

Sponsorship Guidelines

The following is an excerpt from *Day Four, The Pilgrim's Continued Journey* published by The Upper Room:

“The strength of any Emmaus Community is a direct result of that community’s recruiting practices. If the community is committed to recruiting strong church leaders for the purpose of strengthening the local church, the community will be a strong, vital force in the renewal movement. If, on the other hand, the Walk to Emmaus is looked upon as a hospital where every human ill can be cured, it will have a weakening effect on the entire community. Emmaus is designed to spiritually renew church members who, in turn, can Christianize their environments. The church is a vital part of this renewal effort. If strong church members are recruited to attend Emmaus Walks, the Emmaus community will provide authentic spiritual renewal.

The overriding purpose of Emmaus is to Christianize environments such as home, business, friendships, and churches. As people have an opportunity to consider the reorientation of their priorities, to experience the grace of God in a loving community, to be wooed by the Holy Spirit to be disciples, and to participate in a supportive group following the weekend, it is only natural that they will want to change the most important things in their lives according to this new experience of love.

There are several qualities in a Pilgrim that this expectation would suggest. First, the prospective Pilgrim should already be on a pilgrimage, willing to grow and move forward in his or her journey of faith. Second, the person should have a Christian orientation...no, a Christian *fervor*. The Pilgrim knows God can make and has made a difference in life. Third, the prospective Pilgrim is not so consumed by other situations that he or she will not be able to give full attention to the message and experience of the Walk to Emmaus during the seventy-two hour experience and all the follow-up activities.

STEP 1: Pray. Prayer should be focused on how this person can become a more vitally alive Christian in helping bring God’s kingdom into his or her natural environments rather than on how you can get this person to attend a weekend. Do not think about the weekend for a person, but a new vitality for one’s faith that will last a lifetime. When you have a focus on God’s call for ministry for this person, then move to the next step.

STEP 2: Make an appointment. Casual conversation about your experience with Emmaus is helpful, but if you are serious about asking someone to become a part of the Emmaus community, then make an appointment to make the invitation. If the person is married, make sure that you pay attention to both husband and wife. **DO NOT** recruit one and expect that person to recruit the spouse. Make it a personal invitation to enrich their faith and thus become more effective disciples. Let the person know that there are many ways to enrich faith, but that you have benefited from the Emmaus experience.

STEP 3: The invitation. After sharing your own experience, make sure the person knows that your invitation is to a more vitally alive relationship with Jesus Christ, not just to attend a weekend. The three days are just a part of a whole new way of life. You should carefully explain the group reunion, community gatherings, team membership and formation, and renewed interest in serving one’s church.

Don't overwhelm the person, making someone feel that the invitation is to full-time ministry, even though, in a sense, that is the invitation. Help the person to understand that with God's love and grace, every aspect of life will change for the better.

STEP 4: The commitment. Have a blank Pilgrim's application with you and ask the prospective Pilgrim to fill it out in your presence, answering any questions the person may have. If the person is married, get an application form from the spouse at the same time. Then, complete the back and mail it to the registrar, along with the registration deposit fee.

****Note: "The Equal Commitment Rule"** – the Letter of Agreement between HOF Emmaus and the Upper Room states that "husbands and wives are encouraged to make an equal commitment to participate." The Walk to Emmaus is for both single and married persons. In the case of a married couple, the goal is to strengthen marriages and families rather than have an adverse effect. In the event that one spouse wants to attend and there is evidence that the other spouse will not agree to do so, the HOF Board will take the situation into consideration, pray about it for a period of 6 months and make a determination in regards to letting the individual spouse attend. Should you wish to sponsor such a person, please contact the Board for instructions.**

STEP 5: Continuing Preparation. You're not finished – just beginning. Continue to pray for and stay close to the person to answer any questions that may arise. Start collecting agape letters and letting friends know that he or she is going to attend a Walk to Emmaus, enlisting their prayers. If the person's pastor has not attended, you will want to explain the Walk to Emmaus and enlist support and prayers for your Pilgrim. Help the pastor start visualizing how this spiritually renewed person can be used in the ministry of the church.

STEP 6: Weekend responsibilities. If the person has a family, make sure you pay attention to them during the weekend. The team will take care of your Pilgrim. Continue to pray, attend Send-Off, Sponsor's Hour, Candlelight, and Closing, but at other times let the Pilgrim have space to make his or her own walk.

STEP 7: Remember Day Four. After the person has attended the Walk, don't forget him or her. Spend some time together helping the Pilgrim digest the experience. Give the person direction to his or her newfound enthusiasm about being a disciple. Help the Pilgrim take those first new steps of discipleship in the right direction so that no one becomes alienated from the person or from the Walk to Emmaus. Make sure your friend gets into a reunion group. If you are not currently in a reunion group, go along. Bring the Pilgrim to the first Emmaus gathering following the Walk.

STEP 8: Back to the church. Make sure the person goes back to church with an enthusiastic, supportive attitude. Again, if the pastor of the church has not attended a Walk to Emmaus, you might find this a good opportunity to talk with him or her about it and explain the Pilgrim's new enthusiasm for ministry. Sensitivity is needed in directing this new enthusiasm.

STEP 9: Understand Emmaus. Help the person understand how he or she can serve the Emmaus community. Talk about signing up for the prayer vigil, serving in the kitchen, volunteering agape for the

tables and for snacks, and serving on teams. Entry into serving on Emmaus teams is through the servants' entrance!

STEP 10: Help the Pilgrim to sponsor. When the Pilgrims you sponsor start thinking about recruiting someone for the Walk to Emmaus, they will probably recruit the same way in which they were recruited. Help them discern the people who would respond to a weekend of love and thus become more vitally alive disciples in their home, community, vocation, and church. Help them with all ten steps the first time through.

A good experience during the Walk to Emmaus can be insured when one goes with the proper attitude. A good attitude comes from knowing what to expect. Here are some suggestions on how to prepare your prospective Pilgrim.

Things You *MUST* Tell a Pilgrim

1. If a person is married, keep in mind that we want equal commitment to the Walk to Emmaus. Don't rush decisions, but let the couple work to a common understanding of what they expect the Walk to Emmaus to do for them.
2. Sleeping arrangements are different in each location, but you should explain as thoroughly as possible what they will be. Sleeping and showering are very personal activities and participants need to know how to prepare for these during the Walk to Emmaus. The meals should be explained so that those on special diets can make the necessary arrangements to continue their diets during the Emmaus weekend.
3. Let the person know that participation is expected in all activities from 7:00 pm on Thursday until 7:00 pm on Sunday. Free time is limited to about three-and-one half hours during the weekend, and if the group gets behind in the schedule, free time is diminished.
4. Everyone should bring his or her own bedding, pillows, towels, washcloths, and comfortable clothes, including clothes appropriate for free time. Please impress on him or her, the relaxed nature of the Walk to Emmaus and that no dress clothes are necessary.
5. In the event that the person is on medication, they will want to let one of the leadership team know the schedule for their medication. Because there are no watches or clocks on the weekends, they will need to be prepared to let someone else alert them that it is time for their medications.

Things You *MAY NOT WANT* to Tell a Pilgrim

1. Tell what effect the three days had on you and what they did for your personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. Tell what effect the Walk has had on your family, church, job, and community.
3. Tell how it has helped you change your priorities.

4. Tell how you keep the feeling alive through group reunions, gatherings, and serving during subsequent Walks.
5. Tell how each weekend is unique, but each person seems to find exactly what God wants that person to experience. The Pilgrim can look forward to gaining a new enthusiasm for serving God.

Things You Will WANT to Tell a Pilgrim

1. The Candlelight service has its own special effect in showing God's love and you may want that to be a surprise.
2. The personal agape letters cannot be described adequately since you do not know what each person will be writing. You may want them to be a surprise, too.
3. Don't try to prejudge what a person's needs are or what someone will get out of the Walk to Emmaus. Simply tell your own story. There are not expected results other than experiencing God's love.

Remember – there are no SECRETS in Emmaus...only wonderful God-filled surprises!

It is extremely difficult not to recruit those people whom you want to change. When this happens, we recruit people from the standpoint of wanting them to become like us. We are comfortable with who we are as Christians, and we want everyone else to be like us so that we will be comfortable with them. No one should be recruited to attend the Walk to Emmaus to be changed into our own image of what a Christian should be like. Rather, we should recruit a variety of Christian styles so that the complexity and beauty of God's personality taking form in human beings can be seen. The ultimate reason for recruiting someone to attend a Walk to Emmaus is to deepen that person's relationship with Christ and to create an enthusiastic disciple to work in God's kingdom. The ultimate reason you should want to recruit a person is Christ's love in you wanting the same love for the prospective Pilgrim. This is serious work. Building the kingdom of God, and building a strong Emmaus community is part of that task.

DeColores!