

Compassion Ministry Planning Worksheet

A practical tool to help you move from a ministry burden to a clear, prayerful plan

Purpose of This Worksheet

This worksheet is for churches, small groups, nonprofit leaders, volunteers, and individuals who feel called to begin or strengthen a compassion ministry. It can be used for ministries serving men, women, children, families, senior adults, people experiencing poverty, people in recovery, people returning from incarceration, people facing crisis, or any group in need of practical help and Christ-centered care.

Use this worksheet slowly and prayerfully. You do not have to answer every question perfectly before you begin. The goal is to clarify your first faithful step, not to build a perfect ministry overnight.

Basic Ministry Information

Proposed ministry name

What name best describes the heart and purpose of this ministry?

Church, organization, or sponsor

Who will provide spiritual, practical, or organizational covering?

Primary contact person and contact information

Who will lead the planning process and communicate with others?

1. Who Are You Called to Serve?

Be as specific as possible. A clear ministry focus helps you serve with wisdom, recruit the right volunteers, and avoid becoming overwhelmed.

Primary group

Examples: men in recovery, women rebuilding their lives, families in crisis, single parents, senior adults, people who are homeless, people returning after incarceration, teens, refugees, or neighbors in food insecurity.

Why this group?

What burden, experience, community need, or opportunity has brought this group to your attention?

Current challenges

What barriers might this group face? Consider transportation, childcare, food, housing, employment, education, addiction, trauma, isolation, language, legal issues, or lack of trust.

Strengths to notice

What strengths, courage, resilience, skills, faith, or leadership potential may already be present in the people you hope to serve?

2. What Need Will You Address First?

Many communities have more needs than one ministry can meet. Choose one clear starting point. You can expand later after relationships, volunteers, and systems are stronger.

- ☐ Food, clothing, hygiene, or essential supplies
- ☐ Mentoring, encouragement, discipleship, or spiritual support
- ☐ Job readiness, education, GED/HiSET support, ESL, or digital literacy
- ☐ Recovery support or reentry support
- ☐ Parenting, life skills, budgeting, or home management
- ☐ Transportation, referrals, navigation of community resources, or crisis support
- ☐ Senior adult care, caregiver support, grief support, or loneliness ministry
- ☐ Other: _____

First need to address

Write the one need you believe your ministry should address first.

Why this need now?

Why is this the right starting place for your church, team, or community?

3. Ministry Purpose and Mission

Biblical foundation

What Scripture, biblical principle, or ministry conviction supports this work?

3. Ministry Purpose and Mission - Continued

Purpose statement

Complete this sentence: This ministry exists to...

Mission statement

Write one clear sentence that describes who you serve, how you serve, and why you serve.

Desired outcome

What do you hope participants will experience, learn, receive, or become through this ministry?

Mission Statement Formula

We exist to serve [people/group] by providing [type of help] so that [desired outcome] through the love and compassion of Christ.

Example: We exist to serve adults rebuilding their lives by providing encouragement, practical life skills, mentoring, and spiritual support so they can take healthy next steps with dignity and hope.

4. What Will the Ministry Do First?

Start with one clear ministry activity. A small, faithful beginning is often healthier than a large launch with unclear systems.

First activity

Examples: monthly meal and encouragement night, weekly class, mentoring group, resource closet, food distribution, hope bag outreach, recovery support gathering, job readiness workshop, or prayer and referral ministry.

Location

Where will this take place? Church room, community center, nonprofit space, jail, recovery center, school, apartment complex, online, or another setting?

Schedule

How often will you meet or serve? Weekly, monthly, quarterly, one-time pilot event, or seasonal?

Length of gathering

How long will each session or service opportunity last?

5. People and Roles Needed

Prayer team

Who will pray regularly for the ministry, volunteers, participants, and leadership?

5. People and Roles Needed - Continued

Ministry leader

Who will oversee planning, communication, and decision-making?

Volunteer roles

What helpers are needed? Teachers, mentors, greeters, drivers, childcare helpers, food team, resource team, prayer team, admin support, security, or clean-up team?

Professional partners

Who might need to be involved for safety and wisdom? Counselors, social workers, recovery leaders, law enforcement, educators, medical providers, or community agencies?

Training needed

What training should volunteers receive before serving? Boundaries, confidentiality, safety, trauma awareness, poverty awareness, mentoring, or crisis response?

6. Supplies, Budget, and Partners

A simple budget helps you begin wisely. List only what is needed for the first step, not everything you might need someday.

Supplies needed

List materials, food, curriculum, Bibles, hygiene items, chairs, tables, childcare supplies, transportation needs, printing, or technology.

Estimated start-up cost

What will it cost to begin the first ministry activity?

Ongoing cost

What expenses may repeat monthly or each time you gather?

Possible donors

Who might provide supplies, meals, gift cards, printing, space, or financial support?

Community partners

List churches, nonprofits, agencies, businesses, schools, recovery centers, or civic groups that may help.

7. Boundaries, Safety, and Referral Plan

Healthy boundaries protect the people you serve, the volunteers, and the ministry. Compassion should be generous, but it must also be wise, safe, and sustainable.

- ☐ We will have clear volunteer expectations before launch.
- ☐ We will protect confidentiality and explain its limits.
- ☐ We will have a plan for emergencies or crisis situations.
- ☐ We will know when to refer someone to professional help.
- ☐ We will avoid making promises the ministry cannot keep.
- ☐ We will set clear boundaries around money, transportation, housing, personal phone contact, social media, and after-hours needs.

Safety concerns

What situations could create risk for participants, volunteers, children, or the ministry?

Referral partners

Where will you refer needs your ministry cannot safely meet?

Non-negotiables

What boundaries must be in place before the ministry begins?

8. Communication and Invitation

Think carefully about how people will hear about the ministry. The way you invite people should communicate dignity, welcome, and hope.

Who needs to know?

Pastors, church members, local agencies, schools, recovery centers, jails, nonprofits, shelters, community leaders, or neighbors.

How will you invite?

Personal invitation, flyers, church announcements, social media, referral partners, website, community events, or word of mouth.

Message of welcome

Write one sentence that explains the ministry in a way that feels warm, clear, and dignifying.

9. First 30-Day Action Plan

Write small, clear next steps. Each action should have a person responsible and a date for follow-up.

Action Step	Person Responsible	By When	Done
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐

10. How Will You Know It Is Helping?

Evaluation does not have to be complicated. Begin by noticing participation, relationships, trust, spiritual encouragement, practical progress, volunteer health, and community partnerships.

Signs of progress

What simple signs will show that people are being helped?

Feedback method

How will you listen to participants, volunteers, and partners?

Review date

When will the team meet to pray, review, adjust, and decide next steps?

Final Prayer Prompt

Lord, give us compassion that is tender, wisdom that is steady, and courage to take the next faithful step. Help us see people as You see them, serve with humility, protect what needs to be protected, and offer hope in a way that honors You. Amen.