



The Faith & Character Based Program is a holistic program, secular in nature, designed to equip its participants to explore and choose alternatives to criminal thinking and behavior through emphasis on spiritual, moral, and character development, and life skills training. The goal is to meet the needs of the offender population, their families, and their communities, enhance existing programs, and involve the community in the reentry efforts.

MISSION

To reduce recidivism and improve institutional behavior by allowing the offender to work on mind, body and spirit. With this and community partnerships, the offender will be prepared for a successful transition from custody to community.

VISION

To establish a network of government agencies, community and faith based organizations, businesses and citizens committed to successful offender transition from custody into the community. To create a sustainable transition and reentry process that ensures coordinated services and supervision for offenders released from prison.



Historical Milestones

- Began in 2004 with the support of the administration of President Bush who proposed a four-year \$300 million initiative to reduce recidivism by harnessing resources and experience of Faith based community organizations.
- Today, the program continues to be supported by the administration of President Barack Obama, who announced plans to establish a Council for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.
- On June 1, 2004, GDC implemented the Faith and Character based dormitory program at five facilities
 - 2004: Macon, Calhoun, Hays, Valdosta, and Pulaski State Prisons (SP)
- In 2011, GDC commissioned Walker SP as Georgia's first Faith and Character based prison
- The Department currently has a total of 20 Faith and Character Based programs

NATIONAL RECOGNIZED MODEL

- A National Institute of Corrections study in 2005 found that more than a third of state prison systems (41%) were operating or planning faith based housing unit
- GDC has been one of the leading agencies in advising, promoting and supporting other states in their Faith and Character based programming

Program Components

- Consists of eight major components
 - Faith enrichment
 - Character building
 - Career planning and Workforce development
 - Academic education
 - Leisure skills
 - Substance abuse
 - Cognitive Behavioral programming
 - Community Service and Family relationships
- Components are divided in to four phases

PHASE I - FOUNDATIONAL

- Offenders will be assessed to determine criminogenic risk and need in the eight component areas

PHASE II - DISCOVERY

- Offenders will explore their strengths and weaknesses
- Programming, identified by the Next Generation Assessment, will begin
- They will also be introduced to cultural and religious diversity programming to explore their personal spiritual growth

PHASE III - TRANSFORMATION

- Offender should begin to exhibit signs of change in many aspects of their lives
- Participation in all programs from the Discovery phase will continue
- The offender will participate in career and job based programming

PHASE IV - TRANSITION

- Offenders learn to apply lessons learned from program to their community either on the outside or inside the facility

GRADUATION

- All offenders participate in a formal graduation ceremony
- Graduates returned to general population within facility and continue community development and discussion of future goals and projects
- Some offenders from each graduating class volunteer as mentors to assist in a variety of tasks in the following areas:
 - Faith and Character based dorms
 - Chaplaincy
 - Education
 - Character development

Faith and Character Based Dormitory

- A specially designated living unit within a facility that provides a pro-social, programmatic environment for change to those offenders who voluntarily requests to participate in the program through the enhancement of mind, body and spirit
- Housing unit will foster moral and character development and cultivate pluralistic spiritual enrichment

PROGRAM

- A one-year program, divided in to 4, 3-month phases
- Guided by program coordinator (counselor), chaplain, prison staff and volunteers from community
- Currently, there are 19 programs operating in GDC facilities

Walker State Prison Faith and Character Based Facility

MISSION

- Specifically designed prison that provides a pro-social, programmatic environment for change to those offenders who voluntarily request to participate through the enhancement of mind, body and spirit
- Fosters moral and character development and cultivates spiritual enrichment

VISION

- To be a model Faith and Character based prison that demonstrates a holistic program, secular in nature, designed to equip its participants to explore and choose alternatives to criminal thinking and behavior through emphasis on spiritual, moral and character development

Participants

- Experience personal growth and development
- Change through the promotion of personal responsibility, integrity and accountability
- Explore and choose alternatives to criminal thinking and behavior through emphasis on spiritual, moral and character development and life skills training

Program

- A two-year curriculum
- All core programming include basic Counselor and Group Facilitation of the following components:
 - Motivation for Change
 - Moral Reconciliation Therapy
 - Thinking for a Change
 - Behavior stabilization
 - Effective communication
 - Faith and Character based concept

Application Process

- Applications are made available in areas designated by the facility to include dorm bulletin boards, counseling, chaplaincy and officer workstations
 - Interested offenders, across the state, must complete an application with a Counselor and/or Chaplain
 - Applications will be submitted for review of eligibility to the Facility Classification Committee
 - Classification Committee will process a *Request Reassignment* to Walker Faith and Character Based Prison of approved applicants with Offender Administration via SCRIBE
 - Applicants receive final approval at Walker SP

