

This is kind of long, and we don't expect you to memorize it and use it word for word. This is just to explain the basics, and then you can put it into words you are comfortable with.

What is the Walk to Emmaus?

The Walk to Emmaus, or Emmaus Walk, is a spiritual experience meant to help people grow closer to Christ and develop as disciples and leaders. This, in turn, strengthens the local church. The Emmaus Walk does this by demonstrating Christ's servant attitude and encouraging those who attend (Pilgrims) to be a servant like Christ was, and to put others above themselves.

Many consider the Emmaus Walk a retreat, but it is so much more than that. The experience begins with a short course in Christian attitude, made up of 15 talks. Each talk is given by a lay person or clergy, and explains God's grace, different aspects of Christian discipleship, how to deepen your relationship with Christ, and how you fit into the church. The entire weekend is bathed in prayer and meditation. Each day, the pilgrims grow closer together and to God through times of worship and fellowship. Each day, the pilgrims are encouraged to celebrate Holy Communion and come into an intimate time with God.

Throughout the weekend, the Pilgrims are supported by the Emmaus Community, those who have gone on previous walks (usually called Fourth Day since they have attended the three days that make up the Emmaus weekend). The Fourth Day continue in what they experienced by serving the current Pilgrims in preparing meals, cleaning, and taking care of everything necessary for the Pilgrims to focus entirely on discipleship. Each weekend is also lifted up in prayer through the 72 prayer chart. During each walk, there is someone praying 24 hours a day from sendoff to closing (Thursday night to Sunday evening).

After the three days of the Emmaus Walk, Pilgrims join with the other Fourth Day, are are encouraged to meet in reunion groups. Many already exist, but a group of Fourth Day can start their own if they want to. These small groups let people continue with what they have learned and continue to build each other up. Through these groups, Fourth Day are also encouraged to take their faith into their part of the world, whether it be the workplace, school, or grocery store. Reunion groups help keep the fire kindled on the weekend from dying into an ember.

Where "The Walk to Emmaus" Comes From

What exactly is the Emmaus Walk? No, it doesn't involve a three day physical walk. Instead, it takes its name from Luke 24:13-35. This passage tells of an encounter that two disciples had with Jesus after His resurrection. They were on their way to Emmaus, and were discussing what had just happened to Jesus. When He joined them, they did not recognize Him. This serves as the main message of the Emmaus Walk, that we can become blind to Jesus by focusing on the difficulties we are facing. Even though Jesus is right by our side, we choose to see only our sadness. We let our gloomy attitudes block out the sun- or more appropriately, Son- shine.

At the end of the passage, Christ enters with the disciples, and breaks bread with them. When they take the bread, their eyes are opened, and they realize that they had been walking with Jesus. In all of their grief, they did not see the One who came to bring joy to those who accepted Him. One disciple then asked the other, "Did not our hearts burn within us as we walked with the Lord on the road here?" That fire that was kindled inside of them brought back to their minds what they had experienced while Jesus lived among them. They hurried back to Jerusalem to share what they now knew with the other disciples.

While the passage ends there, the story does not. Jesus rose from the dead, and ascended into Heaven to sit at God's right hand. The disciples become part of the Body of Christ through the Holy Spirit. Jesus then sent them out into the world to complete the task He had given them in Matthew 28 16:20. They also learned by experience what it meant to be a disciple of Christ.

The Emmaus Walk creates a similar experience for us to have our eyes opened, that we may clearly see the Lord. Just as the two disciples hurried to tell others about their experience, the Emmaus Walk offers Pilgrims a way to share what they have experienced with others they meet. Through relationships formed during the weekend, they are given support so that their fire does not die out.