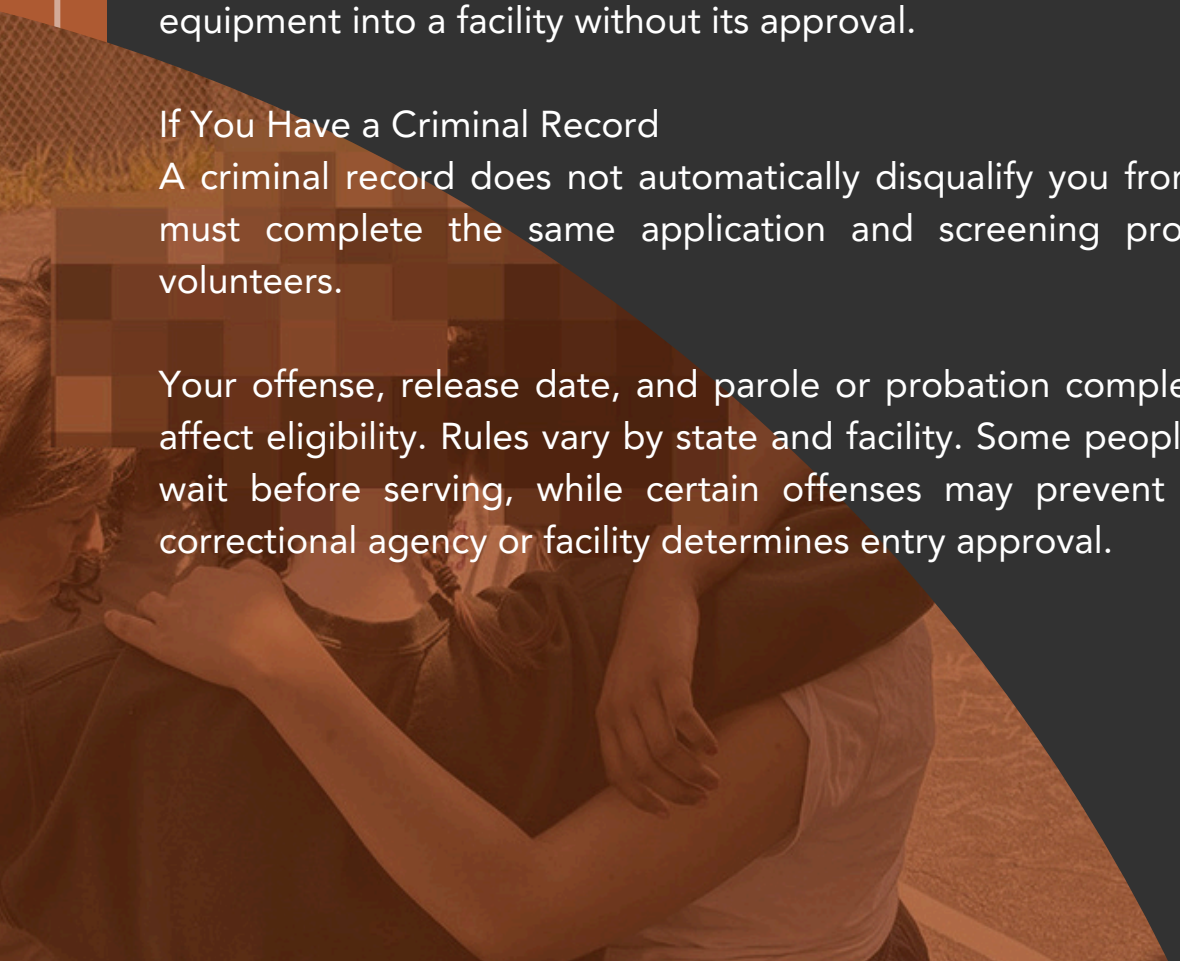
Medical Needs, Medications & Implants
List any serious or ongoing condition that requires you to carry medication or a medical device at all times. Include implants or metal in your body that may set off a metal detector. Do not list unrelated conditions or medications.

Provide a letter on your physician's letterhead confirming the applicable condition, prescribed medication, device, or implant. Emerge will keep a copy, and you must bring a copy when you serve.

A physician's letter does not replace facility approval. Tell Emerge about these needs ahead of time, and do not bring medication or medical equipment into a facility without its approval.

If You Have a Criminal Record
A criminal record does not automatically disqualify you from serving. You must complete the same application and screening process as other volunteers.

Your offense, release date, and parole or probation completion date may affect eligibility. Rules vary by state and facility. Some people may need to wait before serving, while certain offenses may prevent approval. The correctional agency or facility determines entry approval.



# Do's and Don'ts Manual

The Do's & Don'ts are part of the ELE Annual Volunteer Disclosure and Review Form. They provide general guidelines for serving in prison ministry, including what to bring, how to dress, how to interact with inmates and staff, etc. Please review these guidelines and complete the questions in your form (link **HERE**). Each facility may have additional rules to follow. If anything is unclear, contact Emerge Ministries before serving.

## A. PRISON CRUSADES: GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Be Prepared Spiritually:
Be PRAYED-up, GIVEN-up, CONFESSED-up with no ought in your heart. Be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT. Pray for HOLY SPIRIT INFLUENCE in YOUR HOUSEHOLD so you'll have no hindrance to do this work. Come with thanksgiving and open hearts for His wisdom.

2. Be Prepared for: SPIRITUAL BATTLE. ***Cover yourself and the volunteer group in PRAYER.***

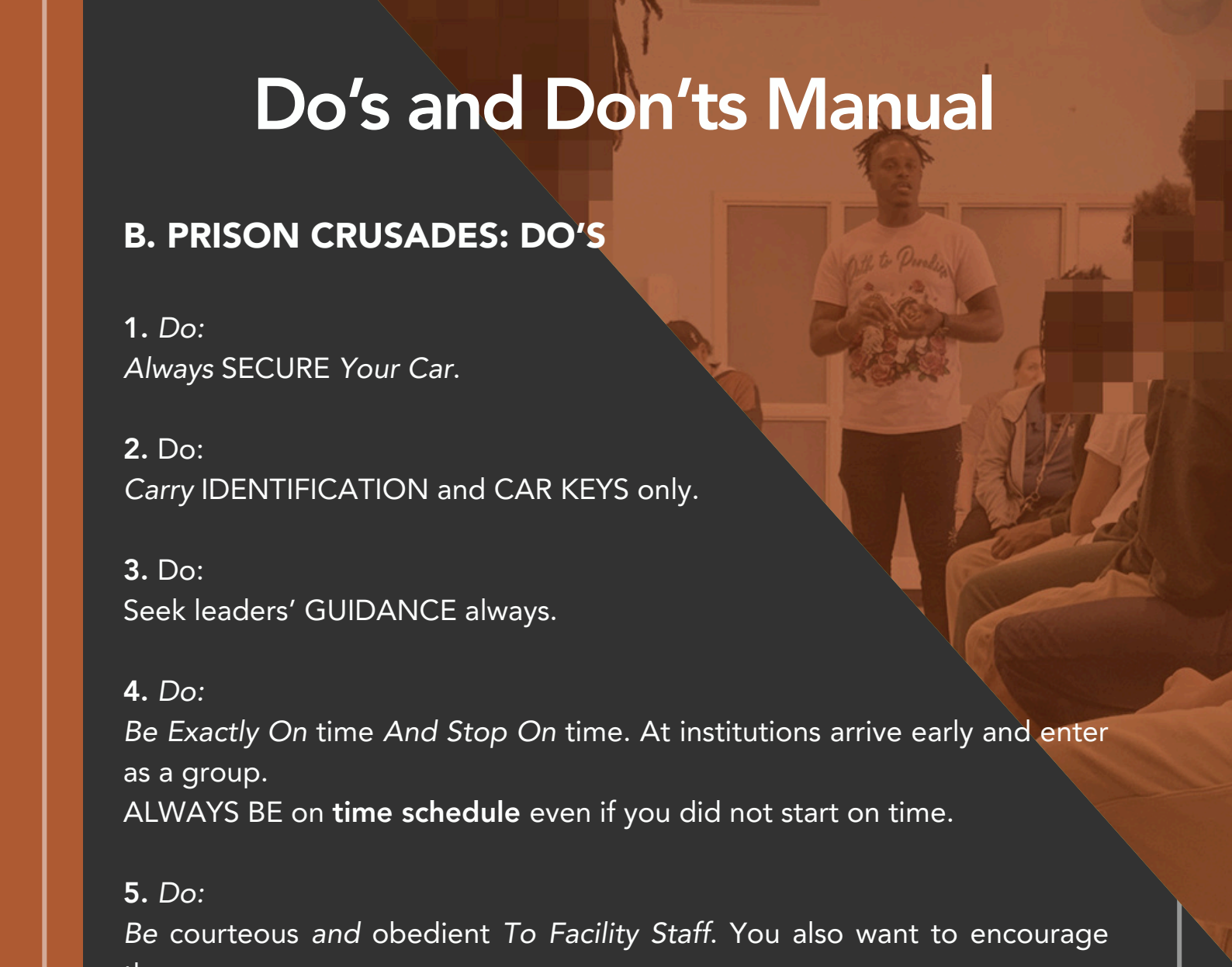
3. I won't Get Into:
DENOMINATIONAL, DOCTRINES or Non- Essentials To SALVATION. I will not preach against or make negative remarks against other religions.

4. Don't Ask About Their CRIME. The ***attorney client*** PRIVILEDGE extends ***only to ordained ministers and professional counselors.***

5. I will Discuss Frequently What I am Doing with TRAINED/EXPERIENCED Volunteers, even if I am BUSY. I will continue to study and review all ***training material.***



# Do's and Don'ts Manual



## B. PRISON CRUSADES: DO'S

**1.** *Do:*
*Always* SECURE *Your Car*.

**2.** Do:
*Carry* IDENTIFICATION and CAR KEYS only.

**3.** Do:
Seek leaders' GUIDANCE always.

**4.** *Do:*
*Be Exactly On* time *And Stop On* time. At institutions arrive early and enter as a group.
ALWAYS BE on **time schedule** even if you did not start on time.

**5.** *Do:*
*Be* courteous *and* obedient *To Facility Staff*. You also want to encourage them.

**6.** Do:
Eagerly obey rules. **Use the term OFFICER instead of guard.** Be un-involved if an inmate tells you how negative things are in the facility.

**7.** *Do:*
*Watch Your* Water *Intake Before Entering the Unit*.

**8.** *Do:*
*Wear Modest* clothing. Clothes that are tight and revealing, including shorts **are never appropriate. No open toed** shoes.

9. *Do:*
*Be mindful of* ***gender appropriateness****. In general, females Should Minister Personally Only to* females. *Men Should Minister Only To* men. Maintain godliness.

# Do's and Don'ts Manual

**10. Women** *Do:*
*Stay in The Presence of a* Male *Volunteer, When Ministering in A* Male *Facility.*

**11.** *Do:*
*Evangelize Without Trying to Be evangelistic.* Be genuine, inmates know the difference

**12.** *Do:*
*Use Only Your First* NAME.

**13.** *Do:*
*Report* THREATS *Immediately*. If you learn directly from an inmate about anything that may be a threat to order or the security of the institution, or about a threat of bodily harm to an inmate or others, this must be reported to the leadership immediately.

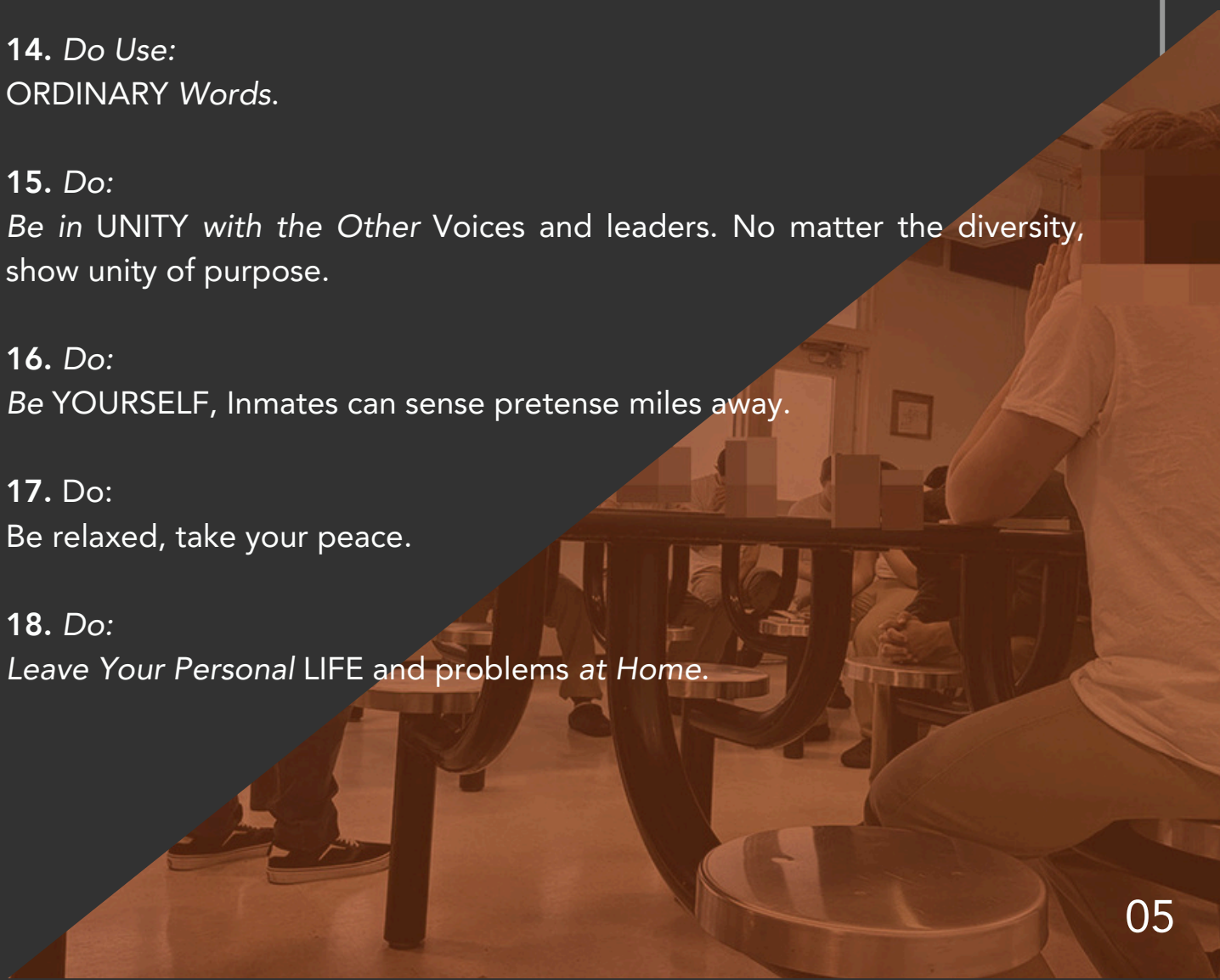
**14.** *Do Use:*
ORDINARY *Words.*

**15.** *Do:*
*Be in* UNITY *with the Other* Voices and leaders. No matter the diversity, show unity of purpose.

**16.** *Do:*
*Be* YOURSELF, Inmates can sense pretense miles away.

**17.** Do:
Be relaxed, take your peace.

**18.** *Do:*
*Leave Your Personal* LIFE and problems *at Home.*



# Do's and Don'ts Manual

## C. PRISON CRUSADES: DONT'S

1. ***Women*** Don't:
Wear perfume Or Heavy makeup.

2. ***Women*** Don't:
Carry a purse Into the Facility.

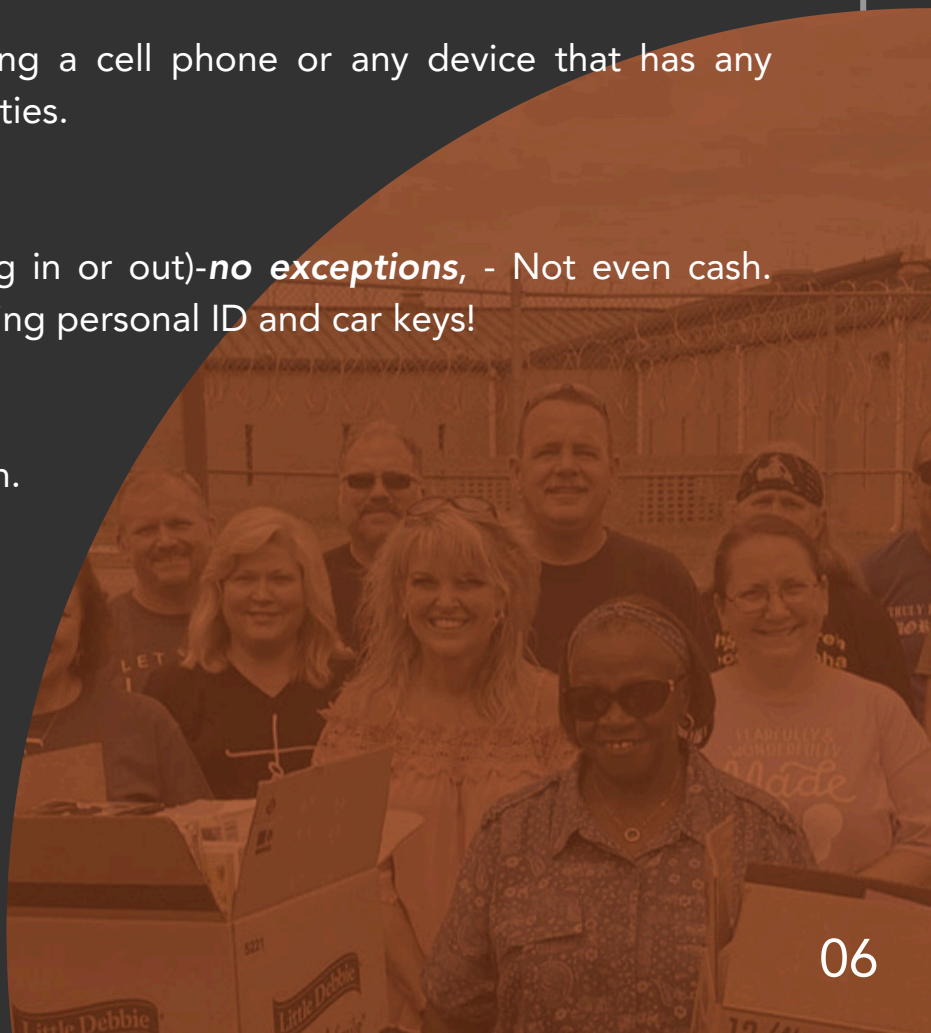
3. Don't:
Bring no medications; unless they are prescribed and documentation provided to Emerge Ministries stating that medication must be on your person at all times. This for your own Personal safety.

4.Don't:
Bring No Potential Weapons. Do not bring any sharp objects like knives, guns, weapons, etc. Do not wear metal pins, barrettes or hair bows. Do not bring ink pens or mechanical pencils. Do not bring in paper clips or staples.

5. Don't:
Take any pictures. Don't bring a cell phone or any device that has any internet or recording Capabilities.

6. Don't:
Be A CARRIER (bring nothing in or out)-***no exceptions***, - Not even cash. Remember you are only to bring personal ID and car keys!

7. Don't:
Give Out Personal information.



# Do's and Don'ts Manual

8. Don't:
Give Any UNAUTHORIZED MATERIALS to Inmates. (No Bibles, Books or Tracks).

9. Don't:
Give Your PHONE NUMBER or HOME ADDRESS.

10. Don't:
EVER Visit Their Family. You don't want to become an unwanted "go between" in a negative situation. Discuss it with your leader.

11. Don't:
Expect THANKS Or GRATITUDE.

12. Don't:
Ever get into an ARGUMENT or DEBATE concerning Doctrine or bible versions, just give them Jesus.



# South Carolina DJJ Online Application

Emerge Ministries partners with the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (SCDJJ). South Carolina requires this application to serve in its juvenile facilities. The short online application is through SCDJJ's volunteer system and should take about 10 minutes to complete. It asks for personal information and a few questions about your interest in serving.

This section explains how to fill out the application and what SCDJJ and Emerge Ministries need you to include. Please read this section and the FAQs at the end of this guide before starting. If you still have questions, email: admin@emergeforunity.org or call 910-375-3088.

## Completing Your SC DJJ Application

To start your application go to the link here: bttr.im/8m709 (this link is also in the email with this guide.) Create an account then fill in the requested information. Use the same email address and phone number you gave Emerge Ministries so we can match your application to our records. Keep your login information for future use. See an image of the starting screen below (you will be using the left side for new applications).



# South Carolina DJJ Online Application

## Important Sections

- General Availability: Emerge's crusades usually take place on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Select the times you are available on those days. You may select other days and times too.
- Get Involved: Select Spiritual Development. You may also choose other interests.
- Administration (Office Use Only): Leave this section blank.
- Group Information: Select Yes and enter Emerge Ministries as your group name.
- County: If you live in South Carolina, select your county. If you live in another state, DJJ staff have said you may select any county listed.
- References: You may enter Emerge Ministries and 910-375-3088.
- Emergency Contact: Enter the person you want contacted in an emergency.
- Volunteer Interest: Answer each question honestly and in your own words.

## History Questions

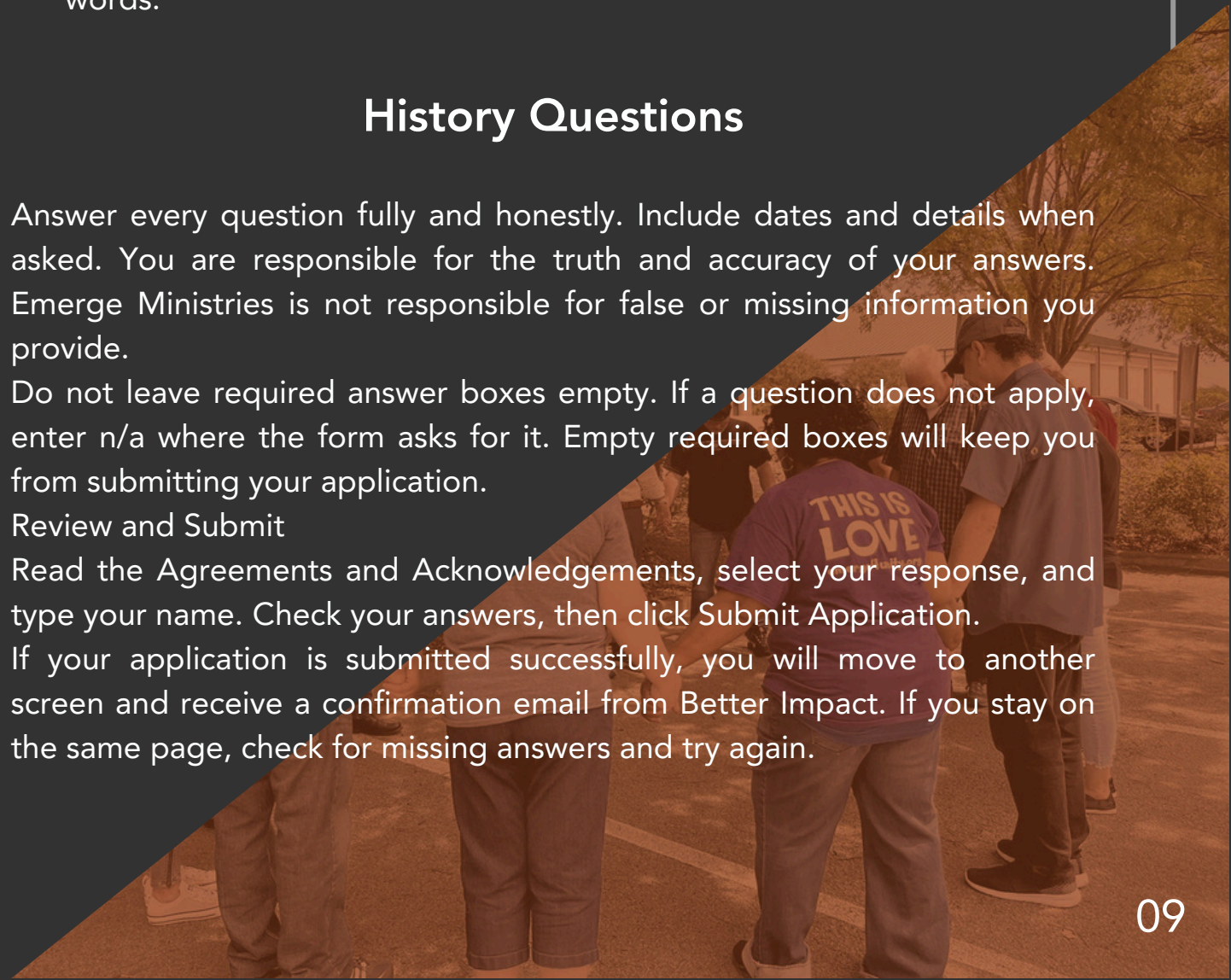
Answer every question fully and honestly. Include dates and details when asked. You are responsible for the truth and accuracy of your answers. Emerge Ministries is not responsible for false or missing information you provide.

Do not leave required answer boxes empty. If a question does not apply, enter n/a where the form asks for it. Empty required boxes will keep you from submitting your application.

Review and Submit

Read the Agreements and Acknowledgements, select your response, and type your name. Check your answers, then click Submit Application.

If your application is submitted successfully, you will move to another screen and receive a confirmation email from Better Impact. If you stay on the same page, check for missing answers and try again.



# South Carolina DJJ Online Application

## Watch Your Email

Check your inbox and spam or junk folder for an email from DONOTREPLY@dss.sc.gov. It will explain how to complete the DSS Central Registry screening.

Complete the DSS online submission within 72 hours of receiving the email. After that, the link will expire. There is no cost to you for the screening.

DJJ will review your application and screenings. Once approved, you will be invited to Volunteer Orientation. You must complete the approval and orientation steps before serving.

After submitting your application, please let Emerge Ministries know you have completed it. If needed, you may also forward the DSS email to us for help. Forwarding the email does not complete your screening you must still follow the DSS instructions within 72 hours. As always, if you still have questions, email:
admin@emergeforunity.org or call 910-375-3088.



# South Carolina DJJ Oreintation

## Completing Your SCDJJ Orientation

Once your application has been processed and your DSS screening has cleared, the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (SCDJJ) will contact you directly about upcoming orientation dates. Watch your email, including your spam or junk folder, for these instructions.

## What to Expect

- Location: Online through Microsoft Teams, hosted by SCDJJ.
- Time: Plan for about one hour.
- Dates: There are usually three to four orientations each month. Your choices will depend on when you are approved and which dates remain.
- Facilities: You only need to attend one SCDJJ orientation. It covers all DJJ facilities in South Carolina.

Emerge tries to stay informed about upcoming dates, but we may not know every available option. Follow the scheduling instructions SCDJJ sends you.



## Schedule as Soon as Possible

Choose the earliest orientation you can attend. SCDJJ limits how many times it contacts volunteers about orientation. If you do not respond or schedule, they may stop reaching out.

Once SCDJJ confirms that your application and screening have passed, let Emerge know. Tell us that you are scheduling your orientation and share the date when you have it. After attending, let us know you have completed it so we can verify your next steps.

# South Carolina DJJ Oreintation

## Confirm Your Certification Dates

After your approval, screening, and orientation are complete, your SCDJJ volunteer certification lasts three years. Your official certification date may be different from your orientation date.

When you receive your orientation instructions, ask SCDJJ to confirm your official certification date and expiration date. Emerge will also verify and record these dates so we can contact you about renewing your certification before it expires.

## Before You Serve With Emerge

SCDJJ certification and Emerge paperwork must both be complete before you can serve with Emerge Ministries. This includes:

- Your approved SCDJJ application.
- Your cleared DSS screening.
- Your completed SCDJJ orientation.
- All required Emerge paperwork.

Keep Emerge updated along the way so we can confirm when you are ready to serve.



# Ready to Serve

Once all your Emerge paperwork, DJJ application, DSS screening, and orientation are complete, you are ready to serve and can register for an upcoming South Carolina Emerge Life Event (ELE)!

## Choosing Your Event

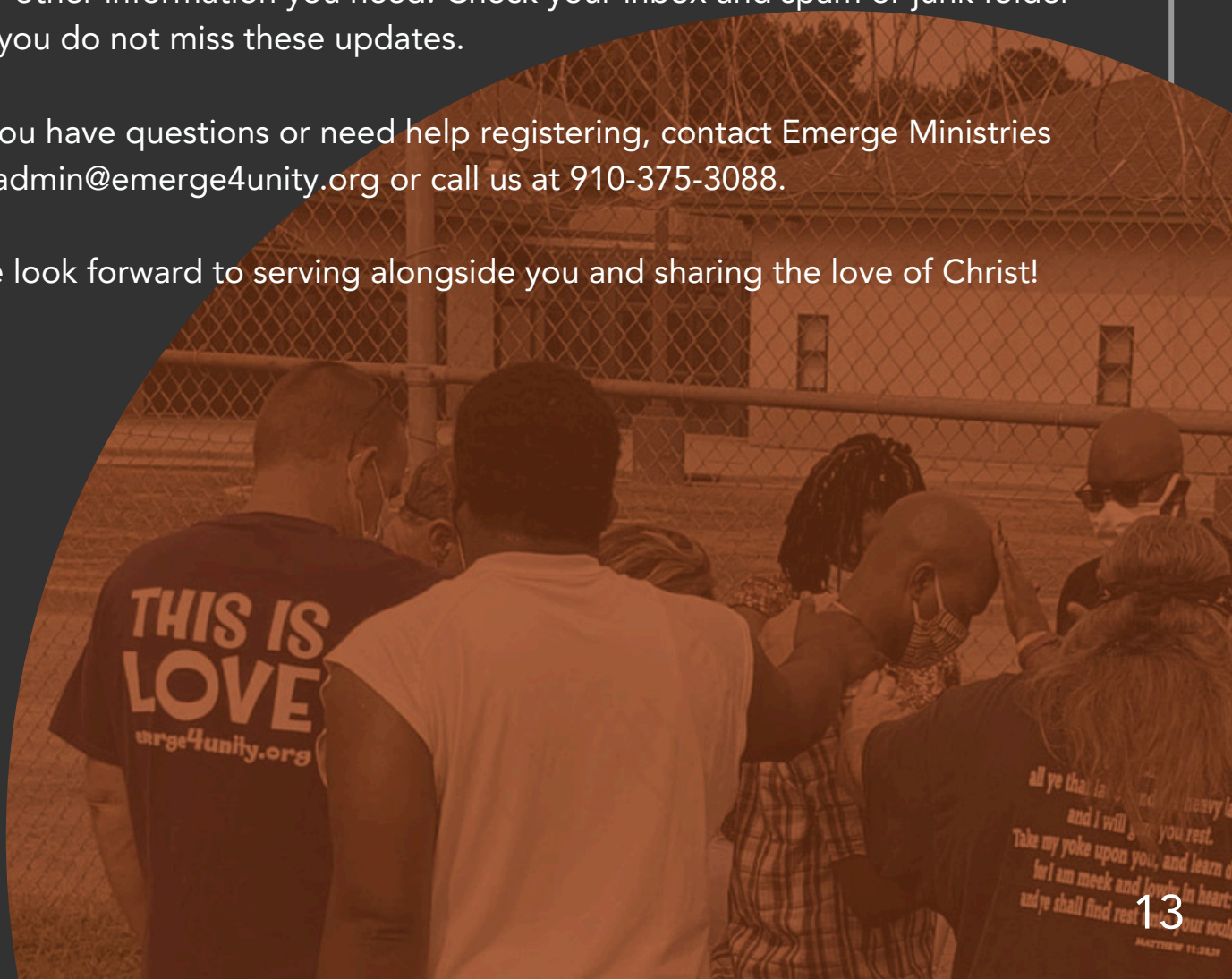
Visit our **Prison Ministry Events** page and elect an event from the dropdown menu and click Register. We also share registration links on social media from time to time. Make sure you choose a South Carolina event. Review the dates, location, and event details before signing up.

## Watch for Event Details

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email. Closer to the event, Emerge's Executive Administrator will contact you with more details and any other information you need. Check your inbox and spam or junk folder so you do not miss these updates.

If you have questions or need help registering, contact Emerge Ministries at admin@emerge4unity.org or call us at 910-375-3088.

We look forward to serving alongside you and sharing the love of Christ!



# Frequently Asked Questions

**How long does the volunteer process take?**
The Emerge paperwork and DJJ application can usually be completed in an hour. DSS screening may take up to three weeks. Plan for one to two months to complete the full process, including orientation.

**What if I want to serve in adult prisons?**
Emerge's process starts with serving youth. After your first service with Emerge, you may begin the process to serve in adult prisons.

**What if I do not receive my DSS email or the link expires?**
Check your spam or junk folder. If you still need help contact DJJ Volunteer Services directly at: volunteerservices@djj.sc.gov. Also reach out to Emerge and we can check with DJJ for you.

**Can I volunteer if I have a criminal record?**
A criminal record does not always prevent you from serving. DJJ may ask for more information. Recent offenses may delay approval, and some charges may prevent approval. Answer all questions fully and honestly.

**What if I have not heard about orientation or cannot attend?**
If you have not heard from DJJ, contact DJJ Volunteer Services at: volunteerservices@djj.sc.gov. Reach out to Emerge and we can check with DJJ for you. If the dates do not work for you, reply to the DJJ staff member who sent them and ask for other options. Let Emerge know as well.

**Does DJJ certification mean I am ready to serve with Emerge?**
Only when all Emerge paperwork is complete too. This includes the Do's and Don'ts and Medical/Ex-Offender Notification forms.

**How long does my certification last, and how do I renew it?**
SCDJJ certification lasts three years. Emerge will contact you about 90 days before your certification expires to help you begin.

**How will I know I am ready to serve?**
Let Emerge know when you finish orientation. We will verify your status, and then confirm that you are ready to serve.




# Your Next Steps

Thank you for taking the time to join Emerge Ministries in prison ministry. Your willingness to share the love of Christ with those behind bars means so much to us. We are grateful to walk alongside you as you prepare to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to people who need hope and encouragement.

**As you finish this process, use this short checklist:**

1. Complete the **ELE Annual Volunteer Disclosure and Review Form**.
2. Complete your **DJJ online application**.
3. Complete your DSS screening and receive clearance.
4. Attend your SCDJJ orientation.
5. **Register** to be a Voice with Emerge!

Keep Emerge updated as you complete these steps so we can confirm you are ready to serve. If you have questions or need help, email admin@emerge4unity.org or call 910-375-3088. We look forward to serving with you!