

Prison Ministry Delivers Hope to Children at Christmas

What happens to the children of inmates at Christmastime? There's something missing for these little ones, whose parents are noticeably absent from the tree trimming, family dinners and other holiday festivities.

Indeed, for the 2.7 million American children with an incarcerated parent, family turmoil and brokenness darken the days of winter and dampen what might otherwise be a time of joyful celebration. These children also deal with the absence of a father or mother, suffer the consequences of diminished family income, and cope with the stigma of incarceration.

What's more, studies show that parental incarceration jeopardizes a child's emotional and mental health, educational and vocational success and future economic mobility. Parental incarceration also has been associated with aggressive behavior, addiction and even homelessness.

For all these reasons, Crossroad Bible Institute (CBI), an international nonprofit prison ministry, is calling attention to these kids. CBI is offering children hope through its Crossroad Kids program, which presents the promise of the gospel through the newly revised Manga Messiah course and the guidance of loving instructors.

"Our existing connection to incarcerated parents provides the perfect avenue for reaching out to their children as we continue our commitment to extend the truth of God's Word and the love of His people to families affected by incarceration," says CBI President H. David Schuringa.

Most Crossroad Kids receive enrollment forms from their incarcerated parents, who are CBI students themselves. Others find their way to the program through Prison Fellowship's

Angel Tree ministry, which provides CBI enrollment forms to many participating parents and children.

The students find significant meaning in the studies. One student, Nelson, explains, "I've learned how I should always keep my faith with Jesus to keep out of the devil's grip. Thanks a lot for the opportunity to learn about Jesus and how to be a better person."

Are you involved in prison or jail ministry? I would love to hear about your experiences. Share with me in the comment box below.