

Welcome to the Cross Walk: A Holy Week Spiritual Journey

Reviews from The Vine

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November 2010

Welcome to the CrossWalk: A Holy Week Spiritual Journey

By Tori Smit, Associate Secretary, The Vine



Holy Week is a time of great drama involving celebration, conflict, nourishment, betrayal and self-examining prayer. What a time to sit in a pew and merely be told the story. It is a time to experience! It is a time for a spiritual journey!

The following is the room design and script for a multi-sensory, interactive spiritual journey through Holy Week. Set aside a room in your church and with a variety of simple items, some script and music pre-taping, and half a dozen personal CD players, you can re-create this CrossWalk for your youth and adults to experience. It will be a memorable journey for everyone.

Each participant will start their journey outside of the room by removing their shoes (for we will be walking on holy ground) and

taking a personal CD player containing a CD with the music and narration you will have pre-recorded for their use. Individually, they will enter into the CrossWalk - a dimmed room filled with a series of masking tape pathways leading to connecting interactive centres - and step back through time into Jerusalem during Jesus' final days with his disciples. Each time they move from a pathway to a centre, or from a centre onto a new pathway, they will be prompted to move to the next track on the CD and hear music or a new story while experiencing a new activity to reflect upon.

Their journey will take anywhere from a half an hour to over an hour. They will see the images of the palm parade, rub on oils to remind them of Mary's anointing of Jesus, taste the food of the Passover meal, feel the

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pain of the betrayal, and sit in the garden in prayer. In between centres, contemporary, ancient and traditional music will set the stage for each centre to come.

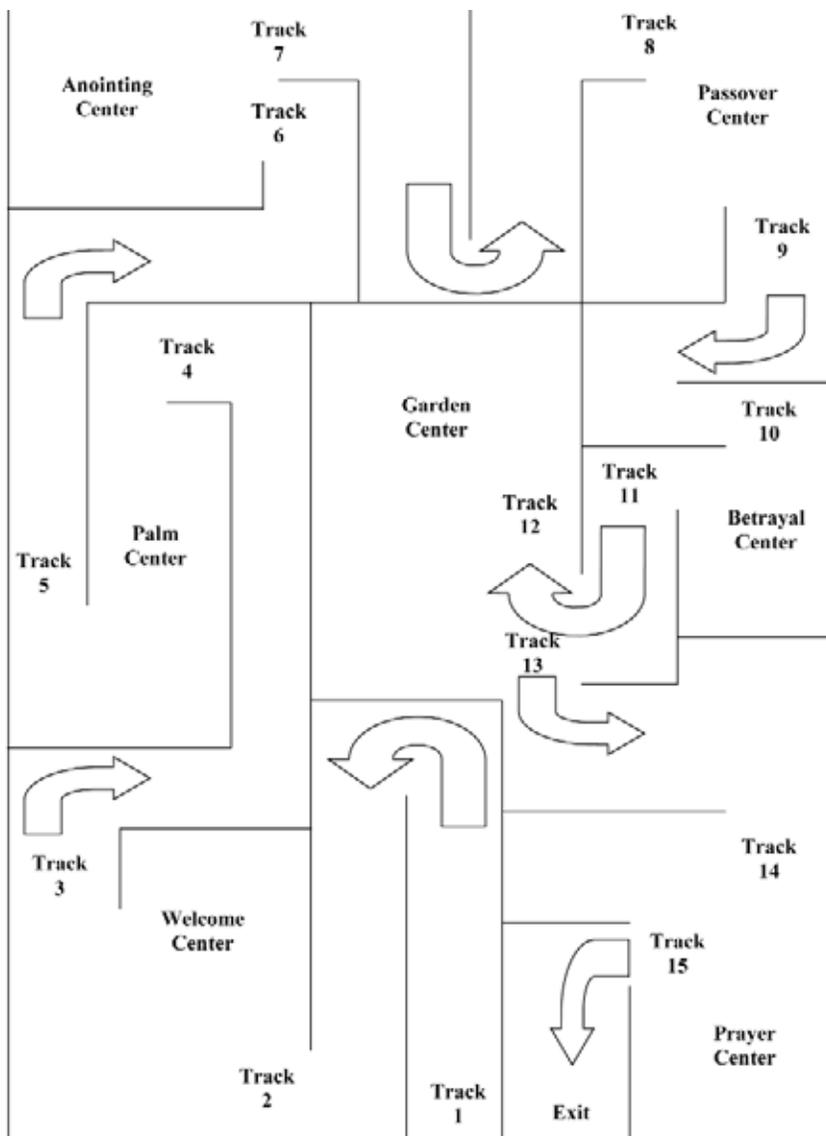
Use a variety of narrators to pre-record the CD. Gentle, soothing voices speaking clearly and slowly are best. With a computer, you can record the script and then lay a second recording of music under the speaker's voice. Recorded music is all that is needed for the pathways. A piece of music is noted for each CD track. Feel free to use a variety of music of your choosing. Selecting music based on the mood and subject of each event is important, while ensuring that the music has enough variety to appeal to a wide spectrum of participants.

To set up the room, you will need to measure the area, decide how much space needs to be set aside for each centre, and decide upon pathways that will wind the participants from one centre to the next. You may wish to lay out the room on grid paper before pushing any

furniture into place. Use the sample layout below to suggest ways you could create your own CrossWalk, but don't feel your space needs to appear exactly as shown. Your room size will be different and you will need to juggle some spaces a little bit to fit your individual situation. Once you have the layout of the room determined, begin to lay 18 inch wide pathways to each centre by placing masking tape on the floor. Place a laminated paper at the beginning of each pathway instructing participants which CD track they should be on. Place similar papers at the entrance to each centre as well.

Decorate each centre as elaborately or simply as you wish. Follow the set-up instructions for each centre to make sure you have the necessary items in each place.

The scripture texts quoted in the script are taken from the NRSV. You may wish to read from Today's English Version or *The Message* as an alternative.



Possible layout sample.



Room Decoration and Layout of the CrossWalk

Music Selection and Script Narration Use a variety of narrators to pre-tape the following manuscript. Tape approximately two or three minutes of music for each pathway and layer background music under each of the narration pieces, increasing in volume after the narrator completes the text. Allow the music to continue for approximately two or three minutes or more after each narration as background for the participant's activity in each centre.



1

Path: A defined path leading to the Welcome Centre.

Track I Journeying music such as *Sanctus Benedictus*.



2

Welcome Centre: A small, quiet space inviting the participants to sit and listen to the practical instructions for the CrossWalk on their personal CD players, as well as cast off the worries of their day and prepare themselves for the journey ahead by relaxing, breathing deeply and listening to a calming piece of music.

Track 2 Narrator: Welcome to the CrossWalk, an interactive and sensory walk through the early events of holy week. Your journey should take anywhere from a half an hour to an hour, or even longer. Take all of the time that you need, allowing yourself the opportunity to fully experience the events of this week. If others wish to pass by you, let them pass quietly. If you would like to pass by someone else, pass quietly.



There are pathways joining each centre. When you are ready, go from one centre to the next centre by following the path set before you. At each of the centre entrances and exits there is a sign noting what track you should be playing on your CD player.

So, when you are ready, feel free to get up and begin your CrossWalk by stepping back in time and stepping into the sands leading to Jerusalem.

(Background music such as *Missa Brevis No. II, Sancti Johannis Baptistae*.)

3

Path: A defined path leading to the Palm Centre. Along the pathway from the Welcome Centre to the Palm Centre, have a low box of sand to walk through followed by palm branches strewn on the pathway. We built a long box about two inches deep and the width of the pathway and filled it with sand. Exiting the sandbox, the pathway was strewn with palm branches for the participants to walk upon.

Track 3 Journeying music such as *Be Still, For the Presence of the Lord*, words and music by David Evans.



4

Palm Centre: This centre requires two or three chairs for the participants to sit in facing a viewing screen. On the screen, show a PowerPoint presentation of global photos and artwork of ancient and contemporary Palm Sunday images. Download these images from Google images, place them in a PowerPoint presentation and project them onto the screen in a loop cycling through approximately 40 individual images at three-second intervals. Decorate the foot of the screen with vases of palm branches and spread the floor with palm branches.



Track 4 Narrator: Don't you love a parade? Don't you love a party? The best celebrations are the ones that just happen – no planning, no preparations, everyone just begins to celebrate because the moment is right and everyone seems to know it. Listen to the words Matthew records about just such an occasion.



When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

"Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

Imagine the sights and the sounds of the celebration as you view the art of this moment in time. Hear the shouts of the crowds. Imagine the pushing and the shoving as everyone tries to get the best seat to view the coming of Jesus. Stay as long as you wish in this centre. Move on when you are ready.

(Background music such as *Hear all Creation*, words by Margaret Becker, music by Keith Getty.)

5

Path: A defined path leading to the Anointing Centre.

Track 5 Journeying music such as *Shout to the Lord*, words and music by Darlene Zschech.



6

Anointing Centre: Set up a dining-height table in this centre with an inviting chair set by it. Cover the table with linens and place a low-light lamp on the table to enable people to see the items on the table. Place on the table open jars of fragrant body oils and creams that feature the spices and flowers of the Middle East. Place containers of Q-tips and wooden stir sticks on the table for participants to use to test the oils and creams. Place a lined basket on the table to receive used Q-tips and sticks.

Track 6 Narrator: How can you say thank you for the raising of your dearest brother from the dead? That was the dilemma Mary faced. Jesus was coming to dinner and Mary couldn't imagine a thank you big enough to encompass all of her emotions. Hear what Mary chose to do.



Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

Mary's gift was to pour out the most lavish thing she owned upon her Lord. Imagine how the room was filled with the heady aroma of the finest perfume. How everyone's heads would have turned toward this deeply personal act.

In front of you are a variety of scented oils and ointments. Enjoy the scents they offer. Feel free to pour them out, to rub them on your hands and breathe deeply the gift of thanksgiving they represent. As you do so, reflect upon the reasons you have to say thank you in the most lavish ways you can imagine.

(Background music such as *To Be in Your Presence*, by Noel Richards.)

7

Path: A defined path leading to the Passover Centre.

Track 7 Journeying music such as *Very Bread, Good Shepherd, Tend Us*, words by Thomas Aquinas.



8

Passover Centre: Set up a small table in this centre with low light cast on the items on the table. Cover the table with linens and place a platter near the back of the table containing a cooked lamb shank, a hard-boiled egg, sprigs of parsley, charoset, horse radish, and three small pieces of matzoh. You may wish to cover this platter with cling wrap to discourage tasting of these items. Place two platters at the front of the table, one with sprigs of parsley and a dish of salted water, the second with pieces of matzoh. Place a jug of grape juice at the front of the table with a stack of small juice glasses. Place a stack of napkins on the table and place a waste basket at the foot of the table.



Track 8 Narrator: As the disciples gather together to celebrate the annual Passover feast with their teacher, the mood of the meal shifts as each course is served. As they taste the spring herbs dipped in salt water, they remember the tears of the slaves crying out to God in Egypt. As they taste the bitter herbs, they remember the bitterness of slavery. The lamb, served as the main course recalls the lambs' blood, which painted over their doors protected them, saving them and releasing them from Egypt, leading them to the promised land.



Jesus leads them through the Passover meal and as the meal concludes, Jesus picks up the final symbols, the bread and the wine, and the meal is transformed before their eyes.

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Taste the various foods of this last supper that Jesus celebrated with his closest friends. When you are ready, you may move on to the next centre.

(Background music such as *This Fragile Vessel*, words by Maire Brennan, music by Keith Getty.)

9

Path: A defined path leading to the Denial Centre.

Track 9 Journeying music such as *There is a Balm in Gilead*.



10

Denial Centre: Place a small table in the centre with a basket on it. Fill the basket with hundreds of pennies. Against the wall, lean a piece of corrugated tin.

Track 10 Narrator: Things change quickly. Betrayal is an ugly thing. For reasons we don't fully understand, one of Jesus' disciples chose to betray him for a few months' wages. Here is what happened.



Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

When it was evening, Jesus took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" He replied, "You have said so."

We, too, can betray Jesus in so many ways.

Count out 30 coins from the basket on the table. As you count out the coins, count the ways you fail or abandon Jesus in your daily life. Feel the weight of your failings and contemplate how every one of them weighs you down. Scripture recounts that as Judas realized the full weight of what he had done, he threw the coins back at the feet of the chief priests.

Let go of the weight of your burdens by casting them against the wall. Know that Jesus pardons each one of us and forgives us our failings. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

When you are ready, toss your 30 coins and move on in your journey.

(Background music such as *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent*.)

11

Path: A defined path leading to the Passover Centre.

Track 11 Journeying music such as *Jesus, Draw Me Ever Nearer*, words by Margaret Becker, music by Keith Getty.)



12

Garden Centre: In the middle of the room create a welcoming and comfortable garden space. Include a bench or two garden chairs. Surround this centre with potted trees and plants to give privacy to those sitting here. Include a trickling water feature if one is available. Place a small garden table near the chairs to hold a basket filled with sealed envelopes. Place in each envelope a piece of paper asking the following:

OBEDIENCE

Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death
– even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:8)
Will you choose obedience?

Track 12 Narrator: Welcome to the Garden of Gethsemane.

A garden is usually a quiet and peaceful place, a place to enjoy the beauty of God's creation, a place to come and pray. Tonight this garden is once again a place of prayer, but tonight Jesus' prayer is neither quiet nor peaceful.

Jesus is well aware of his imminent arrest and knows he has a choice to make. Will he follow the plan God has set before him, a plan that leads to his arrest and ultimate death? Or will he walk away, avoid arrest and slip quietly out of the limelight?

Hear what Jesus prayed that night.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

Obedience is not something we regularly choose, if we can avoid it. But that is what Jesus chose to do. Jesus chose obedience over selfishness. Reflect on the implications of Jesus' choice.

When you are ready, take an envelope from the basket on the table and open it. Read its contents and meditate on what this kind of obedience would mean to you.

Leave the garden when you are ready.

(Background music such as *Abide with Me*.)



13

Path: A defined path leading to the Prayer Centre.

Track 13 Journeying music such as *Wondrous Love*, an American Folk Hymn.



14

Prayer Centre: Place a group of large pillar candles on a glass-top table and light these immediately before people enter the CrossWalk. Scatter a large number of unlit votive candles in fire-proof containers on the table. Place a couple of boxes of wooden matches on the table and a dish to dispose of used matches. These votive candles will be lit by participants as they pass through the CrossWalk, so ensure that this table is clear from any flammable items. Keep your eyes on this table as people enter and exit the CrossWalk, and blow out all candles when there are no participants in the room.

Track 14 Narrator: Our journey has come to an end.

Your CrossWalk is now complete.

You have walked the roads leading to the cross.

Before you leave this place, take one last moment to pause and reflect on the events you have experienced on your way. Recall the road started in celebration and ended with Jesus' arrest. Remember the many gifts given and decisions made during this journey of faith.

Before we come to the cross later this week, take time now to give thanks and offer prayers for the days ahead.

Pray silently, and light a candle before you leave this place.

Thank you for joining us on the CrossWalk.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

(Background music such as *O For a Closer Walk*, by Keith Getty)



Reviews from the Vine



Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church

by Kenda Creasy Dean (Oxford University Press, 2010)

A Review by The Rev. Jacqui Foxall

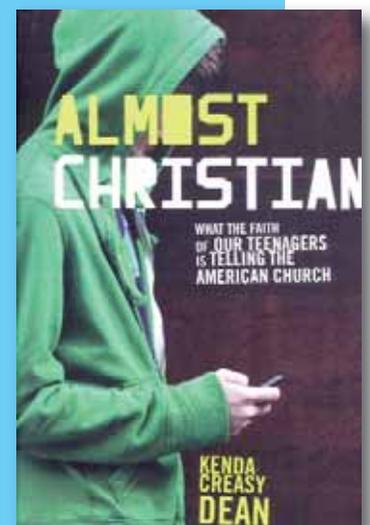
Renowned preacher and theologian John Wesley once described those who go through the motions of religion without fully committing to a loving relationship with God as *almost Christians*. By choosing Wesley's words to title her latest publication, Kenda Creasy Dean gives us a glimpse into the substance of her provocative new book.

Weaving together the results of the recent "National Study of Youth and Religion" with adolescent sociology and practical theology, Dean guides her readers through the process of discerning what contributes to *consequential faith* in teenagers (according to the NSYR, only 8% of teens who attend church consider themselves "highly devoted"). Key characteristics of

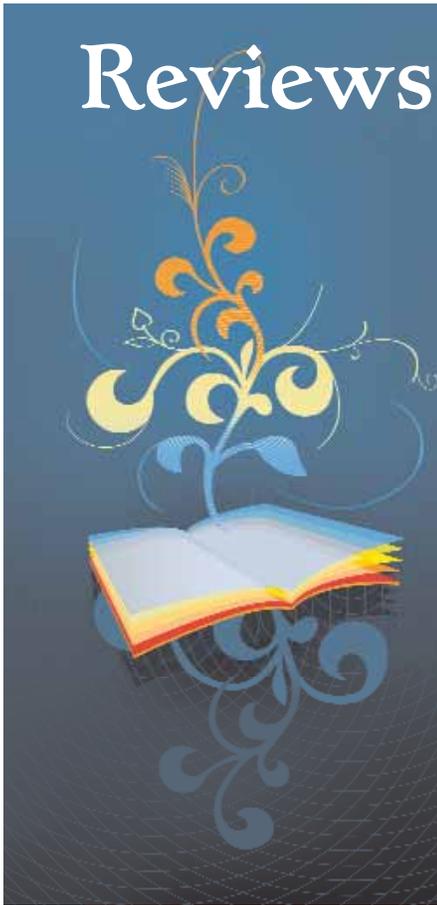
consequential faith are identified and discussed; however, the challenging part, says Dean, is identifying how to *nurture* those qualities.

As a Christian theologian who is guided strongly by her convictions, Dean is quick to reinforce that faith is a *gift* of the Holy Spirit. However, she is also equally quick to point the finger back at parents and faith communities, suggesting that the "benign whateverism" that the majority of teens express about their faith has been inherited and learned. This conclusion has caused an explosion of response on the Internet, following an interview Dean gave with CNN. Teens, she posits, *acquire* a watered-down version of Christianity, which has been dubbed "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism" (MTD). In short, this version of Christianity suggests that there is a God who created and ordered the world and who wants people to be good, nice and fair. This God will only be involved in one's life when there is a problem to solve. And, in the end, good people go to heaven when they die. Compared to the transformative power of Christ's gospel, MTD Christianity is thin and lifeless.

Almost Christian is *not* a book about how to "get kids back to church." Instead, it is a realistic look at teen spirituality coupled with a hopeful proclamation that *consequential faith*, faith that makes a difference in a young person's life, is possible. True transformative faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit, which is meant to be nurtured, encouraged, challenged and grown by families and congregations.



Reviews from the Vine



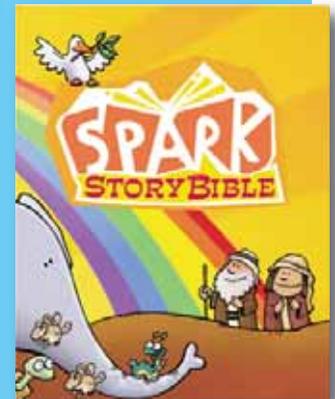
Spark Story Bible:

The Spark Story Bible contains 150 of the most popular Bible stories. The stories are supplemented with colourful art and creative language.

Throughout this story book, the text is consistently engaging, thought provoking and fun.

The Spark Story Bible is designed for ages two to eight but could be used for other ages as well.

Some of the entries from the Old Testament are Creation, Noah's Ark, The Burning Bush, and many more. Examples of entries for the New Testament are Wise Men, The Lamb of God, The Lord's Prayer, and others.



At the end of each story, there is a question designed for children that relates to the story.

Spark Bible:

The Spark Bible is designed for grades three to six but could be used for other ages as well. It is a New Revised Standard Version of the Bible with activity suggestions throughout the pages. At the back of the Bible, there are several maps that allow you to place the location of the stories.

In order to allow the children to express their feelings about the readings, there are stickers with such phrases as "makes me feel," "something I like," "I looked it up" and others.

Certainly these are two worthy resources for your perusal.

Both of the Spark resources can be ordered from The Book Room at The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

