As a volunteer inside the prisons of our Archdiocese, I agree to adhere to the following terms:

I will not accept anything personal from the incarcerated men or women. This includes personal information; legal information; letters or personal items; books or materials that are not spiritual in nature or not relevant to our classroom study.

I will not give anything to the incarcerated men or women that is outside of classroom assignments. This includes religious articles; information from the internet; newspapers, magazines, books or other reading material; pins, necklaces or rosaries; classroom supplies; or food/drink. I will not provide materials that are not agreed upon in advance of class (i.e. highlighters, pamphlets, special books). All extraneous materials must be approved by the Director.

I will not offer to nor agree to contact anyone outside of the prison on behalf of someone in the group. This includes families, friends, agencies, churches or any other public organization. The few exceptions that are allowable will be handled by the Director of Prison Ministries or the ministry Priest.

I will not look up any information for anyone incarcerated. This includes personal information; parishes or halfway houses in areas to which they will be released; employment or philanthropic opportunities; funeral or new items. If asked to do something, I will refer him/her back to the case manager.

I will not provide snacks that are outside of the overall gate clearance of group snack (i.e. a piece of gum, mint). I will remind my group that they must consume the snack while in the group setting rather than take back to the blocks. If I see someone attempting to take snacks back to the block, I will address the situation.

I will not conduct a one-on-one discussion with anyone in the group unless I am trained for such (pastoral counseling, chaplaincy training, ordained) and been granted that role in the ministry. If asked for a personal consultation, I will refer the person to the Priest or Director.

If a group member requests a special item, discussion or privilege, I will refer him/her to the Director. Many requests are denied; those that are granted should originate from the same place to avoid duplication.

I will not take part in any effort to undermine, disrespect or work against the prison staff—by my words or actions. I will report any attempts to use our ministry setting to plan such efforts.

I will not share anything personal with my group that is outside of the context of the spiritual discussion. I will use discretion and remain professional, remembering my surroundings, at all times. If I feel that my personal situation is affecting my ability to maintain appropriate boundaries, I will recuse myself from the ministry for the evening or overall.

I will actively monitor my group and address those who are damaging state property; wandering in the hallways; inappropriately interacting with each other; a distraction or danger to the group.

I will not use the ministry to “springboard” to other causes and connections inside the prison, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections or the industry. If I choose to become active in other ways inside the ODRC, I will inform the Director prior to doing so.

I will address all concerns with the prison system with the Director, not a prison staff member. Under no circumstances will I directly call the ODRC staff on matters of the program. If unresolved, matters can be discussed further with Archdiocese ministry overseer (Fr. Jan Schmidt)

I will dress professionally and modestly at all times for all work inside the prison.

I will address or report to the Director any interaction, comment or concern that I witness or am subject to in which a personal boundary is breached. I will refrain from any bodily contact beyond a handshake.

I will hold sacred all topics and disclosures made inside the context of the group. I will not share that information with family, friends or other volunteers (unless pertinent to the growth of the group). I will immediately report concerns of self-harm (i.e. suicide) or harm to others (i.e. threats to hurt someone at a later time) to the Director or Priest.

I understand that my actions have a direct. Effect on the group and the ministry overall. Any misstep on my part—intentional or inadvertent—could have a damaging and lasting impact on the Archdiocese’s ability to minister to our Catholic incarcerated brothers and sisters.