



*“God does not call the qualified. He qualifies the called.”*

**Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents  
Training Session Outline  
for  
Retreat Leaders  
Registration Coordinators  
Hospitality Managers  
Diocesan Liaisons  
8/26/23  
as of 8/17/23**

**REQUIRED before Training Session**

1. Sign EMFGP Retreat Team Agreement
2. Purchase EMFGP Retreat Team Guidebook/Receive link to digital version
3. EMFGP Retreat Team Guidebook
  - Read Chapter 4
  - Review App 5
  - Read REV Appendix #11 and REV Appendix #23 (attached)
  - Review Appendices #9, #12, #13a & b, # 18, #19, #20, #21a&b
4. Printout this Training Session Outline
5. Have Training Session Outline and EMFGP Retreat Team Guidebook available during training

**RECOMMENDED before Training Session**

1. Complete [Self-Reflection Worksheet](#) (if you are a grieving parent)
2. Read [Sorrow Like No Other](#) booklet
3. View [What We'd Like You to Know](#) video (10 minutes)





## EMFGP OVERVIEW

- 2009 Beginnings
- Core Values
- Why it works
- Current EMFGP Offerings
- Current EMFGP Diocesan Partnerships

## UNDERSTANDING OUR PARENTS

- **Who it is for:**
  - All Grieving Parents
    - Regardless of...
      - Religion
      - Where they are in their spiritual journeys
      - Age of child at death (from conception to old age)
      - Cause of death (including miscarriage, abortion, suicide, etc.)
      - Time since the death
- **How it is offered:**
  - For grieving parents by other grieving parents, spiritual leaders, and diocesan/parish personnel
  - In cooperation with EMFGP Central
  - In compliance with the EMFGP Retreat Team Guidebook
  - Based on Rev App 12 (attached): reading it verbatim and providing hard copy
  - In compliance with Catholic Church teachings (App 21a)
  - Without judgement or assumption
  - Acknowledging that the grief of a parent is a sorrow like no other



- **When it is offered:**
  - On an ongoing basis, with at least two retreats/year/diocese
- **Resources:**
  - [\*Sorrow Like No Other\*](#) booklet overview
  - [\*What We'd Like You to Know\*](#) video overview

## OUR JOB AS RETREAT TEAM MEMBERS

- Worker Bees of the Holy Spirit

## OVERVIEW: RETREAT TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Retreat Leader
2. Registration Coordinator
3. Hospitality Coordinator
4. Diocesan Liaison (s)

---

### Additional Team Members

- Spiritual Leader [App 6]
- Parent Witness [App 14]
- Small Group Facilitators [App 15]
- Volunteers
  - Facility contact
  - Set-up/clean-up
  - Check-In
  - Hospitality
  - Retreat materials preparation-folders/candles/Parent Directory/handouts/name tags [App 12; App 18; App 19; App 20; App 20a; App 21a &b]





## **EMMAUS RETREAT TEAM MEMBERS**

(Note: Roles can be reassigned according to your needs)

### **1. RETREAT LEADER**

- Leads team
- Leads retreat (App 5 Script) - Charley's role
- Leads completion of REV Appendix 11 and REV Appendix 23
- Coordinates prayer service participants (App 13a and 13b)
- Coordinates volunteers
- Schedules Zoom meeting 4 weeks out with Emmaus Central

### **2. REGISTRATION COORDINATOR**

- Communicates with parents
- Tracks registrations/PQ responses
- Coordinates retreat materials preparation

### **COMMUNICATES WITH PARENTS**

- Pastoral Phone Calls [Ch 4, pp 23-26]
  - Challenges
  - Email Messages
    - Pre-call email to all
    - 2 VM messages-need to connect
    - Email assuming not coming
    - PQ via info via phone w/photo texted or emailed
  - Goals of the Call
    - To confirm that they are grieving parents
    - To establish rapport
    - To help them feel comfortable sharing their stories and where they are in their spiritual journeys
    - To share what the retreat is and is not
    - To share Emmaus Ministry Guidelines



- To answer questions about the retreat
- To give information on the Parent Questionnaire and determine whether or not they can complete it online (Alternatively: complete manually via phone; send photo via text or Staples scan and email)
- To send PQ email with link [See samples in *Updated Appendices/Additions*]
- Parent Questionnaire(s) [Ch 4, p 25]
  - PQ email samples
  - Available PQ types (no photo; multiple)

## **TRACKS REGISTRATIONS/PQ RESPONSES**

- Registration Spreadsheet [App 9]
- Registration info/PQ info

## **COORDINATES RETREAT MATERIALS PREPARATION**

- Memorial candles [App18]
- Orientation folders [App12]
- Name tags/Parent Directory [App 20, 20a]
- Handouts

## **3. HOSPITALITY MANAGER** (See Hospitality Training Summary below)

- Food and beverage planning/coordination/purchasing/ execution
  - Light breakfast snacks; sandwich/salad lunch/ casserole dinner
  - Ongoing snacks/beverages throughout the day
- Environment
  - Table clothes; simple centerpieces
- Coordination with on-site contact

## **4. DIOCESAN LIAISON(S)**

**GOAL:** 2 retreats per year in each Catholic U.S. Diocese

- Coordinate diocesan EMFGP retreat scheduling
- Heavily promote all EMFGP retreats
- Support your diocesan EMFGP retreat teams in any other ways possible
- Coordinate an EMFGP retreat once/year at your pastoral center? (IDEAL)

## **HEAVILY PROMOTE RETREATS**

- Identify parish interest in adopting the Emmaus Ministry
- Offer diocesan “Come and See Information Sessions”



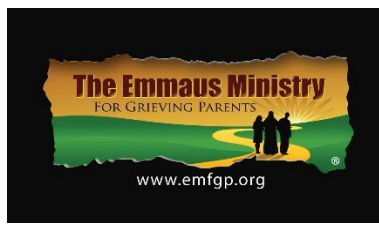
- Add Emmaus Ministry to diocesan website under both “Upcoming Events” and “Resources” for families and bereavement.
- Aggressively promote ministry and upcoming retreats [Ch 5; App 24] in...

#### Meetings

- Regional EMFGP Come and See Information Session
- Deanery meetings
- Pastoral Associate meetings
- Other

#### Media

- Diocesan newspaper article (s)
- Diocesan brochure [App 24]
- Bulletin ads
- Social media
- Flocknotes
- Cards/brochures to local hospitals/funeral homes
- Catholic TV station interviews
- Other



## EMMAUS MINISTRY FOR GRIEVING PARENTS MISSION AND CORE VALUES

### MISSION

Inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, the Emmaus Ministry is a Catholic ministry serving the spiritual needs of all grieving parents (no matter where they are in their spiritual journeys or what religion), whose children of any age (from conception to old age) have died by any cause (including abortion, miscarriage, suicide, overdose, etc.) no matter how long ago (from a few weeks to more than 40 years ago). All of our programs are grounded in Catholic Church teachings on life after death.

### CORE VALUES

**Our total focus is on the spirituality of the individual parent's grieving process.**

- Our retreats provide parents with spiritual nourishment and the opportunity to spend dedicated time focused on their spiritual journeys after the death of their children.
- Retreat team members handle the logistics of preparing for the retreat and having it run smoothly. What actually happens at each retreat, however, is the work of the Holy Spirit, the parents, and the children.

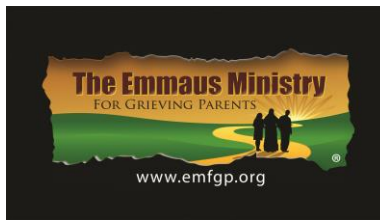
**We offer spiritual retreats, not support groups, workshops, or therapy.**

- Parents are never called on to introduce themselves or speak or share (Many people participate by listening only)
- Retreat team members recognize and value the confidentiality of parents.
- Parents are never required to participate in any retreat session; they choose to spend their time however they wish.
- Parents may participate in as many retreats as they wish.
- Our retreats are offered by other grieving parents, diocesan/parish personnel, and spiritual leaders under the guidance of the Holy Spirit

**We acknowledge that the grief of a parent is a sorrow like no other and serve their spiritual needs without judgment or assumptions.**

**We offer ongoing support, ideally with at least two retreats/year/diocese.**





## **REV2 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, 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.
- As grieving parents, we know that the last thing we want to do is increase another’s pain. For this reason, please refrain from any judgmental comments like “My son wasn’t a drug addict or a criminal, so I don’t know why he had to die.” None of our children deserved to die.





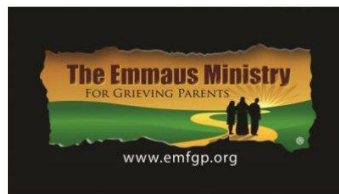


### REVISED: SAMPLE ONE-DAY EMMAUS RETREAT SCHEDULE

Recommended Retreat Team				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration Coordinator</li> <li>Retreat Leader</li> <li>Hospitality Coordinator</li> <li>Volunteers</li> <li>Diocesan Liaison(s)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spiritual Leader</li> <li>Parent Witness</li> <li>Small Group Facilitators</li> <li>Mass Celebrant</li> <li>Spiritual Director (if available)</li> <li>Confessor (if available)</li> </ul>		
	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	RESPONSIBILITY	MATERIALS NEEDED
<b>PRE-RETREAT</b>	Local inquiry calls/Local manual registrations/ Follow-up phone calls ( <b>Ch 4</b> )			Parent Questionnaire Links
<b>9:30am-10:00am</b>	Check In Meet & Greet		Volunteers (Retreat Team welcoming all)	Orientation Folders (App12/App 20/App21) 6' table/2 chairs 20 boxes of tissues throughout
<b>9:30am-10:00am</b>	<b>Breakfast Snacks</b>	<b>Dining Area</b>		
<b>9:55am-10:00am</b>	Retreat Team Prayer		Entire Retreat Team; Prayer Leader:	
<b>10:00am-10:15am</b>	Welcome/House Information Introductions General Info Retreat Guidelines ( <b>App 12</b> )		Site Host Retreat Leader [App 5]	6' rectangular tables arranged in a square to seat 25 people 6' table for handouts 6' table for prayer shawls? Prayer shawls/scarves?
<b>10:00am-4:30pm</b>	Ongoing Snacks & beverages available Candles & music playing in the Chapel/Church			
<b>10:15am-10:45am</b>	Opening Prayer Service Candle Ritual ( <b>App 5</b> ) Blessing of Candles/Crosses Candle Lighting /Cross Distribution ( <b>App13a</b> )	Chapel/Church	Prayer Service Leader: Retreat Leader Spiritual Leader? Reader #1: Volunteer Reader #2: Volunteer	6' table w/cloth table cloth for candles in front of altar 24 eight-day sanctuary candles Comfort Crosses Paschal Candle (or substitute)

<b>10:45am-11:00am</b>	<b>Break</b>			
	ACTIVITY	LOCATION IN YOUR FACILITY	RESPONSIBILITY	MATERIALS NEEDED
<b>11:00am-11:40pm</b> <b>11:40am-12:00pm</b>	Reflection Open Discussion ( <b>App 6</b> )		Spiritual Leader Retreat Leader	
<b>12:00pm-12:45pm</b>	<b>Lunch/Free Time</b>	<b>Dining Area</b>		
<b>12:45pm-1:30pm</b>	Parent Witnessing ( <i>Where am I right now in my spiritual journey after the death of my child?</i> ) ( <b>App14</b> )		???	
<b>1:30pm-2:15pm</b>	Small Group: Mothers/Fathers Reflection Question ( <b>App15</b> ) e.g. <i>In your suffering, have you felt the presence or the absence of God?</i>		2-3 Mothers; 1 Father	3-4 small breakout areas to seat 6-8 people Names in bowl
<b>2:15pm-2:45pm</b>	Large Group Sharing		Retreat Leader	
<b>2:45pm-3:00pm</b>	<b>Break</b>			
<b>3:00pm-3:30pm</b>	Letter Writing to God, child, or other	Various	Retreat Leader	Paper/pens/container to burn letters
<b>3:30pm-4:15pm</b>	Parent-to-Parent Emmaus Walk	Various	Retreat Leader	Names in bowl
<b>4:15pm-5:00pm</b>	Choice of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconciliation</li> <li>Spiritual Direction</li> <li>One-on-One Parent Companionship</li> <li>Chapel /Free Time</li> </ul>		Fr. ??? ???	
<b>5:00pm-6:00pm</b>	<b>Mass (App 16)</b>		Vigil	
<b>6:00pm-6:45pm</b>	<b>Dinner/Feedback</b>		Retreat Leader	Evaluation Forms ( <b>App 17</b> )
<b>6:45pm-7:15pm</b>	Closing Prayer Service ( <b>App 13b</b> ) Sacrament of Anointing?		Spiritual Leader Retreat Leader	Sacred oil? Incense (for letters)?





## OTHER RETREAT ITEMS NEEDED

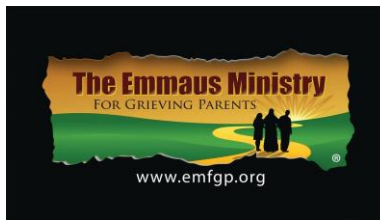
	ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR INITIAL RETREAT [EMFGP = We will bring]
	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	
1	15-20 boxes of tissues available in all meeting spaces and in the Sacred Space where candles will burn and where Prayer Services and Mass will be celebrated [Try to use tissue without lotion, as lotion causes teary eyes to burn.]	
2	CD player, MP3, Ipad or other method to play meditation music in the Sacred Space used to house Memorial Candles	<b>EMFGP</b>
3	Meditation music playlists or CD's to be played during the Prayer Services and when the Sacred Space is not in use for Prayer Services or Mass, but candles are burning throughout the day	<b>EMFGP</b>
4	Six-foot table for Memorial Candles	
5	Six-foot table handouts	
6	Six-foot table for prayer shawls (if you are offering them)	
7	Cloth table cloths for Memorial Candles, Handouts, and Prayer Shawls tables	
8	Basket/container for Comfort Cross distribution	
	<b>PROGRAM ACTIVITIES:</b>	
9	A Paschal Candle, or in its absence, a sanctuary candle substituting for the Paschal Candle, representing the Light of Christ and from which all other candles will be lit	
10	For Opening and Closing Prayer Services, a brass candle lighter with bell snuffer, typically used by altar servers in parishes	<b>EMFGP</b>
11	Wax lighting tapers for candle lighter	<b>EMFGP</b>
12	If you plan to use incense in either the Mass or Closing Prayer Service:	
12a	• Thurible and censer boat with spoon	
12b	• Quick lite charcoal	
12c	• Incense	
13	A method to call participants back to activities—a singing prayer bowl or bell of some sort*	<b>EMFGP</b>



<b>14</b>	If you plan to do parent letter writing and to burn the letters to be offered with incense:	
<b>14a</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper and pens for writing. NOTE: we suggest using resume paper or some other high cotton content paper for the letters. We have found that this burns best into fine ash, while normal copy paper does not. You might want to try burning a piece of the paper you plan to use to determine that it does indeed burn to ash.</li> </ul>	
<b>14b</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An appropriate receptacle in which to collect the completed letters (You can reuse the basket or container used for the Comfort Crosses)</li> </ul>	
<b>14c</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A metal bucket or a large disposable aluminum casserole pan in which to burn the letters</li> </ul>	
<b>14d</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An appropriate receptacle to hold the burned ash of parents' letters (we will use our —or your—prayer bowl)</li> </ul>	<b>EMFGP</b>
<b>15</b>	Business-card-sized pieces of paper folded in half containing each retreatant's name. These will be used to draw names for small group discussion and the Emmaus Walk.	
<b>16</b>	An appropriate receptacle in which to deposit the above single names, from which they will be prayed over and drawn before the small group discussion or Emmaus Walk. (You can reuse your basket or container for the Comfort Crosses.)	
<b>17</b>	Preparing name tags and candles for Walk-Ins:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4-6 blank name tags with Emmaus graphic</li> </ul>	
<b>17a</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-3 blank candles with extra candle back labels to affix if necessary</li> </ul>	
<b>17b</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scissors to cut photocopies of photos parents bring with them to size; double face tape to affix photo to candle</li> </ul>	
<b>17c</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extra blank Avery #22822 clear labels to handwrite child's name and affix on candle</li> </ul>	
<b>18</b>	Memorial Candles (8-day clear sanctuary candles)	
	Comfort Crosses	<b>EMFGP?</b>
<b>18</b>	Optional: prayer shawls	

\*You can purchase a 7" diameter brass singing prayer bowl online for about \$50. We use it for multiple purposes, including #'s 13, 14b & 14d.





## **EMMAUS MINISTRY ONE-DAY RETREAT HOSPITALITY TRAINING SUMMARY**

Once the site is identified, request an onsite liaison or church operations staff to review the kitchen and serving facility. It is optimal to visit the site to personally assess but, if not an option, then by Zoom or phone review with the staff the following.

### **KITCHEN EQUIPMENT**

- Freezer
- Refrigerator
- Usable oven
- Utensils for serving
- Silverware
- Plates
- Coffee cups
- Glasses
- Serving bowls
- Creamers
- Sugars/sweeteners
- Salt and Pepper
- Coffee Urn or Keurig Coffee maker
- Electric Teapot
- Water- can the water in the church be used for drinking/cooking
- Water cooler
- Hot plates
- Kitchen towels, washcloths
- Paper towels
- Napkins
- Coffee stirrers
- ICE and large container- needed to keep water bottles cold and available

After assessing available materials, decide what needs to be purchased the week before the retreat.

### **SUPPLIES**

If plates and coffee cups are not available, you will need (based on 20 people):

- 50 coffee cups; 50 water cups if water cooler is available
- 50 dinner paper plates (lunch and dinner); 40 small paper plates (breakfast muffins/dessert)
- Utensils: 50 forks, knives and spoons; serving utensils
- 60 napkins
- 25 soup bowls if chowder is served at lunch.
- Case of water bottles- at least 40 small bottles
- Plastic tablecloths (depends on the number of tables required)
- Centerpieces (?)



Organizing the delivery of the hospitality is so important. Identify at least two people who can assist you with the stocking of the supplies, preparation and serving of the food and the cleanup. A quiet, coordinated team will make the service of the meals a nurturing gift to the grieving parents.

## **MENU CONSIDERATIONS**

**It is nice to do a menu and display it. Gives people the feeling of a special venue.**

### **Breakfast:**

It is a late arrival at 9:30 so only small snacks are necessary.

Most people like a grab and go option such as small muffins, small yogurt containers and granola bars etc.

Juice is most welcome.

Since Covid people do not like open food or juice so it should be containers.

### **Lunch:**

It is a short time before the lunch break and breakfast so lunch should be light. It is also a short lunch time so dessert that can be taken to the next session is great.

Depending on the season of year dictates the best options.

Winter a chowder is very popular.

Summer pasta salad is popular.

Sandwiches: small finger sandwiches of two varieties work best. Chicken salad, egg salad or ham and cheese with a vegan option such as veggie wraps.

Dessert: cookies or bars such as brownies.

### **Snacks:**

It is helpful to have snacks on the general session tables and available all day in the dining area. Leave the cookies or brownies out after lunch.

Candy on the general session tables is welcome.

Salty snacks are often requested such as pretzels or peanuts (some people don't want the sweets).

### **Dinner:**

There is a long interlude between lunch and dinner.

A hot meal is preferable.

Pasta such as lasagna, stuffed shells etc. is easy to serve, economical and generally liked by most people.

Pasta meals are also best for those kitchens that don't have cooking options as they keep warm or rewarm easily.

Salad is generally also well accepted and necessary for those who have aversion to cheese etc.

Bread or rolls depending on the meal

Butter

Dessert any option is great as everyone is drained and in need of a treat.

**Drinks** for lunch and dinner are a challenge. Coffee and tea should always be available with cream, milk and sweeteners/sugar. Lemonade, iced tea, flavored waters or sparkling drinks are options. Water should always be available. Small water bottles are preferred since the retreat moves from large to small groups and large bottles are unfinished and left behind.

### **Clean Up**

Inquire during your site review about garbage disposal, dishwashing etc. Leave the site as clean as you found it. Leftovers usually are removed unless the staff indicates they will be welcome.

