

Compassion Ministry Launch Plan: First 90 Days

From an approved ministry plan to a stable, faithful beginning

Launch carefully. Learn quickly. Serve faithfully.



How to Use This 90-Day Plan

This plan begins after the church or ministry team has completed enough listening, assessment, and planning to move into a small approved launch. It is not intended to repeat the Community Listening guide, Church Ministry Assets & Readiness Assessment, or Compassion Ministry Planning Guide. Instead, it helps the team carry an approved plan through the first three months of real ministry.

The goal of the first 90 days is not rapid growth. The goal is to establish a safe, clear, dependable ministry rhythm; learn from participants and volunteers; strengthen weak systems; and decide what should happen next.

Before Day 1

Do not begin the 90-day clock simply because a date is on the calendar. Begin when leadership approval, basic policies, volunteer readiness, facilities, safety procedures, referrals, funding, and the first ministry process are sufficiently prepared for a responsible pilot or launch.

Launch Information

Planning Item	Decision
Ministry name	_____
Ministry leader	_____
Church/staff oversight	_____
Pilot or launch date	_____
Day 30 review date	_____
Day 60 review date	_____
Day 90 review date	_____

90-Day Overview

Time Period	Primary Focus	Key Question
Before Day 1	Confirm final readiness and prepare the team.	Are we ready to begin safely and clearly?

Time Period	Primary Focus	Key Question
Days 1-30	Launch small, stabilize the basic process, and learn.	Can we deliver what we promised consistently?
Days 31-60	Strengthen volunteers, systems, referrals, and participant experience.	What needs to improve before this becomes routine?
Days 61-90	Evaluate outcomes and sustainability; make the next decision.	Should we continue, adjust, partner, pause, or grow carefully?

Before Day 1: Final Launch Gate

Use this short gate before opening the ministry to participants. A few unresolved items may be manageable, but no team should knowingly launch with serious gaps in leadership, safety, participant protection, or volunteer preparation.

- ☐ Church leadership has given the approvals required for the ministry, location, budget, and volunteers.
- ☐ A ministry leader and backup leader are identified, and volunteers know who makes decisions.
- ☐ Volunteer screening, background checks, training, and role assignments are complete when required.
- ☐ Facility access, restrooms, parking, lighting, signage, accessibility, storage, and closing procedures have been checked.
- ☐ Participant registration collects only the information the ministry genuinely needs.
- ☐ Privacy practices are clear for paper records, digital records, photographs, stories, prayer requests, texting, and social media.
- ☐ Basic safety, emergency, incident-reporting, child-safety, vulnerable-adult, and severe-weather procedures are understood.
- ☐ Referral contacts are available for needs beyond the ministry role, and the team knows when to refer rather than improvise.
- ☐ Supplies, technology, curriculum, food, equipment, and first-month expenses are available.
- ☐ Participants can be told clearly what the ministry will provide, what it will not provide, and how long the first pilot or session will last.
- ☐ The team has completed a participant walk-through from arrival to departure.
- ☐ The first two to four weeks of volunteer coverage are confirmed.

Items that must be resolved before Day 1:

Days 1-30: Launch Small and Stabilize

The first month is about consistency. Keep the ministry within the size and scope already planned. Pay close attention to what participants actually experience, what volunteers actually encounter, and whether the basic process works outside the planning room.

Primary Goal

To deliver the ministry safely and consistently, protect dignity, support volunteers, and identify problems early while they are still small.

First-Month Action Steps

- ☐ Hold a short team prayer and role review before the first ministry day.
- ☐ Use one clear welcome process so participants know where to go, what to expect, and whom to ask for help.
- ☐ Explain the ministry scope honestly. Do not promise help, money, transportation, housing, counseling, or other services that have not been approved.
- ☐ Observe practical barriers: transportation, childcare, work schedules, disability access, language, literacy, technology, cost, fear, or confusion.
- ☐ Protect private conversations and personal information; avoid discussing participant situations casually among volunteers.
- ☐ Use the referral process when a need is outside the ministry role.
- ☐ Record incidents, safety concerns, unusual requests, or policy questions promptly and bring them to the appropriate leader.
- ☐ Check volunteer coverage weekly and address overload before it becomes burnout.
- ☐ Compare actual expenses with the first-month budget.
- ☐ Ask for brief participant feedback in a respectful, optional way.
- ☐ Debrief with volunteers regularly during the first month, not only at Day 30.
- ☐ Make small corrections immediately when they improve clarity or safety; save major program changes for team review.

Suggested First-Month Rhythm

Timing	Focus	Examples
Launch week	Clarity and welcome	Roles, signage, participant flow, first-day communication, supplies, safety.

Timing	Focus	Examples
Week 2	Consistency	Attendance pattern, no-shows, referral use, volunteer questions, communication gaps.
Week 3	Participant experience	Access barriers, dignity, follow-up, privacy, spiritual care, practical usefulness.
Week 4	Prepare Day 30 review	Budget, volunteer capacity, incidents, feedback, outcomes, needed changes.

Day 30 Review

At Day 30, the question is not “Is the ministry successful yet?” The better question is “Can we deliver this ministry clearly, safely, and consistently enough to keep learning?”

Are we reaching the people we intended to serve?

Do participants understand what the ministry offers?

What barriers are keeping people from attending or benefiting?

Are volunteers prepared and supported?

Have any boundary, privacy, safety, or communication concerns emerged?

Are referrals working when needs exceed our role?

Are actual expenses close to what we planned?

What one or two changes would most improve the next 30 days?

Day 30 Decision

☐ Continue the current pilot with minor adjustments.

- ☐ Make a significant adjustment before continuing.
- ☐ Add training or leadership support before the next phase.
- ☐ Seek a partner for part of the ministry or a recurring need.
- ☐ Pause temporarily to resolve a safety, staffing, funding, or policy concern.

Days 31-60: Strengthen the Ministry

The second month is about making the ministry more dependable. The first-month surprises should now become clearer procedures, stronger volunteer support, better communication, and more realistic expectations.

Primary Goal

To strengthen the parts of the ministry that participants and volunteers depend upon each time the ministry operates.

- ☐ Update volunteer roles or schedules based on what the first month revealed.
- ☐ Provide targeted refresher training on the questions volunteers are actually facing.
- ☐ Confirm that no one volunteer has become the only person who knows a critical process, password, contact, or participant situation.
- ☐ Review participant communication: reminders, cancellations, phone/text boundaries, response times, and who may contact participants.
- ☐ Review referrals and confirm that agencies, phone numbers, eligibility requirements, and service hours are still useful.
- ☐ Identify recurring requests that fall outside ministry scope and prepare a consistent response.
- ☐ Review accessibility and participation barriers and make reasonable improvements within the ministry capacity.
- ☐ Review privacy practices and limit access to participant information to people who genuinely need it.
- ☐ Review donations, purchasing, cash handling, benevolence, reimbursement, or inventory practices if they apply.
- ☐ Check the actual volunteer workload and build a rotation or substitute plan.
- ☐ Look for ways participants can contribute, make choices, use their strengths, or take appropriate responsibility rather than always being passive recipients.
- ☐ Continue spiritual care naturally and respectfully through prayer, encouragement, relationships, Scripture, and gospel conversations appropriate to the ministry setting.

Volunteer Team Check-In

Question	Team Notes
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Question	Team Notes
What are volunteers enjoying?	_____
What is confusing or stressful?	_____
Where do volunteers need more training?	_____
Are expectations realistic?	_____
Do we have enough backup coverage?	_____
What needs leadership attention now?	_____

Day 60 Review

By Day 60, the ministry should be moving from “new every time” toward a repeatable rhythm. This is the right point to correct weak systems before they become the permanent culture of the ministry.

What parts of the ministry now feel dependable?

What still depends too heavily on one person?

What participant needs or barriers appear most often?

What are we doing that is helpful but outside our original plan?

What are we doing that consumes time but adds little value?

What volunteer training or support is still needed?

Are our privacy, safety, referral, and incident procedures being followed in practice?

Do the budget and volunteer hours appear sustainable for another six months?

Day 60 Priorities for the Final Month

Priority	Owner	Due Date

Days 61-90: Evaluate, Stabilize, and Decide

The third month should provide enough real experience to make an informed decision about the ministry. Do not let early enthusiasm pressure the team into expanding before leadership, volunteers, systems, funding, and participant outcomes are stable enough to support growth.

Primary Goal

To determine whether the ministry should continue as designed, be adjusted, strengthened through partnership, paused, or prepared for careful growth.

- ☐ Review the original ministry purpose and compare it with what the ministry is actually doing.
- ☐ Review simple outcome measures, not just attendance or activity counts.
- ☐ Ask what participants say is most useful and what creates difficulty.
- ☐ Review volunteer retention, fatigue, absences, and leadership backup.
- ☐ Review incidents, complaints, boundary questions, safety concerns, and lessons learned.
- ☐ Compare actual expenses and donations with the approved budget.
- ☐ Review whether the ministry is duplicating a stronger community service or whether a partnership would improve care.
- ☐ Identify processes that need to be written down so the ministry can function without one key person present.
- ☐ Delete or securely dispose of information the ministry does not need to retain, consistent with church policy and applicable requirements.
- ☐ Review photographs, stories, testimonials, and publicity practices to ensure permission, dignity, and privacy are protected.
- ☐ Identify the next training needs for volunteers and leaders.

- ☐ Prepare a brief Day 90 summary for church/ministry leadership.

Day 90 Ministry Review

Use this review to give leadership a clear picture of the first 90 days. Keep it factual, concise, and useful for decision-making.

Area	Strong	Needs Work	Team Notes
Ministry purpose remains clear	☐	☐	_____
Participant experience and dignity	☐	☐	_____
Volunteer readiness and support	☐	☐	_____
Leadership and backup coverage	☐	☐	_____
Safety and boundaries	☐	☐	_____
Privacy and record handling	☐	☐	_____
Referral relationships	☐	☐	_____
Facility and accessibility	☐	☐	_____
Communication	☐	☐	_____
Budget and funding	☐	☐	_____
Evidence of participant progress	☐	☐	_____
Sustainability for next 6 months	☐	☐	_____

The clearest evidence that the ministry is meeting a real need:

The most important change we should make:

The greatest risk if we continue without change:

The strongest reason to continue:

Day 90 Decision

Decision	When It Fits
Continue	The ministry is meeting a real need and can be sustained at the current size with normal improvements.
Adjust	The need is real, but the schedule, service, location, participant process, staffing, or boundaries should change.
Partner	Another organization can provide part of the needed service better; the church should collaborate, refer, host, support, or share resources.
Pause	The ministry needs time to resolve leadership, safety, policy, staffing, funding, facility, or training concerns.
Stop	The pilot showed that this ministry is not the right response for the church at this time.
Grow Carefully	The current ministry is stable and there is documented demand; expansion can occur without weakening safety, quality, leadership, or volunteer sustainability.

Growth Is a Separate Decision

Do not treat growth as the automatic reward for a successful pilot. Growth should occur only when the current ministry is stable, leadership agrees, volunteers and funding are sufficient, safety and privacy systems can handle the added volume, and the additional need is documented.

Launch-Day Quick Check

- ☐ Building open, safe, clean, accessible, and clearly marked.
- ☐ Volunteer roles and backup assignments confirmed.
- ☐ Welcome/registration area prepared; only necessary forms are used.
- ☐ Private conversation area available when needed.
- ☐ Participant materials, supplies, technology, and equipment ready.
- ☐ Emergency and incident procedures available to leaders.
- ☐ Referral information accessible to the appropriate volunteers.
- ☐ Volunteer communication plan confirmed for changes or emergencies.
- ☐ Participants know how the ministry works and what it cannot provide.
- ☐ Team prays together before opening.

Participant Experience Walk-Through

Before launch and again during the first month, walk through the ministry from the perspective of a first-time participant. Someone unfamiliar with the ministry should be able to understand the process without insider knowledge.

Stage	Questions to Check
Finding us	Is the location, entrance, date, time, parking, transportation information, and contact method clear?
Arrival	Does someone know how to welcome a person who is nervous, late, unsure, or has difficulty reading forms?
Registration	Are we asking only for information we actually need? Is privacy protected?
Participation	Can people understand instructions? Are disability, language, literacy, childcare, digital, or schedule barriers being considered?
Spiritual care	Is Christian faith visible and genuine without using help as leverage or treating people as projects?
Additional needs	Do volunteers know when to listen, when to help, when to ask a leader, and when to refer?
Departure	Does the participant know what happens next, how to return, and how the ministry will communicate?
Follow-up	Is follow-up appropriate, limited, respectful, and consistent with the ministry communication policy?

Changes we should make after the walk-through:

When a Situation Exceeds the Ministry Role

Volunteers do not need to diagnose, investigate, counsel beyond their training, or solve every crisis. The ministry should have a clear path for bringing difficult situations to the appropriate leader and connecting people with qualified help.

- ☐ Medical emergency: follow the emergency plan and contact appropriate emergency services.

- ☐ Immediate safety threat: follow the church safety plan and contact the designated leader or emergency services as appropriate.
- ☐ Suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, or danger: follow church safeguarding procedures and applicable reporting requirements.
- ☐ Mental health or substance-use crisis: use the ministry referral/escalation plan rather than attempting to provide professional treatment.
- ☐ Domestic violence or stalking concern: protect privacy, avoid actions that could increase danger, and use trained referral resources.
- ☐ Legal, immigration, tax, medical, or professional counseling question: refer to qualified professionals rather than giving advice beyond the ministry role.
- ☐ Repeated money, housing, transportation, or personal requests: follow the ministry boundary and benevolence policy consistently.

First 90 Days Summary for Leadership

Summary Item	Notes
People served / participation pattern	
Most common needs or barriers	
Participant progress or encouraging outcomes	
Volunteer strengths and concerns	
Safety / boundary / incident lessons	
Referral and partnership needs	
Actual expenses and funding outlook	
Recommended Day 90 decision	

What leadership needs to know before approving the next 90 days:

Next 90 Days: Three Priorities

Do not leave the Day 90 review with a long wish list. Choose three priorities that protect quality, strengthen sustainability, or improve participant outcomes.

Priority	Why It Matters	Owner	Target Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Closing Encouragement

A faithful first 90 days may look modest from the outside. The ministry may still be small. Some procedures may still need refinement. The team may have learned that an original idea needs to change. None of that means the beginning has failed. A wise launch creates room to learn before growth makes change more difficult.

Keep the ministry centered on people rather than activity. Protect dignity. Keep promises realistic. Support volunteers. Use partnerships. Refer wisely. Evaluate honestly. Most of all, continue to pray for the people God allows the ministry to serve and for the wisdom to know the next faithful step. After 90 days, the goal is not the largest ministry possible, but a ministry that serves a real need, treats people with dignity, supports its volunteers, uses resources responsibly, and is prepared to continue faithfully.

Final Prayer

Lord, thank You for every person You have allowed us to meet and every lesson You have taught us during these first months. Give us wisdom to keep what is helpful, courage to change what is not, humility to ask for help, and patience to grow only when the ministry is ready. Protect the people we serve and the people who serve beside us. Keep our motives centered on Christ, our relationships marked by dignity and truth, and our decisions guided by prayer, wise counsel, and faithful stewardship. Amen.

Remember

The first 90 days are a season for learning, not proving. A ministry that listens, corrects mistakes, protects people, and grows at a sustainable pace is building a stronger foundation for the years ahead.