



What is the Walk to Emmaus?

In the twenty-fourth chapter of the gospel of Luke, there is a story about two disciples of Jesus who were walking along the road from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus three days after Jesus was Crucified. Along the way, the risen Christ came and walked with them, but they did not recognize him. As they walked along, "this stranger" unfolded the meaning of the scriptures in a way that "made their hearts burn" with excitement. The story ends with them recognizing this stranger as Jesus as they share in a communion meal.

This story provides the image for the Walk to Emmaus. It is a three-day journey with Jesus. The journey, or Walk, begins Thursday evening and concludes Sunday afternoon. At Emmaus, you will spend three busy but very enjoyable days. You will live and study together with a group of other Christians also seeking to deepen their faith. Together there is singing, discussion, prayer, worship, and shared meals. Discussions center around fifteen talks given by laypersons and clergy. These talks function as a wonderful refresher course in the Christian faith. The central theme of God's grace revealed through Jesus is woven through these talks. The structure of the three days is identical for all Emmaus Walks throughout the world.

History of Emmaus

The Walk To Emmaus is based upon the Cursillo de Cristiandad (Spanish for "short course in Christianity"), which originated within the Roman Catholic Church in Spain in the late 1940s. Cursillo moved to America in the late 1950s. It was primarily a Roman Catholic spiritual renewal movement until the 1970s. As Cursillo began accepting applications from Protestant Christians, efforts began among some groups to make the Cursillo experience more available to all Protestants. In the late 1970s, the Upper Room (a worldwide publishing division of the United Methodist Church) formed what was first called The Upper Room Cursillo Community. In 1981 the name was changed to "Emmaus". Since the early 1980's the ecumenical Emmaus movement has spread throughout the United States and is now spreading throughout the world. Currently, there are 225 Emmaus Communities which collectively put on hundreds of three-day "Walks" each year. All of these "Walks" are put on by persons who participated in a Walk and went on to volunteer their time and energy to help make other Walks possible.

Who Should Consider Participating in a Walk?

Emmaus is for Christians who are looking to deepen their spiritual lives. One does not have to be a "pillar of the church" to participate. Emmaus is not structured to move participants from Point A. to Point B; instead, Emmaus is built upon the belief that the Spirit is alive and active and as we humbly make room for the Spirit to move in our lives . . . wonderful things can happen. Emmaus for many many people has been a way to make some space for the Spirit to work and transform. Emmaus is deeply ecumenical: on any given Walk there will be people from different church backgrounds and from different places in their spiritual journeys. This is part of the richness of an Emmaus weekend. If you are seeking to grow in your faith and are interested in Emmaus--talk to someone who has gone through an Emmaus Walk and ask to be sponsored.

What To Expect?

Nothing Heavy Handed: Throughout the three days of a Walk there is no pressure to speak, share, pray out loud, or come forward. People are encouraged to share as they feel led

Worship: Times of worship are richly scattered through the three days of Emmaus. Since Emmaus is ecumenical in its origins, there is a blending of different traditions of Christian worship. So you will probably worship in ways that are new as well as in ways that are familiar.

Christian Community: The three days is a living out of the Early Church's model of Community. Through worship and small group interaction, shared meals and fellowship--the power of "The Body of Christ" becomes real.

Some Times For Silence: While Emmaus is not a "monastic" renewal experience, there are some times through the three days for silent prayer and meditation.

Lots of Good Music and Good Food: Singing together is an important part of Emmaus. You will sing many familiar songs of the faith, and learn a number of new songs. Table fellowship is a big part of an Emmaus weekend . . .with lots of good food.

What Happens After A Walk?

One of the strengths of Emmaus is that while a Walk only lasts three days, afterward you are invited to build upon it for the rest of your life. Those who participate are encouraged to continue to further develop their own spiritual lives and to become more active disciples of Christ through their churches. To nurture this process, each Emmaus Community encourages:

Reunion Groups: weekly groups of four to six people who meet to reflect on their quest for spiritual growth and encourage one another in their discipleship.

Community Gatherings: Monthly events where the whole Emmaus Community gathers for worship and fellowship.

Working Future Walks: For many persons who go on a Walk, the absolute best part of the experience is the chance to give to others through volunteering to work an Emmaus weekend. There is unlimited opportunity to serve in this way.

A Word About Sponsorship?

Each person who participates in a Walk needs to be sponsored by one who has already completed a Walk. This is not for the purpose of excluding anyone. Sponsorship ensures that each participant in a Walk has someone to explain what Emmaus is about and to provide support and encouragement. Nearly all who go through a Walk come to see how invaluable their sponsors were for making the Walk come alive for them.