

Bishop's Letter - Example

ON CHURCH STATIONERY

DATE

Brother / Sister _____:

- Letter of Counsel / Informal Probation / Probation / Formal Probation -

I recognize the strength it has taken you to confide in me the struggles you have been wrestling with. You have made serious mistakes in your life and I am grateful you have decided now is the time to remedy your life and come back to the straight and narrow path of our Lord and Savior. I appreciate your desire to fully repent.

As discussed in our previous interview, I have prayerfully counseled with our Heavenly Father and have decided to put you on (**Informal Probation**). This will start your path through full repentance. The conditions of the (**Informal Probation**) are detailed in this letter. I encourage you to refer to these instructions often, so that you may gain the full benefit of the counsel that has been provided you at this time in your life. Please ask our Heavenly Father to guide you through this process. These sins are not easy to overcome, but with our Father's help, and our Savior's love, I know you can do it.

[I've included a number of items I've used in the past. See if any of these help in the situations you find those you are working with. If anything, they should give you food for thought and a starting point. Add or delete as necessary.]

- Read Elder Russel M. Nelson's General Conference talk on repentance.
The Atonement: General Conference, October 1996
<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1996/10/the-atonement?lang=eng>
Write your thoughts on this talk and the principals within it. Discuss these with me at our next interview.
- Read the For Strength of Youth pamphlet prior to our next meeting. Consider its teachings and the state of your current life. Are there things in your life that you need to change?
- Ask God to forgive you - in prayer, but show Him by your actions that you are sincere, that you will never do this again.
- Do things that will strengthen your testimony - Find ways to give service
- Do things differently in your life from now forward. Choose to be different, better. You can't expect to get different results if you do the same thing over and over.
- Remember: CPR – Church, Prayer and Reading your scriptures daily. I expect your active participation in all three.
- Attend Seminary daily and Mutual weekly.

- Meet with your Bishop often
Our next meeting will be on: _____
- The internet: Be Careful. You can find many bad things on the internet. Do not go searching for pornography, this will only fill your mind with visions that will scar you for years to come, and potentially ruin any future relationship you desire to have with a spouse. If you come across something that you know is bad - and you know what is good and what is not - quickly close the application. Be cautious with your phone as well. Use it as a tool for good, and not something that will push the Spirit away.
- Strive to be a good friend to those around you. The saying goes, 'If you want a best friend, be a best friend.' This will take time, but it will pay off down the road.
- Remove all the media in your life that brings you down. Music with bad lyrics, movies with bad images, books or magazines that lead you to think bad things. Throw away anything with sexual content. Fill your life with good. Think about the direction in Article of Faith 13.
- Remember, having the Spirit with you is a choice. Choose to have Him by you.
- Do not take the sacrament for **at least 3 months (as you deem appropriate)**.
Through: _____ (date) _____
- Do not attend the temple. **Take their temple recommend as necessary.**
- Pay your tithing, and obey the Word of Wisdom.
- Do not put yourself in a position where you will be triggered to sin. Do not spend the night at anyone's home where there are young women (or young men) your age, or older. Flee from temptation, even the hint of it. Do not flirt with temptation, in any way. Stay away from young women or places that will cause you to fall. God has given you the ability to choose and will never take that away from you. He won't allow you to be tempted above what you can withstand, but he can't keep you from going into a place or being with someone where you will fall. That is your choosing.
- Forgive those who have wronged you.
3 Nephi 13:11, 14-15
11 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
14 For, if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you;
15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

E. Uchtdorf - "For our own good, we need the moral courage to forgive and to ask for forgiveness. Never is the soul nobler and more courageous than when we forgive. This includes forgiving ourselves."

Most importantly, work to forgive yourself.

I know that you have the ability to withstand the temptations of the adversary. I counsel you to follow my recommendations and if you slip, to contact me right away so we can get back on track and not fall from this path. If you continue down this path and make more moral mistakes,

then these sins will fall back upon you - further discipline may become necessary.

Work toward being sealed in the temple for time and all eternity. This is the only way to everlasting happiness. This process has shown you what happens when you are mentally and spiritually drained. It has shown you what happens when you don't prepare to have the Spirit with you at all times. It has shown you what happens when you let your guard down.

Remember, you are a son of God (or a daughter of our Heavenly Father). Always strive to be with people who know your potential and will help you realize that potential.

We both know you have the ability to make things right. My prayers and faith are with you.

Bishop _____