



SECTION 3— WALK KITCHEN COORDINATOR

The Event Kitchen Coordinator recruits volunteers for the kitchen through a sign-up sheet at Gatherings, from accountability groups, or from the volunteer sign-up sheets new Community members receive at the end of their Emmaus events. Emmaus Community members may volunteer to work in the kitchen for all or part of an event. The Kitchen chair fields all questions and communicates information.

The Event Kitchen Coordinator may purchase the food (if requested by the Kitchen chair) and assumes responsibility for preparing meals and/or refreshments for the team and participants throughout the Emmaus event. The board decides if the team requires an additional meal prior to the event.

The kitchen provides snack agape for the conference room. The event leadership may decide to provide snacks for the participants and community during the event check-in. If needed, select a Snack Assistant to solicit and organize the snacks for the event.

The Snack Assistant and helpers keep the snack table supplied throughout the event. The kitchen volunteers, under the direction of the Event Kitchen Coordinator, help prepare and serve the meals and aid with cleanup after meals. The facility may determine the number of kitchen servants needed. All kitchen volunteers may assist in praying for special needs throughout the event when kitchen responsibilities do not fill their time.

MODELS FOR KITCHEN STAFF

The kitchen servants are part of the behind-the-scenes support servants. They witness through their humble service and joy in giving without need for recognition. Introductions at mealtimes are not appropriate. Kitchen servants remain anonymous in their servanthood and invisible except when serving meals. They honor the cloistered environment of the conference room and refrain from interaction with the participants and team members as much as possible. Below are different ways to organize kitchen staff:

Revolving: The Event Kitchen Coordinator, with the help of the Kitchen chair, enlists persons to serve over the course of two or three months. The Kitchen Coordinator organizes the kitchen and coordinates a revolving team of kitchen staff who have signed up to help prepare and serve meals at specific times during the Emmaus event. Though volunteers come and go, the Kitchen Coordinator remains on-site for the entire event. Recruit kitchen helpers from the

Emmaus Community at Gatherings and at other times by asking people to sign up on a chart to work specific mealtimes. The advantages of this approach are these: not having to house and care for an entire kitchen crew, giving more Community members the opportunity to serve, needing fewer persons to make commitments for the entire event, and allowing the witness of so many Community members who take time to serve the participants.

1. **Live-in:** For a live-in Emmaus event (Walk to Emmaus, Chrysalis, or a live-in Journey to the Table event), remote event sites sometimes require kitchen servants who remain at the site throughout the event. These servants occupy separate sleeping quarters, away from the conference room participants. Live-in kitchen staff may care for other behind-the-scenes functions, such as decorating the dining room for a special meal, providing meal-time entertainment, or participating in the prayer room for the speakers and participants.
2. **Facilities that serve the meals:** Some events will have no kitchen servants because the retreat center's personnel prepare all the refreshments and meals. The food is offered either buffet style or served by other Emmaus Community members who come to the event site to decorate, serve, and clean the dining room. Servers may come from other behind-the-scenes support staff. If more than one group at a time is using the facility, set apart a section of the dining room for the conference room group.

Whichever model the event employs, kitchen volunteers provide the prayer and logistical support needed for the participants. This is their act of agape for the participants.

The Event Kitchen Coordinator and all assistants attend the orientation session held before the first Conference Room Team meeting. All support assistants attend any meetings called by the Event Kitchen Coordinator.

Other responsibilities of the Kitchen Coordinator include the following:

- Plan ahead and enlist others to assist with recruiting kitchen volunteers and preparing for the Emmaus event.
- Use a variety of Emmaus Community members in the kitchen as helpers, cooks, and servers: male and female; youth and adults; laity and clergy. *Sponsors and family members of event participants may work in the kitchen but do not serve in the dining room, as they remain unseen.*
- Remind the staff to be friendly, courteous, and cheerful. Always smile. Aloof, grumpy, or reluctant volunteers can undermine the atmosphere of the Emmaus experience.
- Remind volunteers of their commitment to serve, to offer more food or drink—not to converse with team members or participants.
- Ask the staff to remove their name tags when serving.
- Adjust the kitchen schedule to conform to the conference room schedule. Some facilities that prepare the food specify mealtimes, and the conference room honors these times. The assistants to the event lay team leader will coordinate any time changes with the Event Kitchen Coordinator.

- Minimize background noise when the kitchen and dining room are within hearing distance of the conference room or chapel.
- Do not introduce or excessively acknowledge the kitchen staff or servers. This diminishes the value of the kitchen servants' witness as anonymous servants, places an expectation on the participants to respond, uses valuable time, and interrupts the cloistered environment of the Emmaus event.
- Check with the Kitchen chair to determine if the Emmaus event has established a standard menu. An established menu saves the Event Kitchen Coordinator time and trouble and frees the kitchen servants from the need to equal or outdo past Emmaus events. It also makes the cost predictable and sets a standard for quality. Each Emmaus Community develops a standard menu that is economical, nutritionally balanced, generous, and appealing. If necessary, consult a dietitian, nurse, or nutritionist for help. Obtain information about participants' special dietary needs from the Registrar.
- Alert the person purchasing food of any special food needs.
- Ensure that ice water is always available at the snack table, at meals, and in the conference room. Provide drinking cups for each participant at the conference room tables.
- Kitchen staff and other behind-the-scenes personnel eat in a separate space after all are served or may wait until the conference room group has been dismissed from the dining room. If this is not possible, they eat in shifts at a separate table, allowing half the group to be available to serve at all times.
- Provide ample food for the participants and team. If a shortage occurs, the support servants supplement the food.
- Provide Communion elements for each Communion service, if the Spiritual Director does not make this provision. If Communion is served at a team commissioning service prior to the event, plan for that, as well as for times during the event that the behind-the-scenes personnel take Communion.

RESPONSIBILITIES THREE MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT

- ___ Check with the Kitchen chair for an inventory list and learn how the Kitchen chair will support your responsibilities.
- ___ Enlist an assistant for the kitchen's organizational needs.
- ___ Make a chart that lists all refreshments and meals, including times, during the Emmaus event.
- ___ Take the chart to Gatherings to enlist volunteers for the kitchen.
- ___ Invite accountability groups to serve together or assist in preparing a meal together.
- ___ Plan the meals according to the established menu. (Check with the Kitchen chair for this menu.)
- ___ Request a variety of snack items from the community by publicizing at Gatherings.

RESPONSIBILITIES TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

- ___ Contact the treasurer to make arrangements for paying for the food and supplies.
- ___ Arrange for the purchase and delivery of food items if requested to do so by the Kitchen chair.
- ___ Check with the Kitchen chair to see if the team will require an extra meal before check-in for the event. If so, determine how many will be eating and who will prepare the meal.
- ___ Post a schedule of talks and prayer times in the kitchen area.
- ___ Develop at the meeting of the behind-the-scenes coordinators a schedule that lists all essential times and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE START OF THE EVENT

- ___ Be sure food and supplies have been collected and delivered to the proper location.
- ___ Follow up on arrangements if the team will eat before check-in and have enough people to help prepare and serve the meal.
- ___ Prepare the snacks for check-in and Send-Off with the help of the Snack Assistant.
- ___ Post the event schedule to encourage the kitchen staff to be in an attitude of prayer for the conference room group.
- ___ Double-check special dietary requirements with the Registrar or the assistants to the lay event team leader.

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE EVENT

- ___ Stay on schedule with the refreshments and meals, following the event schedule.
- ___ Maintain a servant attitude and be willing to adjust the kitchen schedule to accommodate the conference room activities when necessary.
- ___ Prepare the tables with table agape before each meal at the direction of the Agape Coordinator, observing the agape guidelines.
- ___ Remind volunteers that the Emmaus model calls for servants to remain as invisible as possible as they go about their tasks.
- ___ Maintain a good spirit and camaraderie among the kitchen servants.
- ___ Supervise kitchen volunteers and servers during the event.
- ___ Keep a list of names of those who have helped, and submit it to the board Kitchen chair for future reference.
- ___ Be an encourager and teach others the joy of faithful service.
- ___ Be a mediator when necessary.

RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER MEAL SERVICE IS OVER

- ___ Inventory, label, and pack up any supplies and nonperishable items for use at the next event.
- ___ *(Optional)* Distribute perishable foods to local soup kitchens. Some snacks may be used at a subsequent Gathering or Fourth Day Follow-up Meeting.
- ___ Clean the kitchen completely, and remove all trash. As guests in the facility, plan to leave it cleaner than when you arrived.