

New jail programs aim to help inmates succeed

By Kelli Stokes
Georgetown News-Graphic

New Scott County Detention Center programs are aiming to help inmates get on track before release.

A dozen inmates were baptized Sept. 17 at the jail sally port in coordination with jail ministries.

"We offered the opportunity to anyone who was interested," said Jailer Derran Broyles.

The 12 inmates, six men and six women, were allowed to invite a few visitors to the ceremony to witness their baptisms.

Rev. Tim Turner, family pastor at Victory Life Church, presided over the baptism service. Two women and two men from the church who are involved in jail ministry baptized the inmates. The group sang a few songs and Turner preached a small sermon.

"At the end, we closed with Amazing Grace," said Turner.

This is the first known inmate baptism in about 12 years, and the largest one that anyone employed at the jail could recall, Broyles said.

"I think this is definitely something new for us and... I think, a great opportunity for inmates, Broyles said.

Victory Life Church is one of eight or nine churches that are involved in jail ministry at Scott County Detention Center, Turner said.

He cited John 3:16 from the Bible, which says God gave his son to save whomever believed in him.

This is why the churches preach to the inmates — because anyone can be saved, he said.

The hope is that when the inmates are released, they'll become a part of the church community, Turner said.

"We want to love them right where they're at," he said.

Broyles said it's another way of trying to prevent recidivism.

"I think this is a good step in the right direction of positively affecting their hearts," he said.

But jail staff attempt to accommodate religious practices of other faiths as well, Broyles said.

Muslim inmates have been allowed to participate in Ramadan practices, which includes fasting and prayer, the jailer said.

More baptism opportunities for inmates are expected to come as the desire for them arises, Broyles said.

Another attempt at recidivism prevention is a new fathering class offered at the jail. The new class, called Inside Out Dad, started in early September.

Inside Out Dad is a nationwide

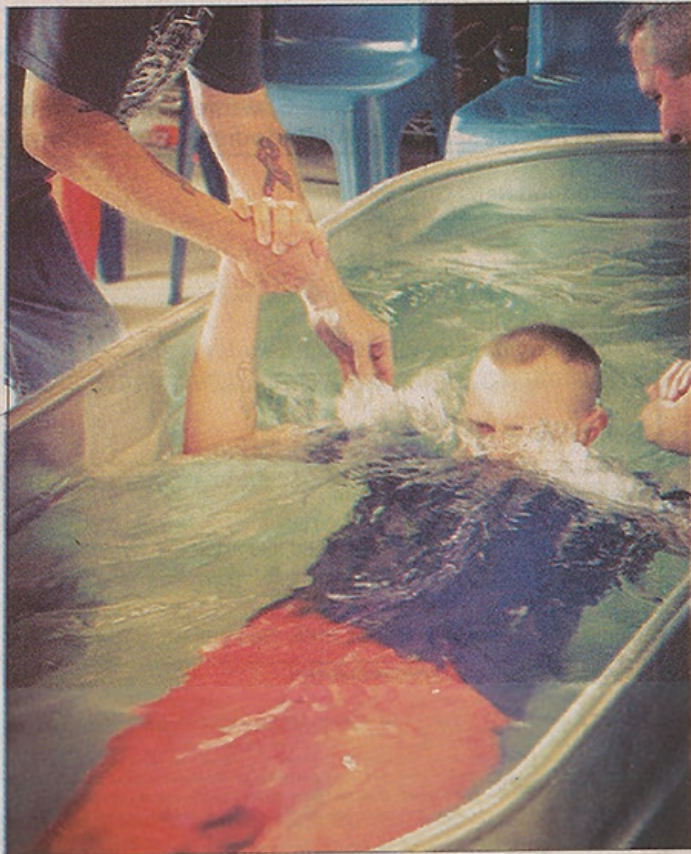


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A Scott County Detention Center inmate is baptized by Victory Life Church members.

program created by National Fatherhood Initiative. It's taught in many jails across the U.S., but this is the first year it's been offered in Scott County.

"The goal is obviously to make them better fathers and grandfathers," Broyles said.

The program is a 12-week course taught once per week by certified instructors who cover topics such as healthy relationships and communication skills.

Fifteen men are in the first class, which is the maximum. Even more wanted to attend, said Broyles.

"All of them seem eager to learn more about the curriculum," said David Stone, an Inside Out Dad instructor.

One section of the course, called Ages and Stages, goes through stages of development for children to help teach the men how to care for their children at different ages.

"I think that it really connects them with responsibilities of being a father," Stone said.

Many of the inmates in the program didn't have people in their lives who were good parenting role models, Stone said, so this class teaches them the skills they missed before.

"They start to be better fathers.

They want to spend time with their kids," he said.

In a National Fatherhood Initiative study, 318 inmates who graduated from Inside Out Dad were followed after release from jail. Only 16 percent of those returned to criminal behavior, Stone said. Overall, the rate for recidivism in the U.S. after release is about 60 percent, he added.

The class will end after 12 weeks, but a new one should begin shortly afterwards with a new group of men.

"All that is in the hope that they can break the cycle of recidivism," Broyles said.

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