

Post Epiphany Quick Facts Guide:

Epiphany is a 3-day retreat for juvenile offenders held within the prison for the purpose of showing them God's love. At the Garza County facility in Post, we minister mostly to young men between the ages of 13-18. About 25-30 young men have the opportunity to attend, and the Epiphany Team consists of about 30 people as well. Some people serve on the Outside Team preparing meals to bring to the prison and serve. The majority of the team serves on the inside. There are two retreats a year—typically in March and October. The following information is merely a quick glance at what is involved in serving on an Epiphany at the Garza County facility, including costs and time commitments, and will hopefully help you prayerfully decide if you would be willing and able to serve:

Time Involvement:

- **Team Meetings:** Prior to an Epiphany Retreat there are 3 Team Meetings. These are on Saturday mornings in either Post or Tahoka and, depending on which meeting, they last either from 8:30-1:00 or 8:30-3:00. It is possible to miss one team meeting and still serve; however, the meetings really are crucial to the ministry and the bonding of the team. Additionally, different material is covered at each meeting and you will miss out on important information.
- **Schedule:** (Thursday afternoon—Sunday afternoon) We set up in the prison on Thursday afternoon and have a fourth Team Meeting and Team Commissioning Service that evening. The retreat begins on Friday and we conclude on Sunday. We usually finish cleaning and packing up supplies around 4:30 pm.
- **Agape:** Each team member is asked to bring at least 35 pieces each of 2 different kinds of “agape”—which is simply a gift of love. Because we are in prison, the agape has to be paper gifts—no glue, staples, stickers, lamination, etc. You can use pre-cut shapes (like die-cuts from a teacher's supply store) and write a scripture or something encouraging on it, or you could print off something from a computer—preferably on colored paper or using colored ink. Some of the prisoners will use these items to “decorate” their cells. Additional agape is always needed, but each Team Member needs to bring at least 2 kinds of agape (70 pieces total).
- **Hand-written Letters or Notecards:** Each team member is asked to **PRE-Write** 25-30 letters and bring them with you to the Retreat. We pre-write them, leaving the “Dear _____” space blank, so that it can be written in once we meet the boys and have correct spellings of their names. These letters are given to them on Sunday and it's important that each letter be unique—they compare them. :) The letters don't have to be long—basically, just letting them know that you care about them and feel God's love for them, etc.... For example, you might use a scripture and then write out a prayer for them. Ask God to guide you in what to write. Also—many of the young men have limited reading skills, so it's necessary to **write clearly in PRINTED letters—not cursive**. Many of the boys cannot read cursive. Yes, this is very time consuming—but it is one of the most impactful things we do for the boys. Many of them never receive a letter from home and you'd be surprised how much these letters will mean to the boys. Bring your letters and the same pen you used to write them so that you can fill in their names on Saturday evening.
- **Monthly EPIPHANY REUNION:** On the **third Saturday of every month**, as many Team Members as can gather at the prison at 12:45 to enter and have a “reunion” with the boys who attended the Epiphany

Retreat. We bring snack items and meet with the boys for about 2 hours. We have a Bible Study with them and pray with them—it's the only "face-time" we get for continued discipleship. Obviously, all of our lives are busy and it's impossible to attend every month, but each Team Member is asked to commit to at least 4 reunions—the most important weekend being the first one following the Epiphany Retreat Weekend. The boys are looking to see if we really do care and if we will keep our word and come back.

- **Walk To Emmaus:** The Epiphany retreat is similar in purpose and nature to a Walk To Emmaus Retreat Weekend, so attending a "walk" is a requirement for serving on an Epiphany. If you have not been on a "Walk" and would like to, please let the person know who gave you this flier and ask for their assistance in finding a sponsor.

Financial Involvement:

- **Motel:** Unless you live near Post, you will want to secure lodging in town for Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings due to the very early morning and late evening schedule we keep. The majority of the team stays at the Best Western Inn at Post. They give us a discounted rate, but the cost can be as much as \$90/night. Some people will share rooms to significantly cut down on the cost and we can connect you with them at Team Meetings if that is your desire.
- **Birthday Gifts:** Each Team Member personally donates \$10-\$12 towards the birthday gifts we give to the boys. All the items have to be identical, so it is easier for one person to purchase the items (toothpaste, deodorant, journal, etc.). Monies are turned in at Team Meetings or on Thursday evening.
- **2-liter Soft Drinks:** Each Team Member is asked to bring 4 or more 2-Liters of a brand name soft drink. We purchase brand names sodas to make a statement to the boys that they are worth the best we can get. It is announced at Team Meetings how many soft drinks each team member needs to provide.

Asking for Community Involvement:

- **Prayer Chain:** Each Team Member is asked to collect signatures on a form we provide (First Names and Town only) of people who commit to pray during a specific time slot over the 3 days. These names are placed on strips of colorful paper used to make a massive paper chain that will demonstrate to the boys how many people outside the prison care about them and are praying for them.
- **Meal Tickets:** Each Team Member asks for \$5 (or more) donations to help fund the weekend. The funds raised are used to pay for the food we serve during the weekend as well as the other related costs (supplies, snacks, gifts, etc.) Each retreat costs about \$125 / per resident. The donations are recorded on a form we provide and the money is turned in on Thursday evening. Every person that donates is sent a thank you card, so names and addresses are needed on the form...however, only first names and towns will be written on the "Meal Tickets" that will be scattered over each table at meal time to show the boys that there are people on the outside who cared enough about them to pay for the meal they are eating.

There are a lot more details involved, but hopefully this information helps you make an informed decision before you commit. It does "cost" us a lot in time, money, and lack of sleep :), but it is so very worth it to have a chance at planting seeds of God's love and His plan for redemption and restoration in their lives. We hope you will prayerfully consider joining us on our next retreat.

— The Post Epiphany Team

If you are interested in serving, please have the person who gave you this flyer put you in contact with the current Lay Director.