



The Big Book Share

Supporting families affected
by imprisonment (Isle of Man)

The **BIG BOOK SHARE** is a scheme for prisoners and their children to share the same book. The book is read together or separately and then discussed. Mothers' Union advertise for books through the members, across the Christian churches, on radio, and in newspapers. Mothers' Union then sort the books into pairs, number them and make a list of books available. (180 at present).



At visiting time a child is helped to choose a book stored on a trolley, the other half of the pair is stored in a separate cupboard so volunteers can give the book to prisoners once the child has chosen the book. Then they both go away to read it. This means that when they come back together the following week they have something to share. It builds up the parent's confidence in communicating with their child as well as helping them support their literacy skills. If the prisoner has trouble reading the education team will support them.

"It is important for prisoners to access and meet people who are not in uniform. It builds a sense of normality" (Alison Gomme, Prison Governor)

For general guidelines about setting up and developing outreach initiatives, go to the members' section (Action & Outreach) of the Mothers' Union website: www.themothersunion.org