

Introduction to Emmaus Agape



What is Agape? The word agape was used by early Christians to refer to the self-sacrificing love of God for humanity and the reciprocating love toward God and among one another. In simple terms, agape means love, as in the love of God. In the Emmaus Movement, agape acts are special acts of prayer, sacrifice and expressions of Christian love on behalf of a Pilgrim by another Christian.

What are examples of agape acts and when are they presented? Sponsorship of another pilgrim is the ultimate act of agape since by prayerfully seeking God's guidance and through self-sacrifice, you are able to bless another individual with the experience of three days in His presence. Agape letters from other communities and the 72 hour prayer vigil are introduced on Friday afternoon and illustrate God's love for everyone through community prayer and sacrifice. On Saturday, the pilgrims become increasingly aware of table agape which is the same for everyone but shows up as a gift for each person, reflecting the fact that God loves us all the same but cares for each of us individually. On Sunday afternoon, the personal agape letters from family and friends communicate God's love for each pilgrim in personal ways that are unique through relationships.

Who provides these gifts of agape? All members of a community are encouraged to participate fully in the 72 hour prayer vigil. It is also common for Reunion Groups or individuals to make or purchase gifts of agape for particular walks or for all walks. You just have to have a loving spirit and a desire to express Christian love on behalf of another. Is there any special type of agape I should make? Snack agape of baked goods, fruit and other refreshments are welcome and should be turned in to the agape coordinator at Send Off if possible. Individual snacks like hard candy, chocolate, nuts, etc. can be turned in to the weekend Agape person along with the wide variety of individual table agape typically made by reunion groups or individuals. There is no limit to the type or amount of gifts you can make and it can be anything that pertains to God's love, the healing grace He offers us, how to be His servants, etc.

How many do I need and how do I label the agape gifts? There are no minimums nor special labeling requirements for snack agape. Gifts for the pilgrims and entire conference room team require a quantity of 50 items per men's or women's walk. When making individual table agape, you may want to attach a label with a particular scripture or simple phrase associated with your gift. You may also want to add your Reunion Group name or church name please do not sign an individual name! These gifts are to actually represent God's love and therefore we should remain as anonymous servants. Mark your package of items to indicate if they are for the Men's Walk or Women's Walk, especially if they are brought at the same time. Please also indicate a contact person with phone number so that extra items can be returned to be used for future walks. These extra items will be brought to gatherings after the walks for pickup. If you have questions, please contact Collette McKee, the Emmaus Agape/Background Chair, at (302) 222-6124.

If you would like ideas or suggestions please click on the following links:

<http://www.songifts.com>

<http://www.niemmaus.com/agape>

<http://www.angelfire.com/ga3/dayspringagape/EmailShareIdeas.html>

<http://www.gcgb.org/current-banquet/17-agape-ideas.html>

Agape Letter Information



A detailed letter will be sent the sponsors explaining the personal letters for their pilgrims, including several suggestion letters from ours and other communities. This is information *based on the Emmaus Handbook*, along with suggestions and other information.

Letter Information for Sponsors

All of the following information was taken from the Emmaus Handbook. The individual agape letters are another, more penetrating reminder that the pilgrims are loved, not only by the people on the Walk who have not known them long and people far away who do not know them at all, but by persons who know them best and to whom they will be returning soon.

Each sponsor collects at least eight to twelve letters for his or her pilgrim. If the sponsor receives more than twelve letters, he or she will certainly include family letters in the twelve. All the letters above twelve can be delivered as a Fourth-Day surprise. Limiting the number of letters delivered on the Walk for each pilgrim has several advantages. The main advantage is that the pilgrim can usually read all twelve letters within the time allotted. Persons trying to read more than twelve may be frustrated by their inability to read all. This frustration will detract from the special experience of having read the letters.

A second advantage is to ensure that a disparity between the quantities of letters each pilgrim receives does not distract from the quality of the message that the letters convey. Since twelve is the number of letters that most pilgrims receive anyway, we ask sponsors to avoid the norm for the sake of "their" pilgrims at the expense of others. Sponsors aim for twelve well-chosen letters. In doing so, everyone can be confident that manifold expressions of grace for one pilgrim will not become an obstacle for other pilgrims who appear to receive less.

Delmarva Emmaus Agape Procedures

Sponsors are asked to mark envelopes from family and close friends so they may be easily identified by those sorting letters. Agape (non-letter) should not include personal gift items or bouquets of flowers that are given to only one pilgrim and not to all. Such gifts should be returned to the sponsor for delivery after, and away from, the weekend.

The Agape Letters should be delivered during sendoff (Thursday evening) and given to the Agape person on the weekend. Please have them bundled together (in a manila envelope, tied with a ribbon, rubberband-ed) and clearly marked with the Pilgrims' name. This is very important to ensure the agape chair has the 8-12 letters for distribution on Sunday. Any extra letters will be placed in the 4th day bags and handed out at Closing.

Team members should not receive letters as they are showing their agape love by serving and already received letters when they made their own walks.

Thank you for sharing God's love with the pilgrims. I hope this clears up any confusion on what is agape, and how the system will work at the retreat center. Please call or email me with any questions.

De Colores!

Collette McKee

Board Agape/Background Chair

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