

Heartland Faithful Walk to Emmaus

Sponsorship Guidelines

When you have a prospective candidate in mind, follow these suggested guidelines.

Remember that the weekend is for those who have accepted Christ as their Savior and are active in a congregation. The Walk is not designed to fix someone's emotional or personal problems. It is not a psychology clinic, a consoling or counseling service, an escape from reality weekend or a last resort to save someone.

Please be sure that your candidate is cheerfully looking forward to a weekend of Christian companionship, worship, singing, prayer and spiritual moments.

Pray for strength and guidance as you consider sponsoring a candidate

Ask God for help in selecting candidates who are truly ready to attend a Walk. If you do not have a close personal relationship with someone you would like to sponsor, get to know them socially outside of church. Your candidate's actions and attitudes in a public environment will help you confirm their Christian commitment. Talk about your Emmaus spiritual experience when the time seems right without divulging details that would be a pleasant surprise on the candidate's Walk. Make an effort not to overload your candidate with your own enthusiasm which might hinder their desire to attend a Walk. Do not push your candidate into attending a Walk; let them decide on their own.

Make a formal appointment with your candidate

Schedule enough time with your candidate to fully discuss the commitment for a three day Walk to Emmaus weekend. This is a serious meeting so arrange a place where the candidate will not be distracted by activities, children or phone interruptions. Explain to them the role you will play when they are attending a Walk. Answer any questions they may have about the application details and a general outline of the activities. Explain to the candidate about group reunions, community gatherings, serving their church and the scholarship program for those in need. If they are married be sure that the spouse can attend this meeting. Help them fill out the candidate application and obtain the **\$20.00** deposit. If someone else is sponsoring the spouse ask them to join you at this meeting. Remember that each spouse must fill out their own application and make their own deposit.

Pray for your candidate

Focus your prayer on how your candidate can deepen their faith and become a bright beacon for Christ in this secular world. Remember, that many were praying for you before, during and after your Walk. Put this wonderful revelation to work for your candidate! Stay close to your candidate during the time before the Walk. This will ensure that the candidate stays enthused about attending and may help alleviate any doubts or jitters. Be sure to include the candidate's spouse in your prayers that they will be supportive and understanding. Continue to pray for your candidate after the Walk for spiritual strength, a deeper study of God's word and enthusiasm to sponsor a candidate of their own.

Equal spousal commitment

If the candidate is married, approach both the candidate and spouse about attending a Walk. This is important because Emmaus can indirectly strengthen the spiritual bond in a marriage. Be sure that the spouse is supportive. If one spouse wants to attend and one does not, prayerfully wait for six months before approaching them again. We want to be sure the Walk to Emmaus does not cause division within a marriage. **If only one spouse will be attending a Walk, be sure that you send the reasons in writing to the Heartland Faithful Emmaus Registrar along with the application.** This request will be forwarded to the Community Lay Director for approval.

Continuing preparations

Send in the candidate's application form (filled out and signed), your sponsorship form and the \$20.00 deposit. If the spouse is attending a concurrent weekend please try to send both applications together. At times there is a waiting list of people wanting to go on a Walk so get the applications in ASAP. Your candidate and you as their sponsor will get confirmation in the mail. If the candidate application form or your sponsorship form is not complete it will be sent back to you for further attention. This will only delay a Walk confirmation.

The Walk weekend

It is very important that you personally attend the sponsor's hour at the Walk site. Candlelight services on Saturday night often can be the highlight of the weekend so **be there**. If the spouse has already been on a Walk make an effort to see that they attend. You must make every effort to attend 4th Day closing ceremonies to welcome your candidate into the Emmaus community. Arrange for transportation back to the candidate's home on Sunday evening.

Fourth Day

Contact your candidate the first part of the week following their Pilgrim Walk. This is a good time to compare notes with them about the Emmaus experience and how it will help them build a stronger spiritual life. If it is convenient meet with them and pray together so that a new stronger bond will develop between the two of you. Be aware that your candidate will be "on top of the mountain" and may be concerned about slipping back into secular values that were discarded during their Walk weekend. Encourage them to go back to their church with a new, enthusiastic attitude to make it stronger through laity involvement.

Groups and gatherings

Make sure your candidate attends a group reunion. Invite them to come to yours, or suggest other groups you are aware of. This is perhaps the most important aspect of remaining active in Emmaus. It is your responsibility to help your candidate find a suitable group. If there is a great distance to gatherings, help your candidate begin a group in their area.

New Emmaus member, new sponsor?

Your candidate's spiritual enthusiasm is bound to spill over on their friends. One of the most frequently asked questions of new Emmaus members is "what has happened to you?" This is a perfect time for a new member to start working on sponsoring candidates of their own. Make sure that your candidate has all of the necessary paperwork, information and skills to be a sponsor. Offer your assistance!

The responsibilities of sponsorship are great, but the rewards are priceless!