

Which Bible translation is best for prisoners? That's a question often asked by volunteers who want to share God's Word.

First, it's helpful to realize that in-prison Bible study groups are different from most Bible study groups at your church. While it's true that many prisoners can read well and are knowledgeable about the Bible, some in your group may struggle with reading and comprehension skills.

Reading and Comprehension

To better serve prisoners and ex-prisoners, volunteers should expect that many have very low reading skills and may never have owned a Bible. Here are some statistics:

1. Over half of the adults incarcerated in U.S. federal and state prisons cannot read or write and have less than an eighth-grade education.
2. Incarcerated adults in the U.S. have among the lowest academic attainment and literacy rates, and the highest disability rates.
3. Only 41% of all Federal and state prisoners have a high school diploma or GED.

Based on these statistics, volunteers need to be sensitive when asking someone to read Bible verses aloud. Those with lower reading skills often struggle and feel embarrassed. If you know a prisoner reads at a lower reading level, consider using one of these Bible translations:

- New International Readers Version or NIRV – grades 3 or 4
- Easy to Read Version or ERV – grade 4
- New Century Version or NCV – grade 5.6
- Contemporary English Version or CEV – grade 5.4

If a volunteer wants to provide a Bible for a prisoner, we do not recommend mailing used Bibles or even a new one directly to a prisoner since it will usually be denied. Instead, the best way is to purchase a Bible online from a trusted vendor and have it shipped directly to the prisoner.

Prison Fellowship® has teamed with Biblica to produce *Free on the Inside* Bibles for prison ministry. Single copies are reasonably priced and discounts are offered for purchasing a full case.

Contact: Biblica, 1820 Jet Stream Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80921. For pricing, call 800-524-1588 or go to www.biblica.com.