



***“Were not our hearts
burning within us
while He talked with us
on the road and opened
the Scriptures to us?”***

--Luke 24:32

Sponsorship Guide

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SPONSORSHIP GUIDE

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OVERVIEW

How exciting that all of us are a part of God's plan to fortify His family and His church through our involvement with the Walk to Emmaus!

The purpose of Emmaus is to renew the church as the body of the risen Christ in the world by renewing church members as His faithful and committed disciples. It is one tool God uses to expand our spiritual lives and rekindle our gifts as Christian leaders in our churches and communities. We become leavening agents right where we worship and live.

One significant aspect of the Emmaus experience is sponsorship. It is so vital that our DaySpring Emmaus Community has prepared this special guide to most effectively prepare you for that critical role.

While most church-related functions take a "Y'all come!" approach to participation, Emmaus relies on one-on-one sponsorship. As you read and digest the information in this guide, you will better understand that, like everything meaningful, sponsorship demands and deserves deliberate prayer and preparation to be successful.

May God bless your role as a sponsor and, therefore, a role model for even more sponsors as the cycle of reaching others for Jesus continues.

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Sponsorship = Special Responsibility

How does the Walk to Emmaus depend on effective sponsorship?

Your commitment to being a dedicated sponsor is a key element that sets the tone for a pilgrim's experience on a Walk, which is so much more than the usual retreat or religious education function.

Your diligent preparation, sacrificial love, and follow-through can lessen distractions and give pilgrims the security that is the most fertile ground for God's activity during the weekend.

The result is stronger church leaders, churches, and ministries.

What isn't sponsorship?

Our job as sponsors is NOT to "get all our friends to go," to fill up the weekend's roster, to fix people's problems, or to reproduce our own religious experience in others.

Instead, our role is to help bring spiritual revitalization to those who already are Christians who will, in turn, bring new life and vision to the work of the church in the congregation, home, workplace, and community.

The aim of sponsorship, quite simply, is to build up the body of Christ.

Wise sponsorship is prayerful; unwise sponsorship is haphazard and undiscerning.

Wise sponsorship encourages a balanced, Bible-centered movement of the Holy Spirit, which is integrated into the life of the church. It is our call to committed discipleship and unity in Christ.

Unwise sponsorship eventually produces a harvest that is more a burden for the church than a blessing, because the movement could become a religious fringe group. Such groups may benefit individuals involved in Emmaus but have no relationship with or impact on churches in the community.

At worst, unwise sponsorship could breed division instead of unity within the body of Christ.

What are the first steps in becoming a sponsor?

Pray for the person's openness to God's call to discipleship, not for how to get him or her to go on a Walk. Pray for your discernment and wise actions as a sponsor.

Read and follow this guide completely. Then meet with the person or couple to discuss participation in Emmaus for a more vital relationship with Jesus Christ.

Sponsorship 101: The Basics

Sponsorship is one of the greatest privileges we have as encouragers and members of the Emmaus Community. It is also one of the strongest links in the process that begins with the application and carries through to the follow-up sessions after a Walk and beyond.

How do I get started?

Pray about whom to sponsor. Then explain the purpose of Emmaus and your role as sponsor. Be clear and dispel any aura of secrecy. (See details on Page 5.)

Download an application from the website or contact a board member as listed on the website and in the newsletter to which you may subscribe. Have the person complete the pilgrim section and give it back to you so you can complete the sponsor section.

Who mails the application?

You as sponsor--not the pilgrim--are responsible for mailing the application with the pilgrim's (or your) check for the deposit. Once it is received, the registrar will send any correspondence only to you as sponsor until the pilgrim's application has been approved and he or she is confirmed to attend.

Who is admitted to a Walk?

The Walk to Emmaus was designed to be edifying for both married and unmarried people. Submit a husband's and wife's applications together.

Places on a Walk are filled on a first come-first served basis, so it's best to submit applications as early as possible. However, your applicant may be placed on a waiting list. The registrar makes every effort to confirm all attendees and fill vacancies as soon as they are known.

What if my pilgrim has to cancel?

Be sure to tell your pilgrim to notify YOU as soon as possible in that event. It's then YOUR responsibility to call the registrar immediately. Failure of sponsors to do this causes tremendous inefficiency and distress, which are certainly not elements that should precede anyone's Walk.

What if he or she has questions?

Encourage your pilgrim to call you with questions leading up to the Walk, and refer to this guide or call a board member for answers.

Remember--Uncertainty is a negative element in any situation. Please do your part to remove uncertainty so your pilgrim may concentrate on the experience of growing closer to Jesus.

✝ POINT TO PONDER:

Wise sponsors sacrificially lead new pilgrims to a Walk with a focus on blessings for the pilgrims, not for themselves.

Whom To Sponsor and Why

Whom should I sponsor on a Walk?

It is strongly encouraged that husbands and wives attend consecutive Walks.

Since the stated purpose of Emmaus is to bring together those who already are Christians and fortify them for leadership roles in the church, you should sponsor people who are members of a church (any denomination) and attend regularly.

Consider Sunday School teachers and class members, committee chairs, prayer warriors, lay and clergy staff, and dependable members who are the quiet backbone of the church. Emmaus targets people at a variety of Christian maturity levels who share a foundation in the Lord and a willingness to grow in Him.

Don't let your personal desire to be a sponsor overshadow your judgment about the right people to sponsor. It's all about the pilgrim, not you.

Why should I not sponsor someone?

Many worthwhile activities and special events reach out to those who do not know Christ, but the Emmaus Walk is for people who already believe.

This distinction is important. Its purpose is not geared for everyone in general.

Think of it this way: A kiddie pool has water and a cement shell like a regular-size pool. But it exists for a different type of person and certainly different kinds of activities. Does that mean it's exclusive? Of course not. It's just designed for something different. That's how it is with the Walks.

So certain reasons for sponsoring people are obvious indications that this activity may not be the place or time for them. Another Christian activity may better address their needs.

RED FLAGS: Avoid sponsorship if your reasons sound like any of these:

"She's had a rough year, and I think she needs to be introduced to the Lord."

"His wife has tried for years to get him to go to church. Maybe this would help."

"She's never belonged to a church and needs Christian fellowship."

"This would be a great way to introduce him to the Scriptures."

"She needs something exciting and dramatic to get her mind off all her problems."

"He's involved in some offbeat religious stuff, so the Walk would be a great way to convince him to accept Jesus instead."

To Tell ... or Not To Tell ...

How should I describe the Walk to Emmaus experience?

Truth is always essential. Being secretive is never appropriate. Giving details helps remove unfounded notions a person may have formed that lead to uncertainty. Use these explanations:

The Walk to Emmaus is a weekend for Christians to concentrate on their relationship with the Lord. You'll be spending it with about 90 Christian adults from a variety of churches and of all ages, all at different stages of Christian growth but sharing a desire to grow in Christ.

You'll spend lots of time in a large conference room at tables of eight (your special small group for the weekend) but will also share meals and fellowship with everyone. Pilgrims often refer to the new friendships in these groups and the insights as especially meaningful and enriching.

How much should I say about the weekend's activities?

Ten lay persons and five clergy members will give talks on topics that help us better understand the nature of Christ and our relationship to Him. They will share their personal experiences with God, challenges, insights, and growth journey.

You'll have opportunities to discuss what you learned from the speakers' testimonies, although you determine your own level of participation in any discussion. You will not be forced to contribute.

You'll enjoy times of chapel, prayer, communion, music, skits, and laughter. Clergy will be available whenever you need to speak with one.

Lots of people will be lifting you up in prayer before and during the weekend. You will feel pampered by volunteers who prepare and serve your meals, provide snacks, and meet any needs, all out of their unconditional love for you.

What about the special parts of the weekend?

Candlelight, dying moments, letters, and closing are surprises (*NOT* secrets) that you won't want to spoil by mentioning. Not offering those details is totally honest and preserves the element of highly individual and spontaneous responses.

Never, never lie. If your pilgrim asks you to confirm something about one of these surprises, tell the truth. Mention that most pilgrims do not know about such surprises, and ask for your pilgrim's help in letting the others experience these things for themselves without prior knowledge.

+ POINT TO PONDER:

By sponsoring someone for the wrong reasons, you could be creating a distraction for other pilgrims who are attending to focus on a closer relationship to the Lord they already serve.

Tips for Enriching the Experience

Commit your pilgrim to the Lord, and trust God's team to follow His lead. Be careful not to create unrealistic expectations for your pilgrim.

What mistakes should I avoid?

The Walk is only one way through which the Lord meets people at different stages. Communicate that God touches each person in different ways, so don't even hint to your pilgrim that he or she will have a dramatic change after the 72 hours.

If such a change occurs, that's great. If a not-so-dramatic change occurs, we don't want anyone to feel short-changed or "left out" because of unfair expectations. Be careful not to assign an outcome or compare your experience to anyone else's.

How can I make my pilgrim less apprehensive?

Explain as many details as possible, and stay in touch with your pilgrim as common courtesy and common sense.

Tell him or her to watch for a letter of confirmation with details about what to bring, times, etc. When you as sponsor receive such a letter, call your pilgrim to verify that he or she also received the letter and ask if you can answer any questions.

Offer to help your pilgrim's family in his or her absence.

How can I make send-off and follow-up more comfortable?

The Walk begins *after* dinner Thursday, so be sure your pilgrim doesn't arrive hungry. Taking pilgrims out to eat beforehand with others is a great way to give everyone a head start on meeting new faces.

Being rushed or late--or showing up too early--creates embarrassment and stress. Arrive on time, introduce your pilgrim to others, and help start conversations.

Once the experience is over, take your pilgrim to the follow-up meeting, and encourage him or her to participate in Emmaus activities as he or she feels led, not necessarily in the same ways as you may be participating.

Review this guide with your pilgrim after it's distributed at the follow-up, and suggest that he or she begin praying about someone to sponsor. You will be helping to nurture that ongoing cycle.

✦ POINT TO PONDER:

Think back to your own Walk. What do you wish someone had done for you or told you? Then do that for your pilgrim.

Straight From the Pilgrims' Mouths

What made your sponsor effective?

"Watching the change I saw in her own life made me want to know Jesus in that same way."

"He reassured me that the participants would not be Bible scholars. Instead, he promised me that they were from all different places in their faith but that we were on the same road to heaven."

"It was nice to know that scholarships were available, because I couldn't afford it at the time."

"My sponsors were more alive in praising God. I wanted to express my love for Him in that way."

"She explained that my reservation was taken seriously, not casually to be cancelled if something better came along. That made me respect all the work and prayer being poured into this weekend for people like me."

"He took my husband to dinner and explained everything so he wouldn't have misgivings. Then he drove many miles to come serve. Wow!"

"She prayed for me every day and sometimes on the phone before and after the Walk. She also helped me find a reunion group and a Bible study."

What do you wish your sponsor or others would've told you or done for you?

"I wanted to hear more about the format. Telling me that I'd hear lay and clergy talks wouldn't have spoiled any surprises, but he didn't tell me that."

"I almost cancelled because someone in my church kept saying, "Don't anticipate!" That made me wonder what *would* be going on. It seemed childish, as if he were gloating about knowing something I did not know. God blessed us in spite of that man's comments. So be mature about it."

"I wish she would've told me I might not experience a mountaintop the first evening. I got a slow start and thought I must be missing something!"

CHECKLIST: Before

- Pray** about whom to sponsor and how to approach him or her. If you are working on the team, you are not to sponsor a pilgrim.
- Carefully read** and follow the details in this guide. Then contact the registrar or download an application on the website at: www.DaySpringEmmaus.org.
- Mark** your calendar to support the Walk at send-off, candlelight, and closing. (If you cannot fulfill that gift of your presence, wait until another time to sponsor.)
- Approach** the individual or both the husband and wife about attending the Walk, and share details. Couples do not have to attend the same set, but it is strongly recommended.
- Give** the pilgrim the application to complete and give back to you. Fill out your portion and mail it promptly with the registration fee. Explain that there may be a waiting list and that pilgrims will be notified directly when they have been confirmed.
- Do** your homework, and solicit *personal* letters in plenty of time.
- Sign up** at gatherings or on the website for the prayer vigil. It's meaningful for pilgrims to know you're praying for them.
- Review** all necessary items to be packed, answer questions, and clarify when you will pick up your pilgrim. Be on time!

CHECKLIST: During

- Pray**.
- Leave** your phone number with the family, and offer to be accessible to help at any time. Tell them what time you will be returning on Sunday.
- Offer** to help with children or household demands to make the weekend pleasant for those remaining at home. Do something special, like giving the spouse a few hours for personal time or sharing a meal. Let the family know you care for them.
- Ask** the spouse and children to write agape letters, and pick them up to take to candlelight. (Waiting until the pilgrim is on the Walk is best to protect the surprise.)
- Attend** send-off (be sure to stay to pray over your pilgrim's cross), candlelight, and closing.
- Turn in** agape letters (don't forget to write your own) at least by the candlelight. If you wish, donate homemade snacks, 2-liters, and agape (generally 100 items) at send-off.
- Serve** a meal, but *only* if you have signed up to do so ahead of time at gatherings or on the website. Too many servers can cause congestion and confusion. Be sure not show special attention to your pilgrim while serving.
- Bring** a spouse who has attended a Walk to candlelight and closing, if possible.

CHECKLIST: After

- Pray**.
- Take** your pilgrim to the follow-up. Information will be in the pilgrim packet and is publicized for you way ahead of time in the newsletter and on the website.
- Discuss** reunion groups, and help your pilgrim find one. If none fit his or her schedule, consider starting a new one. For information or questions, contact the board member who oversees reunion groups as listed in the newsletter and on the website.
- Keep in touch** with your pilgrim, especially on the first Fourth Day. Be ready with encouragement along the way.
- Review** the packet information about opportunities for new members to become involved in DaySpring activities and teams. Accompany your pilgrim to some to help get him or her acclimated.
- Encourage** your pilgrim to pray about sponsoring someone on a Walk. Each new member will receive this Sponsorship Guide at the follow-up, so review it with him or her, emphasizing the important responsibilities that come with sponsorship.
- Be available** to talk and share with your pilgrim. Encourage him or her to review materials and notes and to stay in touch with others from his or her table, if the pilgrim feels led.

TRUST GOD'S TIMING

If you present the Emmaus opportunity to a prospective pilgrim who then decides not to participate, do not feel discouraged. When we turn over every endeavor to God, we trust that He is in control, so perhaps the timing isn't just right.

Remain in contact without badgering the person. Keep praying about when to present the opportunity to him or her again.

MAKE A PLAN TO REST

Encourage your pilgrim to take the Monday after the Walk as a day off to revel in the awesome experience and catch up on rest, if at all possible. Or perhaps you could offer to watch the children for part of that day so he or she can relax.

SAY WHAT?!

Communicating with one another and being aware of Emmaus opportunities is smart. It's also a two-way deal: The DaySpring Community reaches you via ongoing emails, newsletters, and its website. But all that effort falls short if you don't log on, open your mail, read the information, and respond!



OUR HISTORY ... SO BLESSED BY GOD

THE EMMAUS MOVEMENT

Although sponsored by The Upper Room, a ministry unit of the General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church, the Walk to Emmaus is ecumenical.

The first Walks were held in Peoria, Ill., in 1977. The first Indiana Walks were held at Rivervale in 1981. Emmaus continues to grow in 12 countries the world over, including Australia, Central and South America, West and South Africa, Europe, Asia, and Canada.

A BIRTH TO CELEBRATE

Walks in Madisonville, Ky., begat Walks in Elizabethtown, Ky. in 1983, which gave birth to the Louisville Emmaus Community in 1986, which gave birth to our DaySpring Emmaus Community in 1990.

The Southern Indiana community was started because of long waiting lists for the Walks in Louisville and the need to make the opportunity available to those in outlying counties on this side of the river as well.

Nearly 200 people convened in 1990 for the first prayerful gathering to form this new venture, produced an offering of \$1,200 that night, and launched us on our way. In addition, our "parent," the Louisville Emmaus Community, gave us a love gift of \$1,000. (Interestingly, a few years later when they needed support, DaySpring gave them \$1,000.)

The inaugural Board of Directors (10 lay persons and five clergy) was elected that night. After months of prayer and diligent planning, DaySpring Walks #1 and #2 were held at Wyandotte Woods (now O'Bannon Woods in Harrison County) in November of 1991. The first "extra" women's walk, Walk #5, took place at Mount St. Francis in the summer of 1992.

Just look at the number of Walks and *thousands* of pilgrims who have been blessed and fortified since that move of faith in 1990!

GIFTS THAT KEEP ON GIVING

God blessed members of our community with special gifts to apply to our new community that produced items still used today.

The stained-glass, illuminated, framed illustration of the Emmaus Road was made by Cecil Trobaugh. The large Emmaus cross was crafted by Tom Ogden. The hand-painted, wooden roosters on the conference tables were created by Connie Newbanks.

From several options, the DaySpring name was chosen. It had been suggested by the Rev. Jim Gentry, New Albany District Superintendent of the United Methodist Church at the time, who met with the Board of Directors on occasion in those early months.

The logo was selected from several designs, and all name badges for the first 10 years were lettered by hand until the computer took over.