Sponsorship

Southwest Texas Conference

Emmaus Community
Objectives

• After this training, you will be able to:
  — Define what is sponsorship
  — Determine whom to sponsor
  — Assume the responsibilities of sponsorship
  — Answer some of the basic questions about sponsorship
  — Spread the word about The Walk to Emmaus
Introduction

• A sponsor is one who takes responsibility for another
• The suffix “-ship” refers to the skill involved in the activity
• Sponsorship is the skill of taking responsibility for another
• It requires
  — A lot of deep knee bends (praying for your pilgrim)
  — A lot of physical energy
  — Much time
  — Extreme perseverance for the long haul
• The cost of discipleship — Luke 14:28-32
• Sponsorship is a dynamic partnership between you and God Ω
What is Sponsorship?

- The act of your revisiting The Walk to Emmaus experience with the person whom God has laid on your heart
- It is one of the most important aspects of The Walk to Emmaus
- The strength of any Emmaus community is a direct result of that community’s recruiting practices
- Should commit to recruiting strong church leaders in order to strengthen the local church
- The Walk to Emmaus is not for everyone
- Be certain that the individual you invite is right for Emmaus, and that Emmaus is right for that individual
Scriptural Principles

• **Prayer**
  - The first step of sponsorship
  - Commit the process to God
  - Release to God
    - Our control
    - Our desires
    - Our expectations
  - Allow God to work through us
  - Empty ourselves of self to be filled with
    - God’s instruction
    - God’s timing
    - God’s person for us to sponsor Ω
Scriptural Principles

- **Openness to God**
  - Enables us to become God's instruments in furthering divine will through The Walk to Emmaus
  - Includes having our eyes open to see God at work
    - **Psa 119:18**
    - Means we listen
      - **Psa 78:1, Isa 28:3, Jer 11:7**
      - **Matt 13:9**
  - Allows us to receive God's instruction
    - Even when it doesn't conform to our expectations (Jer 42:6)
  - Sensitizes us as to how God wants to renew and revitalize the church using all the aspects of the Emmaus experience
Scriptural Principles

• **Calling by Name**
  – **God called people by name**
    • **Noah, Abraham, Samuel, Esther, and others**
  – **Jesus called individuals**
    • **Twelve disciples by name (Mark 1:16-20)**
    • **Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)**
    • **Saul of Tarsus on road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19)**
  – Disciples prayed for help in replacing Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:23-26)
  – **Nowhere in the Gospels do we see a general call for volunteers!**
Good Sponsorship

• **It is “the first act of agape” before a Walk ever begins**

• **It undergirds the whole weekend “with sacrificial love on behalf of each Pilgrim”**

• **It is the foundation for a healthy, effective Emmaus Movement, which results in the renewal of the church**

• **Wise sponsorship builds up the body of Christ**
Whom Not to Sponsor

- **Anyone who would find The Walk a discomforting experience**
  - Beliefs about God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit that differ from the traditional Christian belief of the Holy Trinity
  - The Walk is not a place for theological or religious debate
  - Anyone from a Christian group that have specific dietary restrictions and Sabbath celebrations that the Emmaus weekend experience cannot provide
- **Anyone who is not a member of a church**
Whom Not to Sponsor

- Anyone currently involved in emotional distress
  - Death of a loved one
  - Divorce
  - Work downsizing, etc.

- Anyone with protracted health problems
  - Facing surgery or recovering from surgery
  - With conditions that won’t allow them to sit for long periods of time
Whom Not to Sponsor?

• **ANYONE WHO IS A CHURCH-HOPPER**
  — Joins a church, finds something wrong, complains, leaves
  — Like the seed sown on rocky soil (Matt 13:20-21) — grows but does not have a strong root; it wavers and falls, never producing fruit.

• **ANYONE WHO IS A SOAPBOXER**
  — Uses any forum to dominate the situation
  — Does not want to hear other opinions
  — Chide those who don’t agree (Eph 5:6, Col 2:8)
Whom Not to Sponsor?

- Anyone who differs doctrinally from the basic doctrine espoused in *The Walk to Emmaus*

  — Controversy over doctrine leads to divisiveness

  — *The Walk* is designed to bring the body of *Christ* together
Whom to Sponsor?

- Anyone already on a pilgrimage
  - Willing to grow and move forward in their journey of faith
  - Living a life that is pleasing to God
  - Anyone that has a Christian fervor
  - Knows God can make and has made a difference in life
  - Evidence an excitement about being a Christian
Whom to Sponsor?

• A church leader who is an authenticator

- Gives prayerful, careful, and fair consideration of ideas
- Listens more than they speak (James 1:19)
- Well respected among the membership
- When given a job, does it to completion
- Pursues God’s calling
Who to Sponsor?

- A church leader who is a servant
  - Puts discipleship into action
  - Willingly does whatever is asked of them
  - Are the first to see a need and make an effort to fulfill it
  - Receive little recognition for their effort, and prefer it that way
  - Receive joy from serving God in the little ways
Whom to Sponsor?

- Anyone in the church who is seeking a service role
  - Faithful attendes
    - Dependable with many talents and gifts
    - Searching for a place to serve
      - Waiting to be asked to do something
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

1. Spend concentrated time in prayer to discern whom God wants you to sponsor
   - Take a list of names with you in prayer
   - Leave them with God
   - Let God reveal a name
   - May take a long time before you hear God’s response
   - Doesn’t mean only one on the list will attend a walk – God’s timing is of the utmost importance
   - It is not your responsibility for getting everyone you know on a Walk to Emmaus
     - You will be frustrated
     - Those not called to go on a Walk will be angry at you
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

2. Continue to spend time in prayer
   ▪ Devote prayer time to your potential pilgrim and yourself
   ▪ Include requests:
     ▪ For discernment as to the best time to discuss The Walk to Emmaus
     ▪ Openness on the part of your prospective pilgrim
     ▪ A humble spirit for you for the presentation
     ▪ A hope that God would guide your discussion time
3. Make an appointment to meet the potential pilgrim
   ▪ Before the meeting, obtain a copy of *What is Emmaus?* for the potential pilgrim, and re-read your copy
   ▪ Before leaving for the meeting, pray that God will give you calmness, assurance, and perseverance
   ▪ Tell about your experience with The Walk and how it has helped you
   ▪ Give them their copy of *What is Emmaus?*
   ▪ Answer any and all questions
   ▪ If you don’t know the answer, write them down and get back to them
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

4. **Give your prospect an application**
   - Explain everything on the application
   - Answer any question
   - Request that they prayerfully consider the offer to attend
   - Ask the prospect for a time to check back on their response
   - While awaiting the response, pray for the prospect
   - You will get one of three responses
     1. “I’m not interested”
     2. “Not now, but perhaps later”
     3. “I’m willing to attend”
   - **Being turned down is not cause for disappointment or discouragement – reminder of God’s time**
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

5. Obtain the application
   ▪ Make sure all information is complete, including the pilgrim’s pastor’s signature
   ▪ You fill in the sponsor’s portion – include anything the Team members would need to know
   ▪ Submit the application with the appropriate fee
   ▪ Remind your pilgrim to reserve the dates for the 72-hour experience
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

6. Begin preparations to request personal agape letters
   ▪ May require some sleuthing on your part so your pilgrim doesn’t know what you are doing (but don’t lie!)
   ▪ Wait for confirmation letter from Registration
     ▪ One letter to you
     ▪ One letter to your pilgrim
   ▪ You will receive information and pre-printed agape request letter from the Lay Director of the walk about 5 weeks prior to the beginning date of the walk.
   ▪ Mail out requests immediately.
     ▪ Remember: only 8-12 letters are given in the conference room, so it is not necessary to request letters from everyone who can write.
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

7. Contact you pilgrim

- Make sure they have received their letter regarding the upcoming walk
- Offer guidance as what to pack and what not to pack
  - Remember no electronic devices
    - Cameras
    - Computers
    - Cell phones, etc
- Provide positive encouragement and reassurance
- Prepare them for a 72-hour encounter with Jesus Christ
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

8. Take your pilgrim to The Walk site and assist with check in

- Make sure that they eat before arriving at the retreat center
- Don’t allow them to arrive on their own
- Check-in with registration table
- Get them settled in the cabins
- Return to the meet and greet room and remain with your pilgrim throughout, introducing them to others.
- After send-off, attend sponsor’s hour
- Pray for your pilgrim
- Place their cross on the large cross
9. Spend as much time as possible in prayer for your pilgrim
   ▪ In addition, be part of the 72-hour prayer vigil
   ▪ When your pilgrim see your name, it provides a special lift Ω
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

10. Check on your pilgrim’s family

- If your pilgrim lives alone
  - May need to check on pets or plants
  - Pick up mail
  - Take out trash

- If your pilgrim is married
  - Offer to baby-sit so spouse can shop or have some time alone

- Do all these things in the spirit of cooperation and servanthood
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

11. Attend the Saturday candlelight service and closing

- Bring any last minute personal agape letters
- Another example of personal sacrifice to support your pilgrim
- Reinforces your commitment to your pilgrim
- Closing will encourage your pilgrim
- Provide transportation home
- Any “special” agape should be held until the trip home
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

12. Take the new member to the 4th day meeting and assist them in joining a reunion group

- You may have to step forward and become part of another reunion group
- May continue for several months until new group is established
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

13. Get the new member to gatherings and other Community events

- Introduce them to others in the Fourth Day Group Community (this is not the church gatherings)
- Help them learn about Emmaus
- Show them the many opportunities to serve
- You explain and model progressive servanthood
- Encourage them to be involved in their local church
Responsibilities of the Sponsor

14. Teach them how to be a good sponsor
   - Help them understand the responsibilities of good sponsorship
   - Relay information carefully and in complete openness
   - Avoid approaching sponsorship with an arrogant point of view (Mark 10:42-43)
   - Review the materials on sponsorship
   - Explain why Emmaus has a detailed and consistent approach to sponsorship
The Equal Commitment Rule

• **Emmaus:**
  - Does not want to be a divisive force, especially in marriages
  - Is not intended for just married couples
  - Encourages the participation of both spouses in The Walk to Emmaus

• **So:**
  - Present to both husband and wife at the same time
  - If one partner does not choose to attend, suggest that they pray about the decision for 3 months
  - Pray
  - If still disinterested, sponsor the other, as long as the other agrees Ω
The Equal Commitment Rule

• If one spouse does not participate in a church, and understands their spouses involvement, you need not wait the 3 month period

• The rule does not assure marital tranquility, but removes an area of potential conflict within the marriage

• Does not mean that a person cannot attend The Walk to Emmaus unless a spouse also attends

• Interpretation of this rule is not the responsibility of the sponsor or registrar, but of the board.
Q & A About Sponsorship

• How many should I sponsor on a Walk?
  – Simple answer:
    • one (1)
  – Sponsoring a second person will compromise your ability to be a good sponsor
  – Count the cost of discipleship before you begin to sponsor (Luke 14:28-32)
  – Remember, it is not just a 72-hour weekend you are sponsoring, but through your pilgrim’s 4th Days
Q & A About Sponsorship

• Can I work on a team and sponsor someone on the same weekend?
  – Not easily, but sometimes unavoidable
  – You must have help from others to handle those responsibilities outside The Walk environment
  – Be sure that the pilgrim knows that you have a job to do on the weekend
  – Let the pilgrim know that you want them to experience the full weekend as if you are not there
Q & A About Sponsorship

• How soon should I sponsor?
  – All of us were enthusiastic right after our Walks
  – But this enthusiasm far exceeds knowledge and effectiveness
  – Recommend about a year before sponsoring someone
  – Learn about the complete Emmaus movement and to participate in Emmaus functions
  – During this time, the sponsor should be training the new pilgrim in the total responsibility of sponsorship
  – If you can’t wait, and you have followed all the steps, get an experienced member of the Community to help you with sponsorship
• Can I sponsor someone to attend a Walk in another community?
  – Answer these questions:
    • Why do you want to do this? (close family member)
    • Will you be able to handle all the responsibilities of the sponsor? (before, during, and after the weekend)
  – Your answer in all likelihood would be NO
  – Thus the answer to the question is NO
  – However, there is a solution:
    • Get someone in the other community to cosponsor with you
    • Split the responsibilities; you could handle the pre-Walk details, and your cosponsor could handle the post-Walk activities
Q & A About Sponsorship

• Why have separate weekends for men and women?
  – Single people and married people participate on the same weekend
    • Having a weekend without spouses allow both to participate equally
  – Same-gender groups encourage freer discussion without the restraints some might feel with spouses present
Q & A About Sponsorship

• What about agape letters?
  – Goal is to have 8 to 12 letters from family members and close friends for the pilgrim
  – These letters
    • Should be positive and uplifting
    • Conveying a meaningful message from the writer to the pilgrim
    • Relate a special moment the two have shared
  – Work behind the scenes to get the letters
  – Agape letters come Sunday afternoon, the others will be put in their packets as a 4th day surprise
Q & A About Sponsorship

• What about providing my pilgrim gifts and special surprises during the weekend?
  – This is not part of the Model
  – The message of The Walk is that God loves each person with the same love; God does not have favorites
  – A special gift will short-circuit this message
  – Sometimes results in problems with other pilgrims, who wonder why they didn’t get such a gift
  – Any gifts or special surprises will be collected and returned to the sponsor
  – Sponsors can present these items as 4th day surprises at the conclusion of the weekend Ω
Personal Contact Techniques

• **Individuals**
  – Pray about whom to sponsor
  – Wait for God’s leading
  – Be sure you are contacting Christians who belong to a church
  – Use a personal setting to speak with people
  – Affirm the person’s walk with the Lord
  – Be open in your discussions
  – Testify to the changes in your life following your Walk experience
  – Use simple terms and avoid Emmaus jargon
  – Share that Emmaus is not a secret society
Personal Contact Techniques

• Clergy
  – Be sensitive to the fact that clergy already have many demands on their time
  – Counsel with a clergy member of the Community prior to approaching clergy
Personal Contact Techniques

• Group Contact
  – Obtain permission to place informational brochures and registration forms in display areas within the church
  – List Emmaus events and activities on your church calendar, including the dates for The Walks
  – Invite persons personally to attend gatherings
  – Publish times and places of reunion groups
  – Acknowledge those who have attended a Walk and those who have participated on a team
  – Introduce Emmaus through intentional group meetings where supportive Emmaus pilgrims and clergy are present
DE COLORES!