

Southern Maryland Emmaus Sponsorship FAQs

1. Who should I sponsor?

Mature Christians - this may be someone from your church, your job, a friend, a relative or a neighbor. They are involved in their local church. Those who want to deepen their faith and their Walk with Christ. Christian servants.

2. Is it okay to sponsor a non-believer?

Emmaus is not meant to be a conversion experience. It is intended to build leaders in the Church and to build the Body of Christ. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to sponsor a non-believer.

3. Is it okay to sponsor a Christian that is going through a personal crisis?

The Walk to Emmaus is a once in a lifetime event and can be a very emotional event for some people. If you would like to sponsor a pilgrim but they are facing personal difficulties, it is probably not the best time to sponsor that person.

4. How do I go about approaching a perspective pilgrim?

First PRAY - for the Holy Spirit to reveal WHO you should sponsor. Then pray for that person to be receptive to your invitation. Make an appointment to meet with the person. Tell them about the Walk to Emmaus and what it meant to you. Explain the purpose of the Walk and provide a general outline of what to expect during the 72 hours - a structured schedule, listening to 15 "talks", singing, praying, quiet time and time for fellowship. Explain that they will be "cloistered" for 72 hours - asked to put aside their watch, cellphone and suspend outside communication for the duration of the weekend. Remember there are no secrets to Emmaus, just surprises. Give them an application and ask them to pray about attending. Give them a week or so, then follow-up with the perspective pilgrim. Answer any questions and ask if they would like to attend. If they are interested, have them complete their application, have them get it signed by their pastor and have them mail their application and \$35 deposit. Let them know there may be a waiting list so it is important to submit their application early.

5. How will I know if my pilgrim is selected?

No less than 6 weeks before the Walk weekend, you will be contacted by the Pilgrim Registrar and notified whether or not your pilgrim was selected for the upcoming weekend. The pilgrim will also receive a letter.

6. How much does it cost to sponsor a pilgrim?

Currently, the full fee for a pilgrim is \$225. The pilgrim is asked to submit a \$35 deposit when their application is submitted. The sponsor covers the remaining balance of \$190. The balance can be paid prior to the Walk Weekend or at Sponsor's Hour.

7. What if I'd like to sponsor someone but am not able to cover the financial expense?

The best solution is to work with your Reunion group or others who have attended the Walk to Emmaus to share the cost. However, there is a scholarship fund.

8. What is expected of me as a sponsor in the weeks before the Weekend?

First - prayerfully "select" your pilgrim and support your pilgrim through the application process. After you are notified that your pilgrim has been selected, follow-up with your pilgrim to be sure they still plan to attend. If your pilgrim has any special dietary restrictions, you may need to provide special food for the pilgrim for the Walk Weekend. Immediately, start working to get the "personal" agape letters for your pilgrim. You will need a minimum of 12 personal agape letters for your pilgrim. As soon as you learn your pilgrim has been selected, begin collecting personal agape letters for your pilgrim. Bring those letters to the retreat site Thursday night of the Walk Weekend and discretely give them to the Agape team. See # 19 and 22 below for more on personal agape letters.

9. What is expected of me Thursday of the Walk Weekend?

Arrange to pick-up your pilgrim. Make sure your pilgrim has had dinner Thursday night and get the pilgrim to the Retreat Center (West River) by no later than 7pm. Most sponsors arrange to surprise their pilgrim by having a "Send-off" dinner for the pilgrim, attended by others who have attended the Walk to Emmaus that the pilgrim may know. If the dinner is held at a restaurant, the Sponsor is responsible for paying for the pilgrim's meal. This shows support for the pilgrim as they prepare for their Walk. It is the first act of agape the pilgrim will see... before they even learn about agape.

10. What happens when we arrive at the Retreat Center?

You and your pilgrim will be greeted in the parking lot. You will be directed where to park and will be helped to carry your pilgrim's belongings to the building where they will be staying. Your pilgrim will be "registered"-asked to verify some information and given a name badge. You and your pilgrim will be led to their bedroom. If possible, encourage your pilgrim to "take out their bedding and set it aside as it will be late when they return to their room." This is important so you will know where their bedroom and bedding are located as later you will be directed to return to make their beds. You will then be directed to the Dining Hall where the pilgrims, sponsors and team will gather. Be sure to

help your pilgrim feel at ease... introduce them to a couple people, perhaps even help them find their roommates. This will help calm any butterflies the pilgrim may have.

11. As a sponsor, should I bring any agape?

Yes! Thursday you should drop-off any agape (trinkets or food agape) and the personal agape letters for your pilgrim. Remember if your pilgrim requires special food, you are to provide that. If there is a special snack that your pilgrim loves, you can provide that as food agape. Just be sure to provide enough for the Conference room to share, and let the agape team know if it is a special favorite so they can be sure it is used during the weekend.

12. What are the key times I need to know for the Walk Weekend?

Have your pilgrim at the Retreat site no later than 7pm Thursday evening. Arrive for Candlelight Saturday night by 8pm. Arrive for Closing on Sunday at 4pm.

13. What is expected of me during the Walk Weekend?

During the Walk Weekend you are expected to participate in Send-off and Sponsors' Hour Thursday night - including participating in Communion, praying over your pilgrim's cross and making your pilgrim's bed (when directed to do so.) On Saturday, participate in Candlelight. On Sunday, you are to attend Closing, to gather and transport all of your pilgrim's belongings, to take your pilgrim to dinner and to take them home. It is the sponsor's responsibility to look after their pilgrim's family, pets or other obligations as may be necessary.

14. What is expected of me after the Walk Weekend?

Follow-up with your pilgrim. Ask them about their experience. Get them involved in a Reunion group. Take them to the 4th Day Seminar and as an act of agape, remember to bring a covered dish large enough to "cover" your family and your pilgrim's.

15. What happens if there is a crisis with my pilgrim's family?

Sponsor's are provided with an emergency phone number at Sponsors' Hour. In the unlikely event there is an emergency, you are to call the emergency phone number. That phone number is for the Agape Lead on the Weekend. The Agape Lead is the contact between the "outside world" and the cloistered environment of the pilgrims and team. Please only use this number for an emergency.

16. Is it okay to provide my pilgrim with a special gift during their Walk?

No. Emmaus policy states no special gifts are to be given on the weekend. If you have a special gift for your pilgrim, you can give it to them after Closing, on the ride home.

17. Can I leave a gift for my pilgrim when I make their bed Thursday night?

No. Emmaus policy states no special gifts are to be given on the weekend.

18. Is it okay to provide a special treat for my pilgrim?

Yes. If your pilgrim has a favorite food, you can bring that as agape that will be shared by the entire Conference Room - pilgrims and team

19. Is it okay for me to include a gift in my letter to my pilgrim?

No. Emmaus policy states that personal gifts shall not be included in Sunday letters. "Lumpy" agape letters will be placed in the pilgrim's 4th Day bag.

20. Is it okay for me to volunteer during the weekend if I have a pilgrim?

Yes, you may volunteer but only in a behind the scenes role. Your pilgrim should only see you at Candlelight and Closing.

21. Is it okay for a sponsor to serve on team?

No. To be sure to give full attention to your pilgrim's family and to provide your pilgrim "space" to experience the Weekend in their own way, Sponsor's are not to team while sponsoring.

22. Do I need to do anything special with the "personal" agape letters for my pilgrim?

Yes. First, be sure the pilgrim's full name appears on the front of each envelope and be sure the relationship of the person who wrote the letter is on the back, lower right-hand corner of each envelope. Next, please sort the letters in order of importance (letters from closest family first) and select the 12 most important. Rubber band or tie the 12 "most important" letters together. These 12 letters will be given to the pilgrim Sunday afternoon. All other letters will be placed in the pilgrim's 4th Day bag to read after the Walk.