



Introduction to Dismas Fellowship - Part 2

Our Objective

By the end of Session 2 ... we will

- ➔ Explore a model of service and the Shared Values of Dismas Fellowship .
-
- ➔ Explore safe and open friendships within Dismas Fellowship

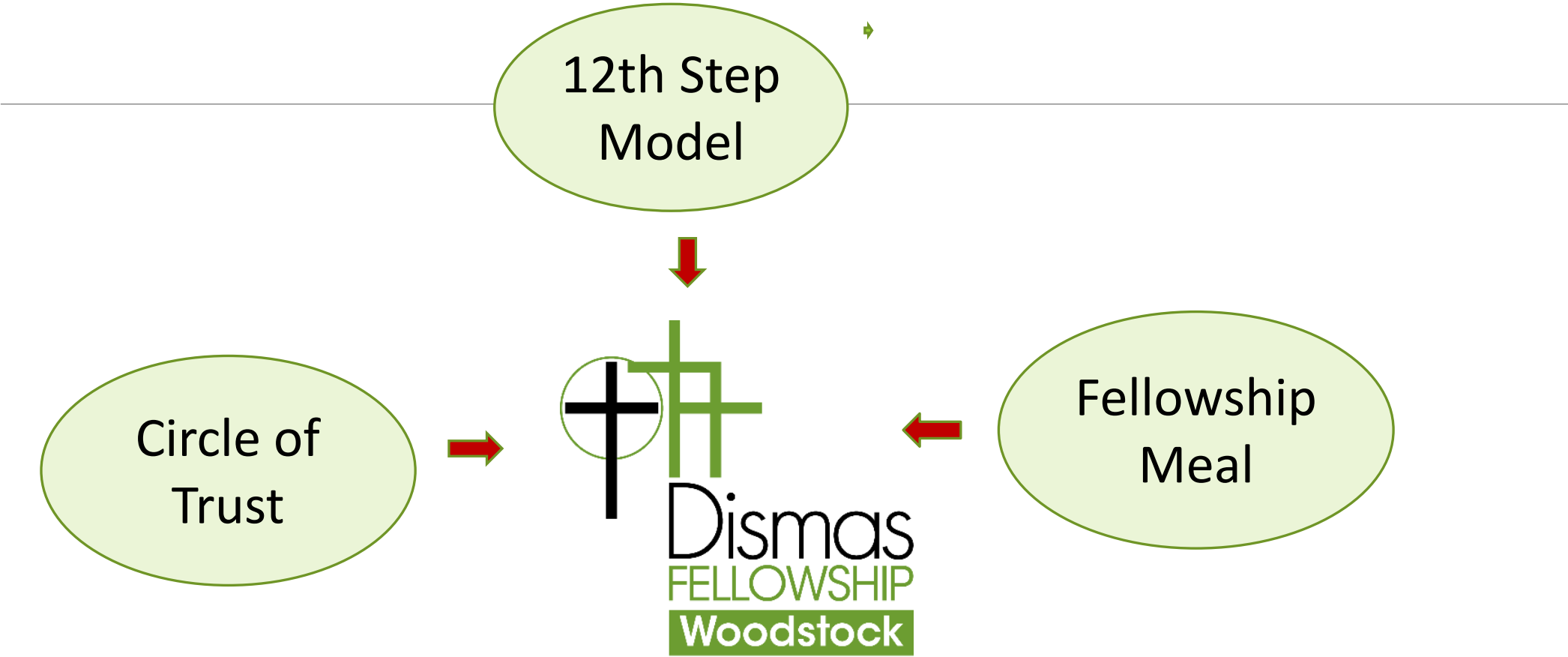
The question from last time:

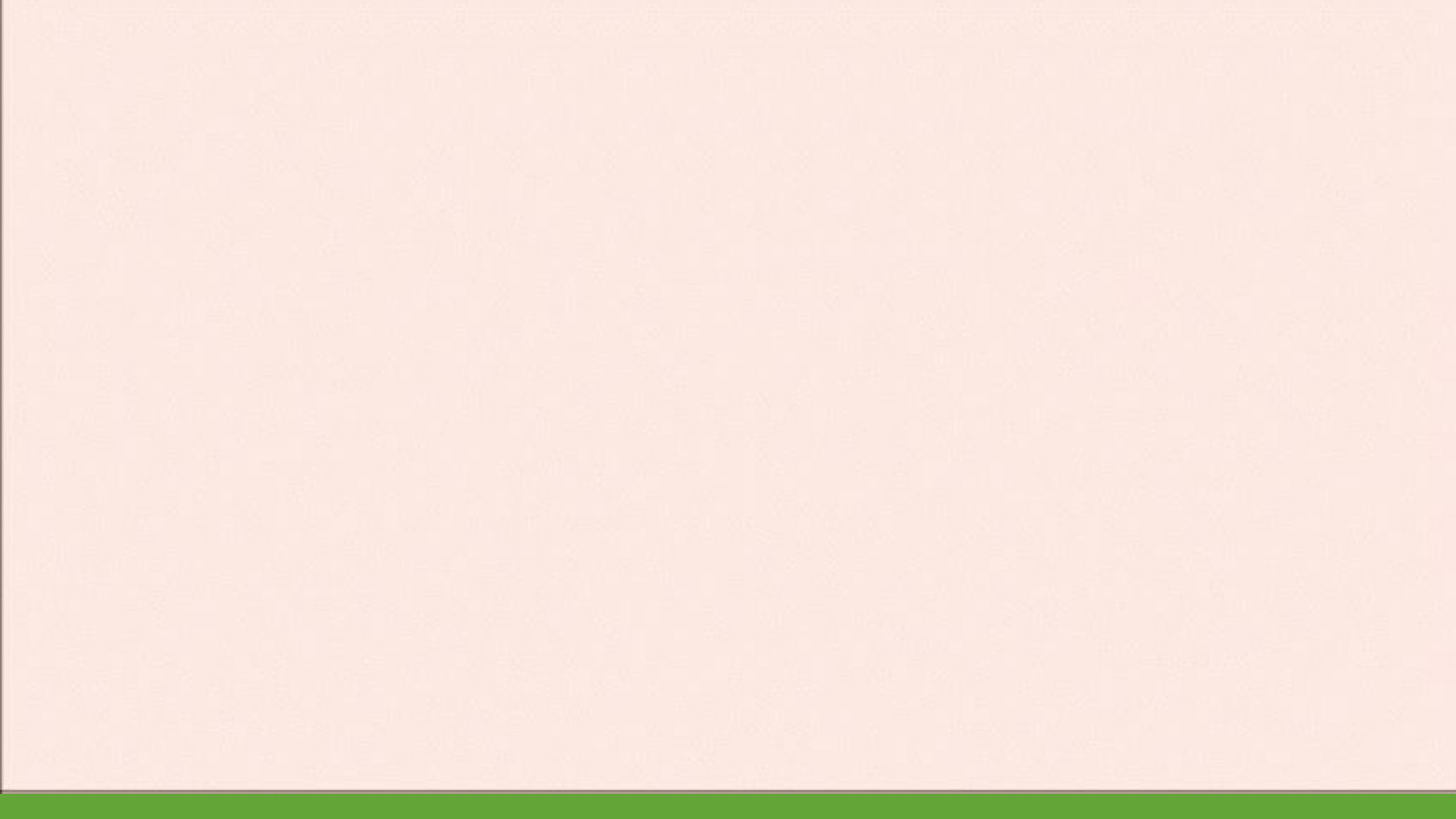
If you were to shape a ministry for former prisoners based on the story of Dismas, what would be the guiding values or principles of your ministry?

Two or three responses?



Influences





Breakout (5 minutes):

Share your reactions to the video about the Dismas Fellowship and Gordie's story?

- **Any questions emerge for you?**

What Happens at a Dismas Fellowship?

3:00 Set up tables... make coffee... name tags

4:30 Members arriving – time for fellowship

5:30 Sharing our meal together

6:30 Begin the Circle

- welcome and singing
- introductions, announcements, appreciations
 - Dismas story;
 - Dismas Values;
 - Dismas Prayer



after the meal the circle

7:00 PM The Circle

Short Reflection (10 minutes):

- a personal story, a theme, and a reflection question.

small groups – share experience, strength and hope

- avoid preaching, “cross talk” religious language.

8:00 PM

End in a Circle, sharing prayer requests and singing *“Jesus, Remember Me”*



Our Shared Values



Members of Dismas
drafted “Shared Values”
and the Dismas Prayer
1994

Our Shared Values

1) We welcome and celebrate one another, regardless of religious or criminal convictions, knowing that we are all 'offenders'.



Our Shared Values

2) We encourage everyone to give of themselves in some way: cooking meals, setting and cleaning up, sharing our truth or reaching out to others.



Our Shared Values

3) We are committed to paying our way by sharing the costs of food and accommodation.



Our Shared Values

4) In the Circle everyone is given the opportunity to speak or to pass.



Our Shared Values

5) We will treat each other's story with confidentiality and love. Each story is sacred.



Our Shared Values

6) We are committed to being a safe and responsible fellowship with accountability to the church where our meetings are held.



Our Shared Values

7) We are committed to ministering to each other as if they were Christ.



Dismas Prayer

Dear God,

In your mercy remember me

and forgive me for the wrongs I've done

Set me free of my deep fears and resentments.

Melt the hard places of my heart, and

Allow me the grace to

Surrender this day to your loving care. Amen

.... use every excuse to celebrate!



People connect at Dismas



Dr. Henry Cloud on boundaries

“when people are abused while growing up, they reverse the function of boundaries and keep the bad in and the good out.”

“Good boundaries prevent resentment.”

Henry Cloud, [Boundaries: When To Say Yes, How to Say No](#)

Friendships in our fellowship ... some guidelines

Dismas is first and foremost a **“fellowship”**.

we do not offer a program of sponsorship, or formal counselling or "mentoring".



Friendships are open and transparent

If you want to meet with a member outside the fellowship time, please consult with a trusted leader before doing so.

especially before exchanging telephone numbers or email addresses!



Where do we meet ... can he / she come to my home?

At first – meet in a coffee shop or public place.

Open your home only when comfortable with doing so and **after consulting with trusted leaders.**

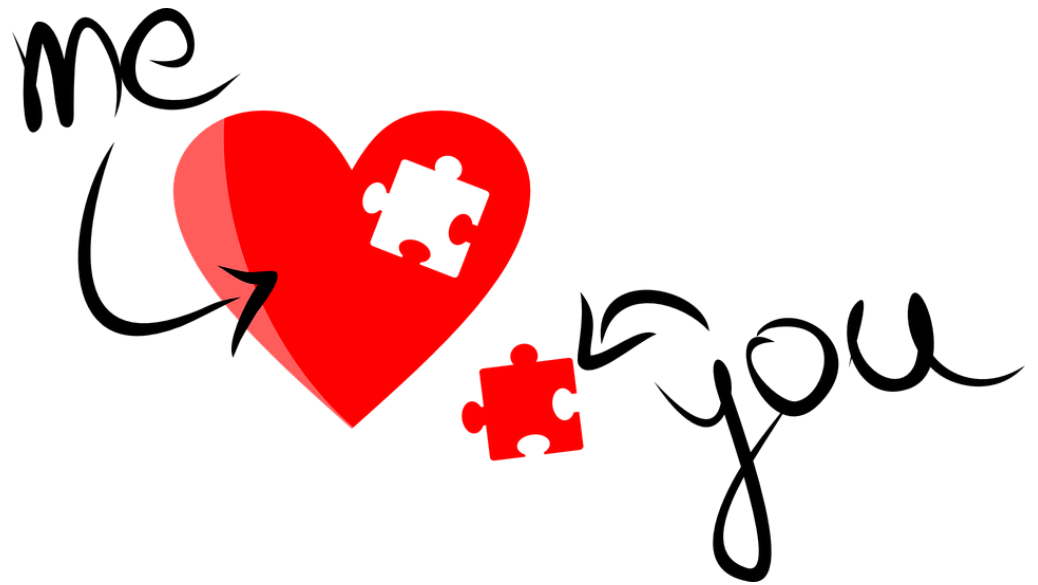
Know any conditions especially involving children or other vulnerable persons.
Check with halfway house staff before taking your friend out...especially to your home.



... and if we become more than “friends”?

...it could be wonderful
or it could be disastrous.

Dismas is not a dating
service – talk to one of
the leaders so it’s in the
open...



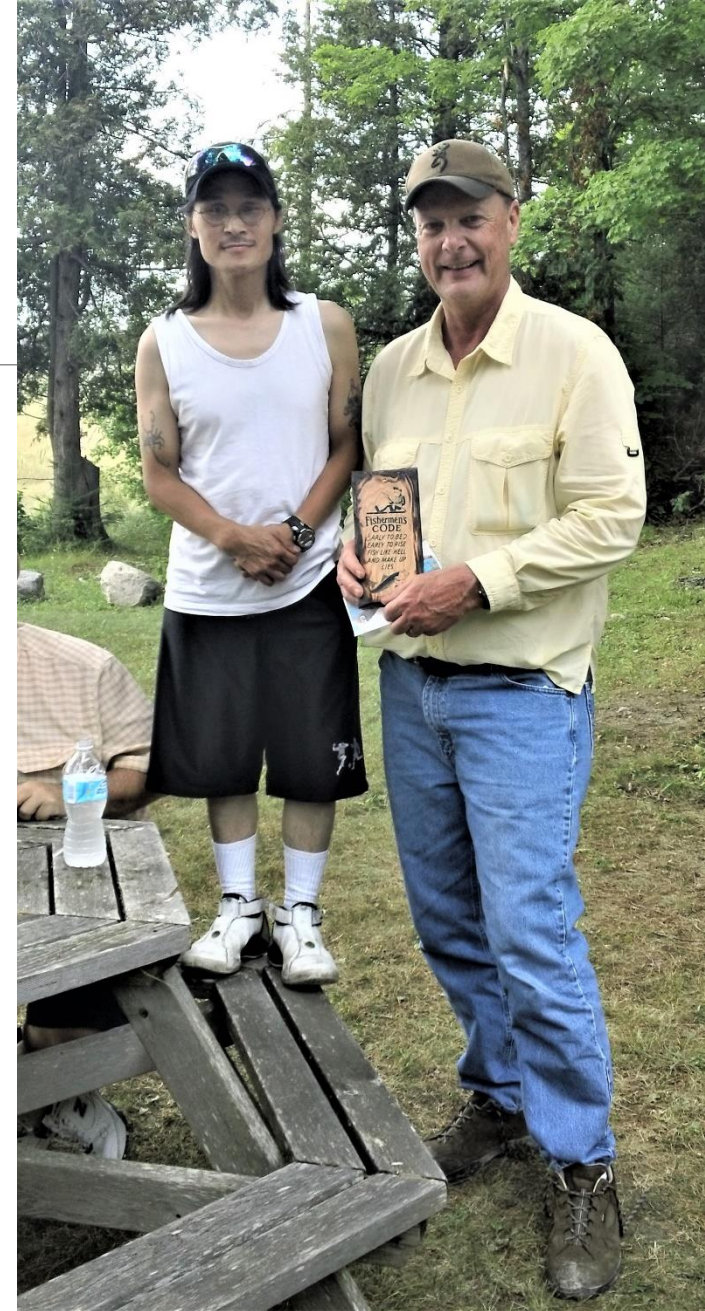
Mutual Respect

... or if you receive unwanted advances or any harassing behaviour, speak to Dismas leadership where it will be dealt with directly and restoratively.



As your relationship develops

- Show up faithfully
- Listen without judgment or advice
- Allow him / her to tell you about criminal past
- Be positive...Encourage...
- Keep showing up!



Preserving Friendships

Avoid becoming

- a landlord
- or employer
- or banker

It will almost always harm
your friendship



What if I see my friend headed for trouble again?

Discuss your concerns with trusted leadership. You may want to confront your friend honestly about what you see happening.



What about confidentiality?

Guard the confidentiality of your conversations with your friend.

Do not reveal his or her name or details of the offences to others.



Duty to Report

But!... If you receive information that could result in self-harm or harm to others, **you will need to discuss this information with trusted leadership immediately.**

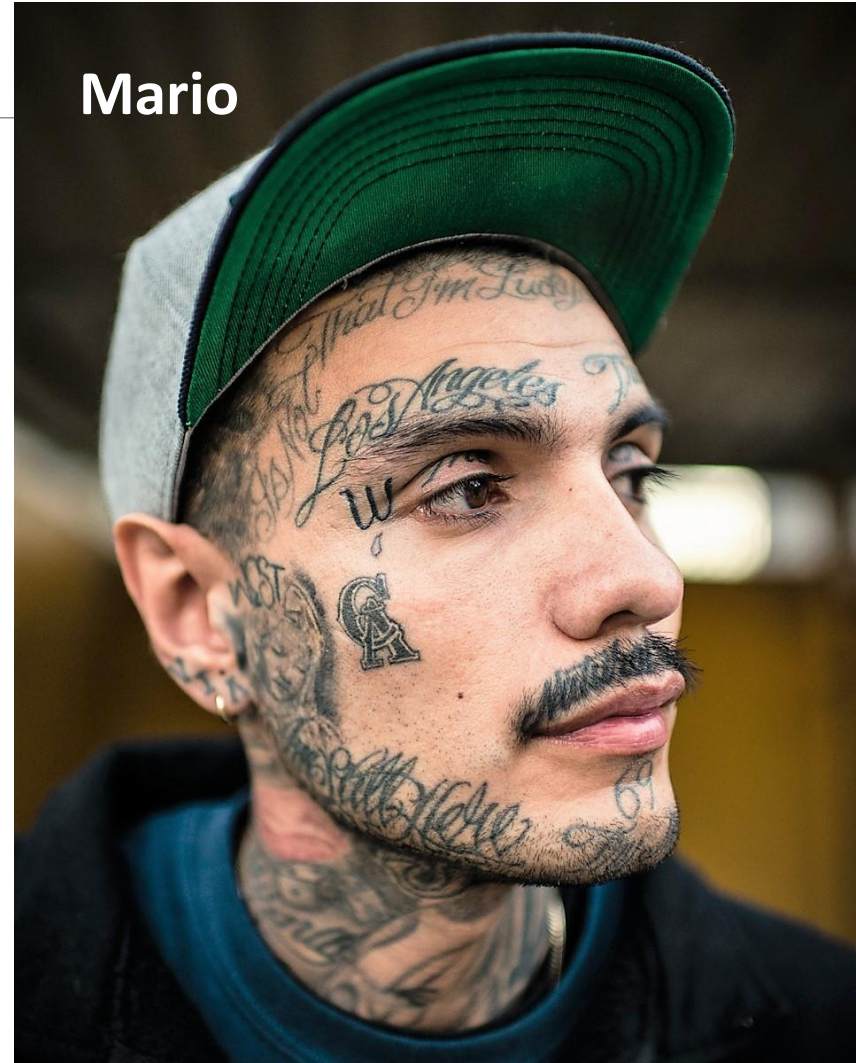
Do not allow another's crisis to become your crisis. If an individual says, "*Don't tell anyone about this.*" then it is likely that you are being manipulated.

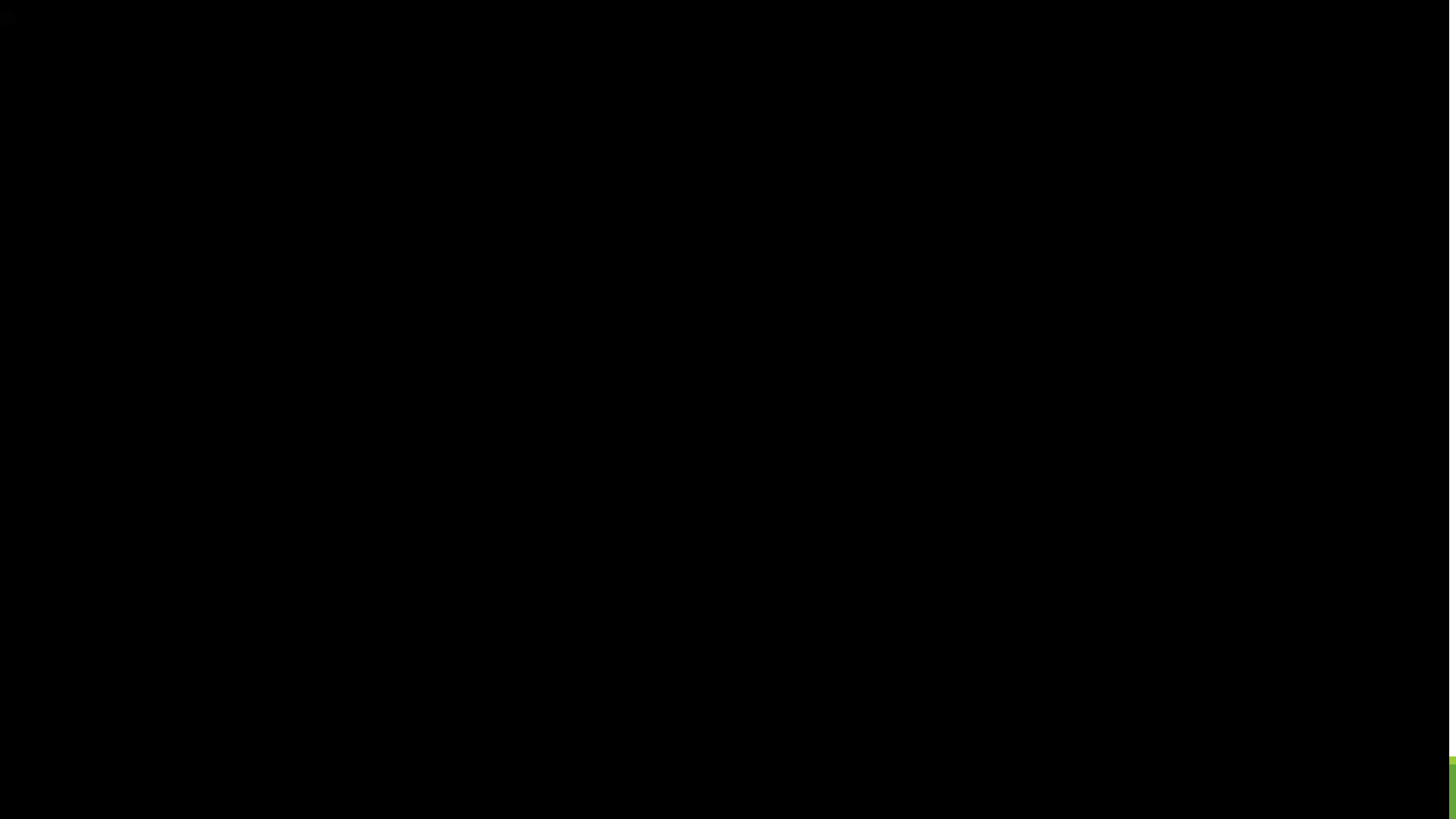


Breakout (5 minutes):

In light of these guidelines for friendships within Dismas, what situations come to mind where someone should ask for help?

..... in relationships we are transformed





“We imagine
with God a circle
of compassion
and we imagine
that nobody is
standing outside
that circle”

Fr. Greg Boyle
Homeboy Industries

