



## EMMAUS MINISTRY RETREAT GUIDELINES

**IMPORTANT:** These Retreat Guidelines should be read *verbatim* during the opening “Welcome” session and highlighted again at the beginning of small group sessions.

- This ministry attempts to serve the spiritual needs of the individual grieving parent. We’re not here as a support group or for group therapy. For those reasons, we will not “go around the room” and you will not be asked to introduce yourself or expected to tell your story to the group. We ask that you share only what is comfortable for you to do so, and only when you are ready to do so.
- It helps to remember that no matter how close we may be to each other, each of us is probably at a different stage in our spiritual journey and most likely in a different place in our grieving process.
- Some parents may want to participate here today by listening only—and that is perfectly fine. Participation happens in many ways. Please plan on contributing as much—or as little—as you like and respect the wishes of others.
- Please help us allow everyone to have time to speak. In order to permit everyone to say what they feel called to share, while still appreciating the constraints of time, you may be asked to pause when addressing a group so that someone else may be heard.
- Within these walls today, the only one with all the answers is the Holy Spirit. Please do not assume that any of the presenters, or you yourself, knows how someone else should feel or act. Feelings are neither right nor wrong, and everyone should be able to speak from their heart without being concerned that someone may correct them or challenge what they say.
- Everything that is shared by you or with you today should be considered strictly confidential, and not repeated to anyone or anywhere outside of these walls. Every one of us has the right to total confidentiality regarding our discussions today. Please do not share anything on any media without specific permission of the owner.
- At the end of each session, we will tell you where and when the next session will meet. All sessions are optional. If you are not there when it is time to begin, we will assume you have chosen not to attend that session. If you begin to feel overwhelmed at any time, feel free to step out for a time or to use your entire time here privately.