

WALK TO EMMAUS

Sponsor Training Guide | A practical, Scripture-centered orientation

Purpose. Sponsorship is an act of Christian love that begins with prayer and continues through the pilgrim's Fourth Day. A sponsor invites, prepares, supports, and follows up with a pilgrim while strengthening the pilgrim's relationship with Jesus Christ and the home church.

"And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them." — Luke 24:15 (KJV)

1 | The heart of sponsorship

Like the risen Christ walking with the travelers on the road to Emmaus, a sponsor walks alongside another believer. Our role is not to manufacture an emotional experience; it is to pray, serve humbly, keep our promises, and point the pilgrim toward Christ.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." — 1 John 4:11 (KJV)

- Serve rather than recruit. Invite because you care about the person's discipleship, not because a spot needs filling.
- Be dependable and discreet. Respect private family matters and application information.
- Commit for the long term. Your responsibility extends beyond the closing service.

2 | Whom should you invite?

Emmaus is designed for Christians seeking renewal and deeper commitment in their congregations. Pray about inviting clergy and lay leaders, faithful behind-the-scenes servants, believers needing renewed encouragement, or anyone hungry to grow spiritually. Welcome Christians from different denominations.

Exercise extra care: Emmaus is not a substitute for conversion, crisis counseling, or professional support. If someone is in an acute emotional crisis, consider whether this is the right time and consult appropriate local leaders. Explain the ecumenical character of the Walk honestly. Respect family needs and the candidate's free decision; never pressure someone who declines.

3 | How to invite with integrity

- Pray for the person and ask God for discernment about timing.
- Arrange a personal conversation; tell the person why you thought of them.
- Describe Emmaus as a Christian renewal weekend with worship, teaching, prayer, and fellowship; do not promise specific spiritual results.
- Discuss dates, costs, transportation, accessibility needs, family responsibilities, and what you can personally do to help.
- Give time for prayer and questions before requesting an application.

Suggested invitation: "I appreciate your faith and service. Would you prayerfully consider a Walk to Emmaus as an opportunity to grow closer to Christ? I would be glad to sponsor you and help with the arrangements."

Group discussion: What makes an invitation loving instead of pressuring? What qualities indicate that a person might benefit from Emmaus?

BEFORE & DURING THE WALK

Practical preparation is an expression of agape love.

4 | Prepare the pilgrim

Once the person agrees, walk carefully through the application process. Obtain the completed candidate application, fill out the sponsor section, and submit the application and deposit as directed by the registrar. Confirm that registration has been accepted before making firm plans.

- Review the current local schedule, arrival details, packing instructions, medication guidance, emergency contact process, and transportation plan.
- Stay in touch and pray with the candidate. Answer questions truthfully, honoring local community practices.
- Ask about household needs during the weekend—meals, childcare, rides, pets, or care for relatives—and make only promises you can keep.
- Gather encouraging agape letters, not gifts, from family and friends; follow the local community's submission instructions and deadlines.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." — Galatians 6:2 (KJV)

5 | Serve faithfully during the weekend

A sponsor is not finished when the pilgrim reaches Send-off. Continue to pray, fulfill family-support commitments, and quietly serve when invited by the community. Be present at the events expected of sponsors.

- Thursday Send-off: Bring the pilgrim on time. The supplied checklist gives 6:30 p.m.; verify with your community.
- Sponsor's Hour: Attend after the pilgrim leaves you and receive important instructions.
- Agape: Deliver letters according to the community's instructions.
- Through the weekend: Pray, check on family needs as appropriate, and serve behind the scenes without disrupting the Walk.
- Closing: Be there for the pilgrim and arrange a safe ride home with all belongings.

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." — Mark 10:45 (KJV)

6 | What agape looks like

Agape is self-giving love in action. It might mean making sure a family has meals, providing dependable transportation, preparing encouraging letters, or praying faithfully when no one sees. The sponsor should not seek attention or attempt to control the pilgrim's experience.

Sponsor training questions

- What practical responsibilities must be arranged before you agree to sponsor?
- How could you support a family without overstepping boundaries?
- Why should a sponsor attend Sponsor's Hour and Closing?

Local guidance: Walk schedules, fees, forms, service expectations, and safety procedures vary. Always follow your current Emmaus community's instructions.

THE FOURTH DAY & SPONSOR CHECKLIST

Continue the relationship after the weekend.

7 | The Fourth Day: helping faith grow

The Fourth Day is the pilgrim's daily walk with Jesus after the retreat. The weekend is a beginning, not the destination. Follow up in a supportive way and encourage active discipleship in the pilgrim's home church rather than creating a separate "Emmaus church."

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." — James 1:22 (KJV)

- First week: Check in, listen, pray, and invite conversation without demanding details.
- First month: Attend a gathering together and help the pilgrim connect with a reunion group.
- Ongoing: Encourage home-church worship and service, Emmaus activities, and eventual service on future Walks or sponsorship of others.

8 | Sponsor's working checklist

Before the Walk

- ☐ Pray for the prospective pilgrim and invite without pressure.
- ☐ Explain the Walk, schedule, deposit, and practical expectations.
- ☐ Receive the pilgrim's application; complete sponsor portion and submit.
- ☐ Confirm registration, transportation, and household support.
- ☐ Request agape letters (not gifts) and arrange delivery.

During the Walk

- ☐ Bring the pilgrim to Send-off (verify the Thursday 6:30 p.m. time).
- ☐ Attend Sponsor's Hour and deliver letters as directed.
- ☐ Pray, support the family, and serve quietly where appropriate.
- Attend Closing.
- ☐ Take the pilgrim home with all belongings.

After the Walk

- ☐ Follow up personally and pray together.
- ☐ Attend a monthly gathering with the pilgrim.
- ☐ Help connect with a reunion group.
- ☐ Encourage home-church ministry, Emmaus service, and future sponsorship.

Discussion for a sponsor orientation

How will you stay involved once the Walk is over? What is one specific way you can help the pilgrim put renewed faith into practice at home and in church?

My next step: _____

My Fourth Day follow-up plan: _____

Reference: Adapted from the prospective sponsor questions and checklist provided for this training, including the reference to Day Four: The Pilgrim's Continued Journey. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version (KJV).