

PILGRIM SPONSORSHIP

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This training syllabus is to be used in conjunction with three Emmaus library books: “Sponsorship,” “The Upper Room Handbook on Emmaus,” and “The Fourth Day Book.”

I. SPONSORSHIP DEFINED

- A. Sponsorship is like being a godparent. A godparent doesn’t just stand with a person at the front of the church, but helps him or her grow in spiritual life. (*The Upper Room Handbook on Emmaus*)
- B. Sponsorship is the act of revisiting the Walk to Emmaus experience with the person whom God has laid on your heart. (*Sponsorship*)
- C. Sponsorship is one of the most important aspects of the Walk to Emmaus. Do not take its responsibilities lightly or carry them out casually or haphazardly. (*Sponsorship*)
- D. Sponsorship requires extensive prayer, diligent thought, and careful planning and follow-through.

II. FIRST STEP

- A. Pray
 - 1. Commit the process to God.
 - 2. Pray that God will guide you to the person with whom He wants to you to share the Walk to Emmaus.
 - 3. Turn over control of your desires and expectations to God. Do as Jesus did, praying in the garden. "Not my will but thy will be done." We must put ourselves in the position of allowing God to work through us. As we spend time in prayer, we need to empty ourselves of self to be filled with God’s instruction, God’s timing and God’s person for us to sponsor.
 - 4. In all things, pray without ceasing.
- B. Be open to God
 - 1. Listen with your heart.
 - 2. Call the potential Pilgrim by name to attend the Walk to Emmaus. God called people by name and so did Jesus. Jesus called his disciples by name.

3. The Walk to Emmaus is not for everyone.
4. Be certain that the individual you invite is right for Emmaus and that Emmaus is right for the individual.
 - a. The personal character of sponsorship underlines the personal care and commitment of God to each Pilgrim.
 - b. The fact that the Emmaus experience is passed on from person to person reflects the relational nature of God and the manner in which God reaches out to people through people.

III. WISE SPONSORSHIP

- A. The *Fourth Day Book* has an excellent chapter on sponsorship and should be required reading for sponsors.
- B. The *Upper Room Handbook on Emmaus* states that “sponsorship is the most important job in Emmaus.”
- C. Sponsorship has far-reaching implications. It affects not only the sponsor and the pilgrim, it has a direct bearing on the health of the Emmaus movement and impacts the church affected by the movement.
- D. Paul’s letter to the Galatians has poignant words that apply to sponsorship.
 1. Galatians 5:22-23 -- Fruit of the Spirit. A result of your sponsorship.
 2. Galatians 6:2 -- Bear one another’s burdens.
 3. Galatians 6:7-8 -- Reap what you sow. The person you are sponsoring is the seed you are sowing for the future of Emmaus and for future church leadership.
 4. Galatians 6:9 -- Words of encouragement. Do not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time if we do not give up. Persevere in doing what is right.
- E. Three aspects of good sponsorship.
 1. It is “the first act of agape before the Walk ever begins.”
 2. It undergirds the whole weekend “with sacrificial love on behalf of every Pilgrim.”
 3. It is the foundation for a healthy, effective Emmaus movement, which results in the renewal of the church.
- F. Wise sponsorship builds up the body of Christ.

IV. WHOM SHOULD I SPONSOR, WHOM SHOULD I NOT SPONSOR.

- A. Wise sponsorship
 1. Persons committed to living a life that is pleasing to God.
 2. Those who want to grow and increase their knowledge and understanding of God and God’s will.

3. Church leaders, those involved in the church, especially those who are most visible: church school teachers, persons serving on committees, persons singing in the choir, those involved in the men's and women's groups. Those involved in outreach programs.
4. Persons who are authenticators, who give prayerful, careful and fair consideration of ideas; listen more than they speak (James 1:19) and are well respected among the membership.
5. Persons who, when called upon, gladly accept the job and follow through to completion. You can count on them.
6. Those who work actively behind the scenes, fulfilling the role of servant (Mark 10:43-45). Servants put discipleship into action.
7. Persons seeking their service role in the church, faithful attendees, dependable persons with talents and gifts who seem to be searching for a place to serve.

B. Unwise sponsorship -- Unwise sponsorship results from unbridled enthusiasm for everyone to have the same experience.

1. Those who would find the Walk to Emmaus a discomfoting experience. The discomfort might extend to beliefs about God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit that differ from traditional Christian belief of the Holy Trinity.
2. Persons with specific dietary restrictions and Sabbath celebrations that the Emmaus weekend experience cannot provide.
3. Persons who are not members of a church may or may not be good candidates. These people are not in the position to benefit from Emmaus and then return to their church for additional leadership responsibilities. However the Emmaus experience could be the motivational tool to get them re-involved and active in a church.
4. Persons with emotional distress, death of a loved one, divorce proceedings, or work related loss. Could be candidates for another time.
5. Church-hoppers or soap-boxers
6. Persons who differ significantly from the basic doctrine espoused in the Walk to Emmaus do not make strong prospects for the walk.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SPONSOR

The sponsor has a long list of responsibilities that begins several weeks before the Walk, picks up intensively during the Walk, and continues for several months after the Walk. Remember the reference to sponsorship as “the first act of agape” (*The Upper Room Handbook on Emmaus, page 21*).

- A. First of all, spend concentrated time in prayer in an effort to discern whom God wants you to sponsor.
 - 1. Take a list of names with you into prayer; share that list with God.
 - 2. Leave the list with God and let God reveal a name.
 - 3. Once you have discerned God's will, continue to spend time in prayer. Pray for the potential Pilgrim and yourself. Pray for the best time to discuss The Walk to Emmaus with the prospective Pilgrim. Keep in mind the "Equal Commitment Rule". (*The Upper Room Handbook on Emmaus, page 21*).
- B. If the potential Pilgrim is married, you need to meet with the couple at the same time even if one has doubts about attending a Walk.
- C. When you have discerned the right time, make an appointment to meet with the potential Pilgrim.
- D. Aspects of the Walk to be discussed:
 - 1. Group of sixty to seventy people who come from all walks of life.
 - 2. These persons may appear to have nothing in common except their belief in Jesus Christ.
 - 3. They do not know one another but in a short period of time these people will have become a close-knit community.
 - 4. This experience demonstrates the remarkable love of God that binds us together.
 - 5. The Pilgrim will experience strong Christian Fellowship and the support and reinforcement that this fellowship provides.
 - 6. After the Walk, follow-up meetings and regular practices serve to recharge your spiritual batteries.
 - 7. Tell about your accountability group (Reunion Group) and how that has helped and encouraged you in further spiritual growth.
- E. Give your prospect an application
 - 1. Explain everything on the form. Provide answers to all questions. If unsure, write the question down and seek answer from proper source.
 - 2. Be up front about the cost of the Walk.
 - 3. Request that the person prayerfully consider the offer to attend the Emmaus event and give him or her a copy of the booklet *What is Emmaus?* by Steven D. Bryant. Ask the prospect to give you a time when you may check back for his or her response.
- F. Your potential Pilgrim will make one of three responses: I'm not interested; not now but perhaps later; or I'm willing to attend. For those who respond with the first or second response, extend thanks to them for their consideration and offer to be available later. Having your offer turned down is not cause for disappointment or discouragement.

- G. When the potential Pilgrim has accepted your invitation:
 - 1. Obtain the application and see that all information is complete. Fill in your portion (sponsor) and submit the application to the community Registrar along with the appropriate deposit.
 - 2. Begin preparations to request agape letters.
 - 3. Check with the Registrar to be sure your Pilgrim has been accepted.
 - 4. Request at least 8 to 12 agape letters from close family and friends.
 - 5. A few days before the Walk event, contact your Pilgrim as a reminder of the upcoming Walk. Offer guidance about what to pack for the weekend. Provide positive encouragement and reassurance. Help your Pilgrim to prepare for a 72-hour encounter with Jesus Christ.
- H. Take your Pilgrim to the Walk site.
 - 1. Remain with your Pilgrim through send-off, introducing him or her to others.
 - 2. Following send-off, you are requested to attend Sponsor's Hour. Write in his or her Fourth Day Book and pray over his or her Cross.
- I. Spend what time you can in prayer for your Pilgrim over the next 72 hours.
 - 1. Sign up for the Prayer Vigil
 - 2. During the 72 hours check with the Pilgrim's family to see if you can be of any assistance during the Pilgrim's absence.
- J. Attend Candlelight. If you have not already done so, bring the agape letters you have collected to Candlelight and turn them over to the Chapel Gopher or Angel.
- K. Attend Closing. This gives you the opportunity to reinforce your commitment to your Pilgrim. This encourages the Pilgrim to continue to function within the Emmaus Community.
- L. Take your Pilgrim home. This gives you the opportunity to discuss the Reunion Group and Gatherings.
- M. Your responsibilities do not end with bringing your Pilgrim home.
 - 1. Help your new member get into a Reunion Group or start a new Reunion Group, even if you have to abandon your own Reunion Group for a time until the new one gets established.
 - 2. Take your new member to their first Gathering and introduce the new member to others in the Community.
- O. Your final responsibility is to teach the new Emmaus member how to be a good sponsor by helping him or her understand the responsibilities of good sponsorship.