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WALK TO JERUSALEM

History and Overview

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The Walk to Jerusalem is an imaginary walk that encourages walkers to increase physical activity, spiritual growth and cultural awareness through a virtual tour to Jerusalem.

The Walk to Jerusalem was initially launched in January 2002. The Walk to Bethlehem followed in September 2002. Since those first walks, churches and organizations throughout the US and Canada have embraced this program. It has crossed the lifespan and crossed all of earth's oceans. The initial route began in the Midwest, crossed the Atlantic Ocean and continued along the coast of Northern Africa through Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt and Israel. Walkers from Hawaii crossed the Pacific Ocean and traveled through Korea, China and Europe. Walkers have taken detours to historic church landmarks. Walkers have visited missionaries in countries such as Tanzania and Kenya. All of this has been done with the intent of increasing the health of body, mind and spirit. Many walkers have commented about how they have successfully increased their physical activity through this program because it is goal oriented and encourages team spirit and accountability. Others have commented about their increased knowledge and understanding of countries and cultures. Finally, the walkers have enjoyed the focus on prayer and spiritual growth through the devotions. Many walkers have found that their prayer time has increased and become more meaningful while walking.

All good ideas come from God and I thank God for the privilege of being the one to bring this idea to the churches.

I am also thankful for the many parish nurses around the country who have used their creativity in bringing this program to their congregations. Some of the positive outcomes are measurable by increased physical activity. However the spiritual and emotional outcomes, although not easily measured, are perhaps even more significant.

Finally, I thank God for the support of St. John Health and my boss, Karen Beger, in encouraging the development of new ideas, encouraging creativity, and placing the spiritual health of all clients in such high regard. Without this wholehearted support, The Walk to Jerusalem would have been a lost idea.

We continue to seek ways to expand this program and to develop new programs. This 2nd edition of The Walk to Jerusalem/The Walk to Bethlehem includes devotionals which are related specifically to Advent and which can be used effectively with The Walk to Bethlehem.

Introduction

Walking was first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 3:8, “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” It was while walking in the garden that God typically spoke to Adam and Eve. How meaningful for us to walk through our neighborhoods, through our parks and through our communities while talking to our Creator, the One who knows us best!

Walking is mentioned 247 times in the Bible. Our bodies were made for walking. We were built to stand erect. Our organs function best when given room to work. Our joints need movement to maintain good range of motion. None of this can be accomplished by sitting in a chair or lying on a couch. The benefits of walking are numerous. In a report from the US Surgeon General, “significant benefits can be obtained by including a moderate amount of physical activity (30 minutes of brisk walking or raking leaves, 15 minutes of running or 45 minutes of playing volleyball) on most days of the week. “The benefits of walking are compelling. Regular walking can prevent depression, lengthen lifespan, lower stress levels, relieve arthritis and back pain, strengthen muscles, bones and joints, improve sleep.” (aarp.org/health/fitness/walking)

With all of these benefits, why wouldn't we want to walk? The 21st century time crunch and the multitask generation is the problem. With this in mind, The Walk to Jerusalem was launched in January 2002. The Walk to Bethlehem followed closely behind and was launched in September 2002. By using the popular idea of multitasking, these walks provide an opportunity for walkers to exercise the physical body by walking, exercise the spiritual body by praying and exercise the mind by learning about countries and cultures.

How to begin The Walk to Jerusalem

- 1** Determine the distance from your church to the destination. From Midwest locations, the walk is approximately 6,680 miles (minus 3,607 if you elect to “fly” over the Atlantic Ocean.) The American Automobile Club can be helpful in calculating miles as well as a website which will calculate the number of miles from any two cities in the world. (www.indo.com)
- 2** The quickest, most direct route extends through the Northern coastal areas of Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt). This can be a learning opportunity in itself and it will increase awareness of trouble spots in the world and offer opportunities to pray for missionaries and oppressed people of these areas.
- 3** Advertise the walk in bulletins, newsletters and bulletin boards. A colorful bulletin board or a movable tri-fold display board with a highly visible world map should be displayed at least 2 weeks before the official starting date.
- 4** Keep the program as simple and self-serve as possible. On the official launch date be available to answer questions, hand out walking packets and encourage people to sign up for the walk. Walkers take responsibility for logging in their own miles each week on the walking sheets displayed on the bulletin board.
- 5** Walking packets include instructions for tabulating miles. (20 minutes of aerobic activity equivalent to 1 mile). Walking packets also contain the devotions for the walk as well as weekly “walking with God” cards. On these cards, walkers can write their focus Scripture for the week as well as any prayer concerns for the week. Lenten devotions from CareNotes or other denominational resources can also be used for the spiritual part of the walk.
- 6** Miles are tallied weekly and posted where the log in sheets are displayed. Miles are posted in the weekly bulletin. Information about the area being visited for the week can be handed out on Sundays. Bulletin articles and highlights can be used to inform about the benefits of walking and prayer for improved health and well-being.
- 7** Drawings for prizes can be done weekly or bi-weekly. The simplest way to do this is to put the names in a hat and give everyone an equal chance regardless of the number of miles walked.
- 8** Have fun tailoring this program to your congregation and watch how creative you become and how much enthusiasm is generated.

Planning Timeline

Walk to Jerusalem/Walk to Bethlehem

Although it is possible to put this program together in a very short time-frame, it is best to plan ahead and gain as much support as possible before the launch. The timeline presented is the ideal for a church with an active health team. However remember that you can still be successful with a few good team members.

Walk to Jerusalem Timeline

The Walk to Jerusalem begins in January and ends at Easter. By beginning in January, you bring excitement and newness to a season that is sometimes a downtime for people. It also captures the interest of those wanting to “start the year right” with healthy exercise and eating.

Some churches have chosen to tailor this program around the Lenten season and use denominational Lenten devotions for that segment of the program.

Month

Action

September

1. Present program idea to pastor, highlighting the spiritual, physical and emotional benefits of walking.
2. Emphasize the all – inclusiveness of this program. It is inter-generational.
3. Explain physical / space needs: bulletin board
4. Explain marketing needs:
 - Space in weekly bulletin to update progress or use of church website to update.
 - A time spot during announcement time to initially introduce the walk with possible short weekly time spots to inform walkers of progress. This keeps up interest and motivation.
5. Present program idea to health team. Instill enthusiasm by focusing on the positive outcomes possible from this walk, the team spirit that can be generated and the many cultural and educational benefits of this walk.

October

Give the following assignments to health team members:

1. Obtain map. The map can be mounted on foam board for stability or secured on a tri-fold board.
2. Assign health team members countries to research. By obtaining this information early, writing your weekly articles will be less time consuming. If you use the Northern Africa route, you would assign the following countries:
 - parts of US you will travel through to reach NYC
 - Morocco
 - Algeria
 - Tunisia
 - Libya
 - Egypt
 - Israel
3. Determine the distance from your starting location to Jerusalem. www.indo.com(click on "distance calculator") These miles are "as the crow flies."
4. Decide if you want to have "T-shirts" made for the walkers. Assign health team member to research price and style.
5. Research any mission activities that your denomination may have in the countries through which you will travel. Determine if you would like to make this walk a fundraiser for a missionary. In one church, walkers obtained pledges for each mile walked and contributed the money to an orphanage in Palestine. The amount raised was matched by the missions committee.

November

1. Receive updates from health team members about their respective assignments.
2. Keep pastor informed of planning and progress.
3. Assemble "walking packets" which will include cards to tally mileage and weekly devotions.

- December**
1. Begin advertising by placing a highly visible announcement on bulletin board:
COMING SOON! WALK TO JERUSALEM!
 2. Write article for December church newsletter explaining The Walk to Jerusalem.
- January**
1. Arrange with pastor for announcement spot time and bulletin announcement.
 2. Be available before and after services to answer questions and encourage participation.
- January – Easter**
1. Post weekly miles walked and miles needed to reach Jerusalem on bulletin board and in bulletin. Offer periodic “give-aways” to maintain interest.
 2. Designated health team members provide information on countries through handouts and articles.
- Easter celebration**
- Some churches had a celebration at the end of the walk which included ethnic foods, costumes and cultural information. At this celebration, walkers were given a “foot pin” which can be purchased through www.autom.com, Walkers were also given an “E Ticket” from Tel Aviv to the starting point with provisions for a “happy and healthy year.”

The Walk to Bethlehem Timeline

The Walk to Bethlehem begins in September and ends at Christmas. Just as January signifies a new beginning for many people, September also signifies new beginnings. In many ways, it is more agreeable for people in colder climates to attempt a walking program in the fall. Thus we have found as much success with The Walk to Bethlehem as with The Walk to Jerusalem.

The timeline items remain the same in this walk. The difference is that you will begin planning in June and launch the program in September.

Community Based Walk

For non-religious venues, an adaptation of this walk is The Walk Around the World. This program works well in malls where large numbers of walkers accumulate miles at a rapid rate.

Frequently asked questions

- 1. My congregation is very small, with only 125 members. Is it realistic to try a Walk to Jerusalem with a small congregation?**

Many small congregations have done remarkable things with the Walk to Jerusalem. In one small elderly congregation of 125, there were 52 participants and they successfully walked 3229 miles. Remember that walkers receive 1 mile credit for each 20 minutes of aerobic activity. This church has a group of 12 who meet for armchair aerobics each week. The armchair aerobics class lasts 40 minutes and each exerciser receives 2 miles credit for that activity.

- 2. We live in the Midwest with frequent snowstorms and cold weather. It's not easy to walk outside. What alternatives are there ?**

Many shopping malls open their doors at 7:00 a.m. for walkers. There are also some excellent walking tapes. A good inspirational walking tape is Walk the Walk by Leslie Sansone. (ISBN 0-7662-0991-1)

Using a treadmill is also a good way to log miles during inclement weather.

- 3. Will people really “buy into” this imaginary walk?**

From our experience those who have introduced this program to their congregation have been pleasantly surprised at the overwhelming response from parishioners. It is an imaginary goal, but it is a fun activity and one which provides accountability to those participating. It also can be a wonderful global and cultural learning activity.

- 4. How can we involve the children and teens of the congregation?**

Teens who run cross country are great assets to the walk. To encourage family time, one church gave 5 extra miles to families who walked together. Another church gave 1 mile of credit to little children for good behaviors such as: going to bed without a fuss, taking a can of food to church, picking up toys or not fighting with brothers or sisters. Churches with schools can coordinate with teachers and combine geography and history lessons with the walk. One school had all 300 children participate in the walk.

5. What marketing ideas worked with the Walk to Jerusalem?

- T-shirts with the church name and Walk to Jerusalem/Bethlehem help with ownership of the program.
- Providing pedometers for a small fee (\$5) is a good motivating tool for walkers.
- Weekly or bi-weekly drawings keep interest up.
- A grand finale pot luck celebration at the conclusion of the walk is fun for everyone. Participants bring in foods from the Middle East. At this celebration participants may receive a small “feet pin” available from Autom.com for 29 cents.

6. Did you find that this activity helped people become more active and begin possibly a lifestyle change?

Participants report that this activity did jump start their exercise regimen. One church was so enthused with walking the Walk to Bethlehem in the fall that they asked to walk the Walk to Jerusalem in the spring. Many walkers claim that the Walk to Jerusalem (Walk to Bethlehem) keeps them accountable and motivated.

Sample Getting Started instructions and sample prayer cards


Getting Started on your "Walk to Jerusalem"

1. Each week you may take a "Walking with God" card on your walk. Meditate upon or memorize the verse you've written on the card. The verses for each week are located in your walking packet.
2. Log your miles on the back of the walking card.
3. Log your total weekly miles every Sunday on the health team "Walk to Jerusalem" board.
4. Watch us progress to Jerusalem as a group for Easter!

Walking with God

Thought for the Walk

Prayer Concerns



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Weekly Accounts

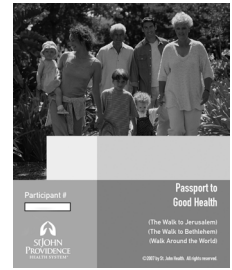
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<i>Minutes:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Special notes: (observations or inspirations from the walk)

Using Supplementary Materials

Passport to Good Health (adult) *(ordered separately)*

This is a great tool used to bring ownership to the program. With this passport size record keeper, walkers can easily record their own miles, their eating habits, prayer needs and even their healthy outcomes. When we travel, our passport is our most important document. *This Passport to Good Health* can be promoted as the most important document to carry for good health of body, mind and spirit.



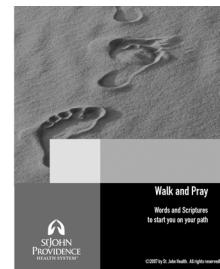
Passport to Good Health (child) *(ordered separately)*

This passport does not include the BMI chart. We simply want to encourage children to move more and eat healthier. Children are challenged to exercise more and record miles for a variety of activities. Anything that takes children away from hours of TV watching and hours of video games is rewarded. Schools have used this tool successfully to encourage responsibility, accountability and awaken an awareness of the good use of time.



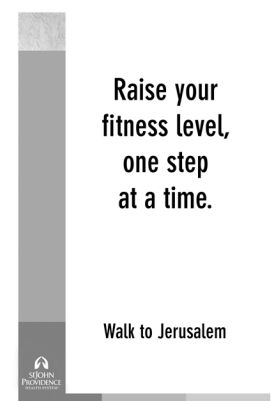
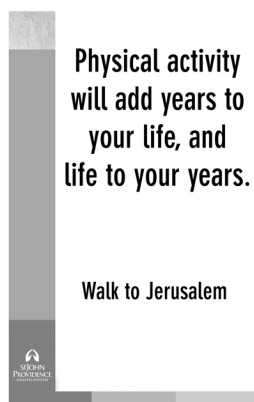
Walk and Pray *(ordered separately)*

This is a collection of familiar prayers, hymns and Scriptures from a variety of traditions. It helps walkers focus on prayer and can be used as a prayer before beginning a daily walk.



Motivational Posters

Posters can be good advertisements for the walk. Here are some sample ideas:



The Walk to Jerusalem/Walk to Bethlehem

A Multi Generational Program

Ways to motivate all generations to walk

It is a challenge to find a way to cross generations and make an activity relevant to all generations. The Walk to Jerusalem/Walk to Bethlehem program can be adapted well to all age groups.

Preschoolers: Good lifestyle habits, both physical and spiritual, begin at a very young age. During those preschool years, parents can control what foods are available to the preschooler. At this age, role modeling is also crucial. If the preschooler sees Mom and Dad making healthy food choices, he will consider this the norm and will model that behavior. Preschoolers are naturally inquisitive and active, however it is tempting to allow preschoolers to engage in too much sedentary time. A lifetime of sedentary behavior too often begins at a very young age through too much computer and television time. Turning off the TV and providing creative ways of exercising requires discipline and perseverance, but starts the young child on a lifetime of fitness and wholeness.

Elementary aged children: In schools associated with churches, teachers have enthusiastically embraced this program. They can cover geography, history, language, culture, global awareness, religious education and physical education in one coordinated activity. To add excitement and ownership to the program, classrooms or grades can compete with each other in walking the most miles.

Middle school children: Middle school children are becoming more aware of their faith in God. Among both children and adults there is the tendency to compartmentalize religion and reserve religious practices and disciplines for Sunday at church. At this tender time of faith formation, The Walk to Jerusalem/Walk to Bethlehem provides concrete ways for children to carry their faith and their prayer life everywhere. They can pray anytime and anywhere to the God of all creation. While they walk they can pray and through the use of the Kids Passport to Good Health, they can keep track of their prayer requests.

Middle schoolers are also at an age that rejects healthy food and prefers “junk food”. Incentive awards for healthy eating and creative ways of presenting healthy food can be a learning activity for this group. Middle school children are ones who often spend hours at the computer playing computer games. Encouraging physical activity is a critical issue among American children today. By providing creative and competitive ways of encouraging physical activity, we can turn the tide of Type II diabetes in children and a potential lifetime of poor health. Francine R. Kaufman, MD, a spokeswoman with the American Diabetes Association and head of the Center for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism at Children’s Hospital in Los Angeles, states, “In the early 1990’s, 2 to 4 percent of our patients were children with type 2 diabetes. Now, it may be up to 25 percent.” (stjohn.org/HealthInfoLib/swArticle.aspx?1,2179)

High school children: Teen-agers need encouragement to develop healthy lifestyles. Those who are very active in sports will carry this activity into their adult years. Those who don’t feel they are athletic need to be encouraged to pursue some form of exercise that gives them a feeling of accomplishment.

Adults: Most adults know that they should exercise more and eat less, but in this fast paced society where we are constantly bombarded by messages and requests, it is difficult to find the time to do good things for ourselves. Adults sometimes work better when there are definite goals established, when there is some accountability and when they don’t feel like they are on their own. For this reason, the Walk to Jerusalem /Walk to Bethlehem has proven to be successful among the adult population.

Adults know what they need to do. A goal, a motivating factor and some friends help many adults begin the process of lifestyle change.

Seniors: Go to any mall at 7:30 a.m. in the morning and you are likely to see scores of seniors walking laps around the mall. These are the seniors who are actively taking care of themselves and who are determined to age gracefully. They are an inspiration!

The Walk to Jerusalem/Walk to Bethlehem has been successful in the mall setting as well as the church. The mall walkers usually accumulate miles at a quick rate because their walking discipline has been well established. Although they are already motivated to walk, they enjoy the added interest of taking a virtual tour to Jerusalem or Bethlehem while walking. Because the mall walkers usually reach Jerusalem or Bethlehem in a shorter period of time, we have extended the tour to include a Walk Around the World. Traveling is a popular past time among the mobile seniors and a virtual tour helps them remember places they have been or places they have yet to see.

Those with disabilities: Because the church is all inclusive, we like to develop programs that are all inclusive. Those with disabilities and any type of physical limitation, need to be included in this program. There are many ways to accomplish this. Armchair Aerobics is a wonderful activity for those with knee or hip problems or for the wheelchair bound. Many video tapes are available, but one we find to be the most popular is Betty Switkes, Strength Training and Dance Aerobics for Seniors. (Distributed by Video Vacation, 1-800-441-3006) The physically challenged can also be given miles for doing physical therapy exercises prescribed by their therapist. For some elderly, using proper body mechanics when rising from a chair can be worth miles. For others, praying for those who are walking can be a way of accumulating miles.

Seniors in assisted living and nursing homes: Recreational Therapists at assisted living facilities and nursing homes are always looking for new programs to motivate residents. Residents can increase their physical activity while learning about countries and cultures, increasing their prayer and meditation time and eating healthier. These combined activities produce greater health and independence in this group of seniors. At one facility in the Detroit area, the staff was also motivated to Walk to Jerusalem.

Small groups: As our society becomes more fragmented, many churches have recognized the need for small groups. It is not enough anymore to simply come to church on Sunday and say hello. Friendships develop in these small groups, faith grows, needs are addressed, people are cared for and lives are changed. The small groups also offer accountability. This accountability produces wonderful results. One small group decided to commit to reading the Bible in a year. Another small group committed to walking and praying. Why not use The Walk to Jerusalem/Walk to Bethlehem to motivate small groups to compete with each other in reaching Jerusalem or Bethlehem? Some small groups may even meet together to walk, talk and pray on a specific day. Walk, talk and pray! Isn't that what Jesus and the disciples did on a daily basis? Let's follow His example!

Families: We learn by example. By exercising and eating well we are communicating an important and powerful message to our children. Talking about healthy eating while packing our shelves and freezers with junk food will not convince our children to eat healthy. Likewise, telling children to go outside and play is not as effective as finding an exercise activity that the family can do together. Some churches have encouraged families to walk together and have given extra miles when families have exercised together. "Participating as a family in lifestyle kinds of exercise, such as bike riding, hiking, walking, running, basketball and tennis – fun activities that can carry over into adulthood – or even just playing in the park sends a strong message. Dr. Sheah Rarback, RD, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association and director of nutrition at the Mailman Center for Child Development in Miami, states that "your kids will associate being active with fun times with the family. By virtue of your example and participation, exercise will become something they want to do." (stjohn.org/HealthInfoLib/swArticle.aspx?1,2179)

Community walks: Communities are becoming more aware of the need to provide bike and walking paths and to encourage citizens to take care of their bodies. Through the use of a website and email, congregations and organizations in a community can be encouraged to participate while engaging in some friendly competition. Mileage progress charts can be updated weekly on the website, with churches/organizations using email to record their miles. The possibilities are endless!

How's your Geography?

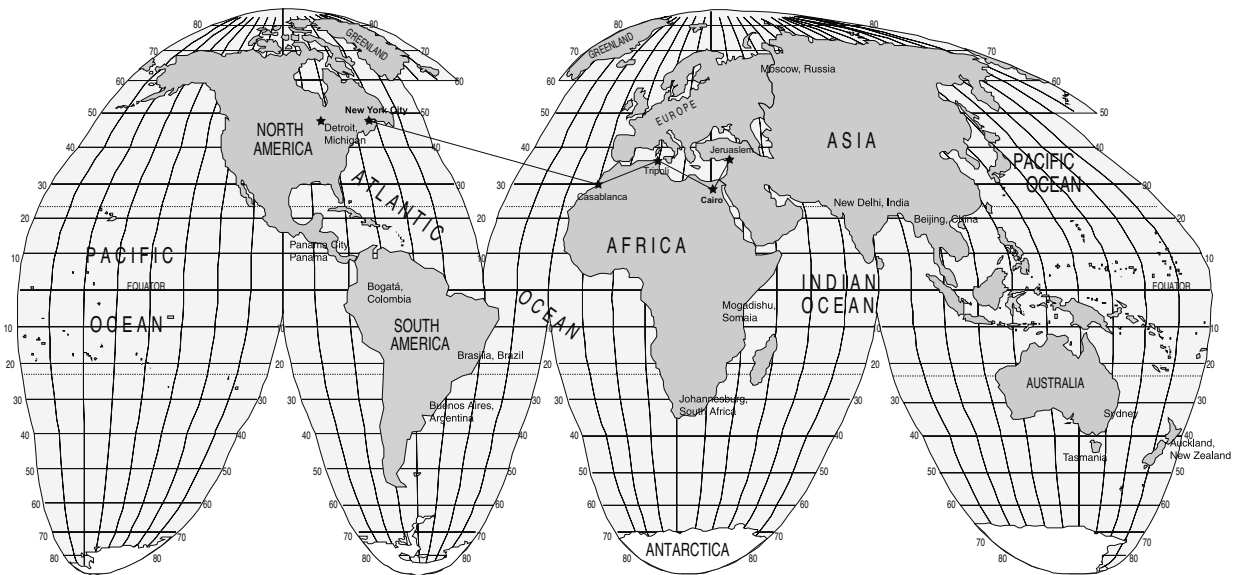
One of the pleasant surprises about implementing a Walk to Jerusalem or Walk to Bethlehem activity is the amount of learning that takes place in both the organizers of the event and the walkers. Some may feel intimidated at first by lack of geographical and cultural knowledge, but that is soon replaced by the excitement of learning about people and places. I'm convinced that in the heart of everyone there lies a spirit of adventure and discovery. Through this activity the globe shrinks. This imaginary tour expands our mind, allows us to dream and connects us to people everywhere. The evening news comes alive and takes on more meaning. In early January 2006, news of the Sago Mine Disaster in W. Virginia took on more meaning as walkers from Detroit "passed through" this area. The parish nurse who was leading The Walk to Jerusalem highlighted this tragedy in a weekly church news bulletin and encouraged walkers to pray for the families and community surrounding this disaster. As walkers travel along the northern coast of Africa, information about the famine in Sudan and Ethiopia can motivate walkers to support rescue and relief projects in those areas.

What route to take?

Northern African Route

The shortest route from Midwest locations travels through New York City, crosses the Atlantic Ocean with stops in Casablanca, Rabat and Fez (Morocco) Algiers (Algeria) Tunis, (Tunisia) Tripoli, Cyrene (Libya) Alexandria, Cairo (Egypt)

There are many resources available that give historical and recent information about the countries. Below is a brief summary of countries with website addresses for your own personal research. This is simply a glimpse of the amount of information available to you. It can be the beginning of a lifetime of study for walkers of all ages.



New York City highlights:

Ellis Island: “During its peak years - 1892 to 1924 Ellis Island received thousands of immigrants a day. Each was scrutinized for disease or disability as the long line of hopeful new arrivals made their way up the steep stairs to the great, echoing Registry Room. Over 100 million Americans can trace their ancestry in the United States to a man, woman, or child whose name passed from a steamship manifest sheet to an inspector’s record book in the great Registry Room at Ellis Island.” (ellisland.com/history.html)

The Statue of Liberty: “The Statue of Liberty was a gift of friendship from the people of France to the people of the United States and is a universal symbol of democracy. The Statue of Liberty was dedicated on October 28, 1886 and designated as a National Monument in 1924. (nps.gov/stli)

The New Colossus: A sonnet written by Emma Lazarus, a descendent of Portuguese Sephardic Jewish immigrants who lived in New York City. It is located on the inner walls of the Statue of Liberty’s pedestal. (nps.gov/stli)

Atlantic Ocean facts:

The Walk to Jerusalem/Bethlehem will require much walking on water. Large groups have fun relating their faith walk to walking on water and can usually accumulate enough miles as a group to accomplish the task. There are many facts about the ocean that are worthwhile to share with the walkers.

- The Atlantic Ocean is the youngest of the world’s oceans. It was formed in the Jurassic Period.
- The Atlantic Ocean was the first ocean to be crossed by ship and the first ocean to be crossed by airplane.
- The Cunard Line began carrying passengers across the Atlantic in the 1850’s.
- The Atlantic’s warm Gulf Stream helps keep many harbours in the North of Europe free of ice in the winter.
- Iceland, a major Atlantic island, is the result of volcanic action and has a number of active volcanoes.
(worldinfozone.com/oceans.php?country=Atlantic&type=facts)
- An estimated 80% of all life on earth is found under the ocean surface.
- The oceans cover 71% of the earth’s surface and contain 97% of the earth’s water. Less than 1% is fresh water and 2-3% is contained in glaciers and ice caps.
- 90% of all volcanic activity occurs in the oceans.
- The top ten feet of the ocean holds as much heat as the entire atmosphere.
- Because the architecture and chemistry of coral is so similar to human bone, coral has been used to replace bone grafts in helping human bone to heal quickly and cleanly.
- The blue whale is the largest animal on our planet ever (exceeding the size of the greatest known dinosaurs) and has a heart the size of a Volkswagen. (marinebio.org/MarineBio/Facts/)

For smaller churches who need to fly over the ocean or take a cruise ship, you may access flight and cruise schedules by contacting any of the cruise lines or cruiseshopping.com and airlines such as British Airways (ba.com) or Northwest Airlines (nwa.com). You will be surprised at how excited walkers can become – even on an imaginary trip!

Morocco highlights:

- Casablanca is probably the most famous city in Morocco. People immediately associate Morocco and Casablanca with the 1942 movie of the same name. “Casablanca is the ultimate classic movie.” (www.reelclassics.com/Movies/Casablanca)
- The capital of Morocco is Rabat
- **Religion:** 98.7% Muslim, 1.1% Christian, 0.2% Jewish
- **Language:** Arabic (official), Berber dialects. French is often the language of business, government, and diplomacy.
- **Independence:** March 2, 1956 (from France)

- **Government form:** Morocco is a constitutional monarchy with a Parliament and an independent judiciary. Ultimate authority rests with the king.
- **Proselytizing:** Islam is the state religion of Morocco. The Moroccan government does not interfere with public worship by the country's Christian or Jewish minorities. However, while Christians are allowed to practice freely, some activities, such as proselytizing or encouraging conversion to the Christian faith – both considered to be legally incompatible with Islam – are prohibited. It is illegal for a Muslim to convert to Christianity. In the past, American citizens have been detained or arrested and expelled for discussing or trying to engage Moroccans in debate about Christianity. (travel.state.gov/morocco.html)

Algeria Highlights:

- The capital of Algeria is Algiers
- **Religion of Algeria:** Sunni Muslim
- Algeria is the 2nd largest country in Africa, after Sudan. The Sahara covers more than 4/5ths of the territory. 90 per cent of the population live along the Mediterranean coast.
- The main industry is petroleum, natural gas and mining
- **History:** Hammadid dynasty from 1014
Ottoman rule from 1516
French rule from 1830
Independence from France: July 5, 1962

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algeria>)

Tunisia Highlights:

- The capital of Tunisia is Tunis.
- About 40 percent of the country is composed of the Sahara desert. The remainder of the country consists of fertile soil.
- The official language of Tunisia is Arabic.
- Tunisia has a republic form of government, with a president and a prime minister.
- Tunisia gained independence from France on March 20, 1956.
- In 1942-1943 Tunisia was the scene of the first major operations by the Allied Forces (the British Commonwealth and the United States) against the Nazi-led Axis Powers, during World War II.
- Tunisia is noteworthy for its lack of public political discourse. Tunisia's precise political situation is hard to determine due to a strong level of silence and lack of transparency maintained by the government. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunisia>)

Libya Highlights:

- The capital of Libya is Tripoli.
- Religion: Sunni Muslim 97%, other 3%
- Languages: Arabic, Italian, English, are all widely understood in major cities.
- The US resumed full diplomatic relations with Libya in May 2006 and rescinded Libya's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism in June 2006. (<http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ly.html>)
- In October 2007, Libya's long term dream of winning the United Nations Security Council seat was realized. Libya joined Burkina Faso and Vietnam to win the three non-permanent seats reserved for African and Asian countries. (<http://www.afrol.com/articles/26980>).
- Libya fell apart with western powers following the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie in Scotland, killing 270 people onboard. This led to UN sanctions on Libya, which at last surrendered the suspects and admitted responsibility to compensate victims' families. (<http://www.afrol.com/articles/26980>)
- Cyrene was an ancient Greek colony in present day Libya, the oldest and most important of the 5 Greek cities in the region. Simon, the Cross Bearer, (Matthew 27:32) was from Cyrene. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrene,_Libya)

Egypt Highlights:

- The capital of Egypt is Cairo.
- **Location:** Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Libya and the Gaza Strip, and the Red Sea north of Sudan and includes the Asian Sinai Peninsula.
- The regularity and richness of the annual Nile River flood, coupled with semi-isolation provided by deserts to the east and west, allowed for the development of one of the world's great civilizations. A unified kingdom arose circa 3200 B.C. (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/eg.html>)

Bethlehem Highlights:

This is our destination. We've heard so much about Bethlehem, but how much do we really know?

- The city, located in the "hill country" of Judah, was originally called Ephrath (Gen. 35:16, 19, 48:7)
- Bethlehem was first noticed in Scripture as the place associated with Rachel's death and burial "by the wayside" (Gen. 48:7). Rachel's tomb is located at the roadside near Bethlehem. The valley to the east was the scene of the story of Ruth the Moabitess. There are the fields in which she gleaned, and the path by which she and Naomi returned to the town.
- Bethlehem is the birth-place of David, the second king of Israel, and it is also the place where he was anointed as king by Samuel (I Samuel 16:4-13).
- In Micah 5:2 it was prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. The Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:4) and Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 2:1) report that Jesus' parents are forced to leave Nazareth, their place of residence, and return to Bethlehem for a census.
- The city of Bethlehem was wrecked during Bar Kokhba's revolt (132-135) and the Romans set up a shrine to Adonis on the site of the Nativity. In 326 the first Christian church was constructed, when Helena, the mother of the first Christian emperor, Constantine, visited Bethlehem.
- Recent events:
 - In May 2002, during an Israel Defense Forces raid into the city, a number of locals (some of whom were armed) occupied the Church of the Nativity. It became the site of a 5-week stand-off. The siege ended with an agreement for 13 militants to be sent via Cyprus to various European countries and another 26 to be sent to Gaza. The rest were set free.
 - Most entrances into and exits from Bethlehem are currently subject to Israeli checkpoints and roadblocks, with the level of access varying based on Israeli security directives.
 - The construction by Israel of the West Bank barrier has had a severely negative impact on Bethlehem; politically, socially and economically. The barrier runs along the northern side of the town's built-up area.
 - The percentage of Christians in the population of Bethlehem has been steadily falling. In 1947, Christians accounted for 75 percent of the population of Bethlehem, but by 1998, their share had dropped to 33 percent. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethlehem>)

Two Models for Calculating Miles

Model #1: The personalized and congregation/organization specific model

With this model, the tour director or organizer of the walk, calculates the number of miles walked collectively for the week and then calculates weekly where this would place the walkers. For example, a congregation from Detroit who walks 300 miles the first week would reach Youngstown, Ohio. The tour director would then mark this on the large wall map and highlight Youngstown, Ohio in a handout or short bulletin announcement. Perhaps someone from the congregation was originally from this area. This type of information can personalize the walk and bring more ownership to the walk. The following week the walkers may walk another 300 miles and find themselves in New York City. The next week will bring the walkers to the Atlantic Ocean. With small groups of walkers, you may elect to fly over the ocean or take a cruise. This will eliminate about 3607 miles from the total needed to reach Bethlehem or Jerusalem. Larger groups of walkers can easily cross the Atlantic and have fun exercising their faith walk as they attempt to walk on water! If a church has missionaries in countries through which you will pass or nearby countries, you may want to take a slight detour and learn more about the missionaries while supporting them in prayer. Some churches with orphanages in various places have used the walk as a fundraising opportunity. Walkers ask congregation members to pledge an amount of money for each mile they walk. This money is then sent to missionaries, orphanages and relief organizations.

The easiest way to calculate miles is to access the website called indo.com and click on the distance calculator. You may also use a map mileage key to calculate miles.

Model #2: Predetermined goal cities

With this model, destination goal cities are predetermined. From Midwest locations, typical goal cities may include Cleveland, Pittsburgh, New York City, Casablanca, Algiers, Tunis, Cyrene, Cairo, Alexandria and Bethlehem. These cities become attainable goals. The tour director can provide teaching and handouts about these cities when they are reached. Knowing the target cities beforehand allows for more time to research the cities.

**The Walk to Bethlehem
devotions
for 12 weeks of walking**

Week 1

New Beginnings

“Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.”

Luke 1:39-42

How many of us can remember the excitement of that first day of school in the fall? We loved summer vacation, but the thrill of shopping for new school supplies and possibly a new school outfit, was invigorating. We looked forward to seeing our school friends again and meeting our new teacher. It's interesting that for many of us, September still brings excitement and even a latent desire to sign up for a class, pursue a new hobby or call an old friend.

When we are children, Bethlehem and Christmas seem afar off in September. The time span from September to Christmas seems shorter as the years pass and towards the end of our life, those months are but a flash. However, the resolve and excitement of a fresh start are still present. We are refreshed from the slower pace of summer and anxious to get back into a routine. Our minds are clear. The air is brisk.

September, the month of brilliant colors and fresh air is a great time for a fresh start! As we begin our Walk to Bethlehem, we can think of how Mary felt while she was carrying Jesus. Shortly after Mary was told she would bear the Son of God, she went quickly to the hill country to visit her cousin Elizabeth. The Scripture states that when Elizabeth was 6 months pregnant, Mary visited her and the babe leaped in Elizabeth's womb when Mary greeted Elizabeth. Mary's life would change radically after Jesus was born. Our lives also change radically with the birth of the Savior. When we are reborn in Jesus, life is never the same. We begin the walk of faith for a lifetime.

Just as we are transformed spiritually in our life of faith, The Walk to Bethlehem can also bring change and transformation into our lives. We can determine to take better care of the body God has given us. By beginning a physical walk with stated and measurable goals, we will find that we have more energy to accomplish those things that God has for us to do. Our physical, spiritual and emotional life will change positively and we will affect our world and those in our world in a positive way. As we begin our journey to Bethlehem, let's begin by examining those things that help and hinder our transformation.

Questions to ponder:

What hinders me from living a disciplined life?

Are there areas in my life that are disciplined? Are they physical disciplines or spiritual disciplines?

Are there areas in my life that are not disciplined? Are they physical or spiritual?

Is there something in my life - spiritual, physical or emotional that needs change and transformation?

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Week 2

The Ripple Maker

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.”

Matthew 9:35

What does it take to change a community? What does it take to change a lifestyle? What does it take to change the world?

The Pike Street Market in Seattle is a wonderful myriad of tastes, smells, sights and sounds. Musicians frequently gather to entertain shoppers and the curious. The music is high quality and entertaining. A similar scene is acted out everyday in cities across the world. People stand and listen respectfully, and then from the crowd, a brave soul breaks the silence and walks to the open violin case, depositing a gift of appreciation. Soon others break the silence and step up in a spirit of bashful thankfulness. The air is somewhat tense, but the music becomes sweeter.

Jesus was perhaps the greatest ripple maker who ever lived on this earth. Everywhere He went He influenced behavior for the good. His small band of disciples became ripple makers and today we who believe in Jesus Christ are examples of the influence and courage of those early believers.

We all have the capability to be ripple makers and change agents in this world. We can begin by influencing our immediate group of friends, family and co-workers. A kind word, encouragement to make healthy lifestyle choices, to join a study group, to attend a worship service or to take a walk, are all positive ripples. Can we change the world? Yes! As we walk to Bethlehem and study about people of different countries and cultures, we can also pray for the people in those countries. As we walk to Bethlehem we can invite friends and neighbors to walk along with us. As we walk, we can speak words of hope and peace to them. That's what the ripple effect is all about: Influencing our world (personal, local and global) in a positive way one person at a time. It worked for Jesus, the greatest ripple maker of all time. It can work for us!

Questions to ponder:

Who are the people in my sphere of influence?

Am I a positive or negative ripple maker?

How can I influence my friends, family and neighbors for good?

Is there someone I can ask to walk alongside me?

Week 3

Preparing the Feet

“Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.”

John 12:3

The last time I walked a beach with the sand swirling around my toes, I thought about the Walk to Bethlehem. When Jesus was about to be born, Joseph walked through the desert sand to Bethlehem with his very pregnant wife riding on a donkey. As an adult, Jesus was constantly on the move. Except for an occasional boat ride, he walked from one dusty town to the next. What a relief it must have been for Jesus to have his tired feet anointed by Mary.

In the Detroit area, there is a rotating homeless shelter that moves from church to church throughout the year. A church hosts the guests for a week and then they are on their way to the next church. In addition to a warm meal, warm shelter and hot showers, many of the churches provide services such as free haircuts, homework help and counseling. When the shelter came to our church one year, one of the women suggested that we offer to wash the guests' feet. This was an unusual service to offer and one that was out of our comfort zone. Most of us have no problem serving in the kitchen, but washing feet? Jesus gave us an example by washing the disciples' feet. Why not wash the feet of the homeless? Like Jesus, except for an occasional bus ride, the homeless guests walk to their destinations. Their feet must ache from ill-fitting shoes, dirty socks and sweaty feet.

As we unwrapped the feet of our guests, I thought of Mary anointing Jesus' feet and I thought of Mother Teresa's statement from a 1974 interview, "I see God in every human being. When I wash the lepers wounds I feel I am nursing the Lord himself. Is it not a beautiful experience?" These simple acts of mercy and serving are the acts that bring Kingdom results. This is when God is glorified and we grow. The homeless guests were surprised by the foot washing, but those who washed their feet were blessed by the privilege of honoring them in a world where they most often find rejection.

Questions to ponder:

Have you ever had your feet washed by someone?

How did you feel?

Have you ever washed someone's feet?

How did you feel?

How can I bless someone today with my serving acts and attitude?

Week 4

Beautiful Feet

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns."

Isaiah 52:7

Good News! The house is sold! I landed the job! I aced an exam! The tumor is benign! I got a raise! My baby's healthy! I won the election! I'm pregnant! I'm accepted to medical school! My team won! I hit a home run! I'm getting married!

There is nothing like the feeling of exhilaration when we receive good news. It lifts our spirits, puts joy in our step and sends immune enhancing endorphins into our blood stream. Nothing seems impossible when we receive good news!

Monumental news in the New Testament was frequently announced by the appearance of an angel. An angel came to Mary and announced the coming birth of the Savior. (Luke 1:28) Two angels announced to the women who raced to the tomb on that first Easter morning that the Savior had risen. (Luke 24:4-8) The women ran to tell the disciples the good news. Their feet were beautiful! "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news" (Isaiah 52:7) Two thousand years later we are the proclaimers of that good news of the Gospel here on the earth. We can still tell the good news that God came to earth in the form of a babe and that His message of redemption, forgiveness, peace and love is as relevant today as it was two thousand years ago!

Questions to ponder:

Have you received good news lately?

Have you given good news to anyone lately?

Have I neglected telling good news to someone recently because of my busyness or preoccupation with the stuff in my life?

Can one become desensitized to good news?

Week 5

Labor

“While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 2:6-7

If you ever want to generate a lively, animated and lengthy discussion, simply ask a group of mothers about their childbirth experience. My three children hear their birth story every year on their birthday. I tell them about the weather on that special day, what I was doing prior to the start of labor, what the nurses and doctors said about them and most importantly, what a very special day that was when they breathed their first breath!

Luke, the physician, does mention the actual birth of Jesus, but what was it like for Mary to birth the Son of God? Every birth experience fills the parents with awe and wonder. This birth of the Son of God was awesome in its simplicity and magnificent in its impact. How can our minds even comprehend the significance of God Himself coming to earth as a defenseless, vulnerable baby, dependant on a very young woman and man for his physical well-being?

I wonder if Mary retold the story of Jesus' birth to him every year on His birthday! What a story she would have to tell! The days leading up to His birth were spent traveling on a donkey to Bethlehem. Joseph had to search for a place for the baby to be born and ended up in a stable. It was a beautiful night the night Jesus was born. There were stars in the sky. There were shepherds in the fields. There were angels in the sky and there were visitors from the East on their way to see the one who was born king of the Jews. (Matthew 2:2) The story is the best story ever told. It is one that we need to treasure in our hearts and never dismiss as routine. “ Mary treasured these things and pondered them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19) May we also treasure these things in our heart and never grow tired of retelling the story of the Savior's birth!

Questions to ponder:

What are some things I can do this Christmas season to allow time to treasure these things in my heart and ponder the significance of the birth of Jesus Christ?

How can I help my family understand the significance of the birth of Jesus Christ?

How can I bring the love of Jesus to hurting people, lonely people and forgotten people this Christmas season?

Week 6

Ohana

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Galatians 3:26-29

Who is in your "Ohana"? The Hawaiians have a wonderful word in their vocabulary that means "family". The word means so much more than family however. "Ohana" is the extended family of relationships that we have with each other. You don't have to be Hawaiian to be a part of the Ohana in Hawaii. It is simply understood that family and friends are bound together and members of the Ohana naturally cooperate and honor each other.

The Hawaiians understand God's concept of love and inclusiveness. All are welcome. Everyone is family. When the angel of the Lord told Mary that she was to birth the Son of God and that her relative Elizabeth was to have a child, she "got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth." (Luke 2: 39,40) Mary hurried to see her blood relative Elizabeth. She needed the support of her "Ohana". However as Jesus' ministry developed we see that He formed a new family - the family of believers - known as brothers and sisters in Christ. Bloodlines and family trees are no longer required to be part of the family of God. Those who know Christ are part of the "Ohana" of God.

When we become part of the family of God, we are bound by a most amazing blood relationship. The blood of Jesus has "cleansed us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9) and has allowed us to enter into fellowship and relationship with God Himself and with others. We are bound together and united together by the blood of Jesus, which has wiped away our sins. This blood relationship with other Christ followers is precious, deep if we allow it to be, and eternal. May we all strive to develop those eternal relationships with God our heavenly father and with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Questions to ponder:

Take a moment to examine your friendships.

Are your friendships superficial or deep?

What makes a friendship deep and lasting?

Do you have a friend you share personal struggles and joys with?

Do you share personal struggles and joys with Jesus, the wonderful counselor?

If not, how can you cultivate this friendship with God?

Week 7

Being Awakened!

“Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened.”

Luke 2:15

One of the quietest places I’ve ever been was high above the clouds in the Austrian Alps in a pulley driven tram. The silence was piercing and except for the occasional bleating of a sheep or the soft clanging of a cowbell, all was sacredly silent.

I wonder if this is the quality of silence that the shepherds experienced every night on the hillsides surrounding Bethlehem. Their lives were steeped in silence and the wonder of God’s starry splendor. Their mission in life was to protect the sheep, find them when they strayed, count them nightly and call them when it was time to move on to another pasture. The shepherd’s eye was always on the sheep, especially in the darkness of night. The sheep knew the shepherd’s voice and responded when he called. How fitting that the first ones to hear the Good News were the shepherds! The birth of the Good Shepherd, who would lead His people and free them from sin, was first announced to the shepherds on the Bethlehem hillside. This night was a night like no other. The silence of the night was penetrated by a light show like no other. A multitude of angels broke the stillness. The intensity of the light and the echoing of creation in the voices of the angels filled the shepherds with awe and wonder. The shepherds left the sheep on the hillside while the Creator of the universe watched over them.

“When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:15,16).

It had started as a typical night on the hillside. Like so many other nights on the hillside, the quietness of the night mesmerized them into a routine of watchfulness and silence. Then suddenly, everything was different. The routine was shattered and life on planet Earth would never be the same again!

Questions to ponder:

When has God broken through my routine and filled me with awe and wonder?

Am I looking for those God moments or am I too mesmerized by the routines of daily life to notice?

What steps can I take to learn to recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd?

Week 8

The Light of the World

*“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
On those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”*

Isaiah 9:2

Photophobia is a condition that affects many individuals. It is described as the inability to tolerate light. This can include sunlight, fluorescent light or in extreme cases even daylight. One of the primary causes of this condition is the presence of cataracts. These cataracts cloud the vision and cause the sensitivity to light. Cataract surgery is a relatively routine procedure these days and most who have the surgery are amazed at how clearly they can see after the surgery. They usually comment that they had no idea how clouded their vision had been and they are amazed at the clarity of detail and brilliance of colors after the surgery.

The shepherds were overcome with awe and wonder when they saw the light of a multitude of angels announcing the Savior’s birth. The light did not blind them, however. They saw clearly and reacted appropriately. Are there times when our vision seems cloudy and we can’t tolerate the Light of Truth? Cloudy vision in our faith walk prevents us from discerning God’s call, recognizing the Shepherd’s voice and moving forward in faith. We can protect our physical eyes by wearing ultraviolet sunglasses, but to maintain clear spiritual vision requires time spent in God’s Word, time spent in prayer and time spent worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ.

When our physical vision is cloudy, we shrink from the light and the colors are dull. When our physical vision is clear and healthy, we welcome the light and even desire to be closer to the light. When our vision is compromised, we prefer to remain in the dark. May we always have clear vision and desire to be close to the Light of Christ!

Questions to ponder:

What’s the darkest place you’ve ever been?

How did it feel?

What are some of the physical signs of cloudy vision?

What are some of the spiritual signs of cloudy vision?

What steps can you take to improve your spiritual vision?

Week 9

The Light of the World Part II

*"I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

John 8:12

The highlight of my first visit to St. Paul's Cathedral in London was Holman Hunt's magnificent painting entitled "The Light of the World". It caught me by surprise the first time because it didn't seem to be located in a prominent place in the church. I turned a corner, and there it was! The painting is entitled The Light of the World, but it is rather dark. Jesus is in the shadows, carrying a lamp. His face is lit and He is knocking on a door overgrown with vines. The door has no handle. It must be opened from the inside. The only light comes from the lantern that Jesus carries. The painting is very compelling. Holman Hunt painted this in 1853 and many came to faith in Christ as a result of viewing this painting.

When I visited London the following year, I was determined to return to St. Paul's Cathedral just to see The Light of the World. I remembered the exact spot where it had surprised me but to my disappointment, it wasn't there! A friendly docent with a sparkle in his eye explained that because of the renovation of the Cathedral, The Light of the World had been moved. He said with excitement that he would take me to The Light of the World. We walked briskly through narrow passageways and turned many corners. As I followed him, I hoped that The Light of the World was in a good place and not in a dingy storage area in the basement. Finally after many turns, the docent stopped. He said to me with delightful reverence, "Now I'm going to leave you. When you turn this corner, you will see The Light of the World. Go spend some time with the Light of the World.

Go spend time with the Light of the World. What a remarkable charge this docent gave me. What a remarkable challenge! I turned the corner and was overwhelmed with the magnitude of not merely the painting, but the presence of Christ. The Light truly does shine in the darkness!

Questions to ponder:

How dark is our world without the Light of the World?

What is the brightest place you have ever been?

Does physical brightness and darkness affect your mood?

What prevents us from opening the door and allowing the Light of Christ to enter in?

Week 10

Prince of Peace

*“For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given,
And the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

Isaiah 9:6

The imaginary Walk to Bethlehem is almost complete. It is ironic that Bethlehem, the tiny town where Jesus was born, is now the center of division, barbed wired fences and threatening conflict. And yet, He is the Prince of Peace. Because He brings light, life and peace into a very dark world, there is tension. The Light in the darkness creates the tension. He came to break through the darkness and He continues to do so. What a comfort it is to cling to these words from Isaiah which remind us that He is our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace.

I wonder if we would live differently if we reminded ourselves on a daily basis that Jesus Christ is our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. When darkness surrounds us, when we are overwhelmed with an important decision, when our world seems to be falling apart, how differently would we react to these situations if we constantly repeated these words from Isaiah: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace!

As we walk this week, it may be appropriate to reflect on this description of the Messiah. It can be our prayer that the world will take note at this Christmas time of the Wonderful counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. May the Truth of the Christmas message break through the superficiality of the shopping frenzy and credit card debt. May we all have an opportunity to bring the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace to everyone we meet this Christmas season.

Questions to ponder:

Reflect on our world. What areas of the world need special prayer at this time?

What areas need to be surrounded by the Prince of Peace?

In what ways can Jesus Christ be our Wonderful Counselor?

Through what means does He counsel us?

How is the mightiness of God displayed?

Think of times when you have felt the peacefulness of God. What were the circumstances?

Week 11

Heavenly Parenting (Abba, Father)

“Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, and Father’. So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.”

Galatians 4:6

Some have said that being a parent is the most difficult of all jobs, but those who are parents can taste a glimpse of the heart of God. Only the creator of the universe could have created a structure called “the family” that would mirror His own love, involvement and concern for us, His children.

Earthly parenting frequently involves watching children experience victories and defeats. The victories make a parent’s heart soar. The defeats leave parents in anguish. As children grow and are given more responsibility for their own actions, parenting becomes even more of a challenge. It is called “parenting from a distance”. It is with great care and wisdom that parents enter the lives of the adult children.

It is here that those foundational relationships carved out in early years bear fruit.

Heavenly parenting is similar to earthly parenting. We address Him as our Heavenly Father. We are the apple of His eye. (Deuteronomy 32:10) He cheers us on when we experience victory. He encourages us on when we’re struggling. He is always present. (Psalm 139) He anguishes when we take a wrong turn. He anguishes when we suffer. He promises to always be with us.

How do we treat our Heavenly Father, the creator of the universe and our creator who “knew us while we were being knit together in our mother’s womb”? (Psalm 139:13) Does He long to hear from us? Does He long to be in communion with us? Does He long to hear our voice? Does He long to have us acknowledge Him?

Earthly parents understand these feelings, these struggles, these joys and these longings. It is a lesson in relationship and love, and just as earthly parents extend love to all their children in amazing ways, our Heavenly Father extends love to all of the family of God.

May we seek our Heavenly Father, who longs to hear from us. May we turn to Him for guidance and may we enter His presence with thankful hearts. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10) and we are a part of His inheritance. (Galatians 4:7)

Questions to ponder:

Ponder the parent child relationship. What is your idea of a good father?

What is your idea of a good child?

Can we grasp the significance and magnitude of God sending His Son to earth as a baby?

What does it mean to call out to God, “Abba, Father”?

Reflect on the significance of the God of the Universe being our Abba, Father.

Week 12

A Promise Fulfilled

*“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
You now dismissed your servant in peace.
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
Which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
And for glory to your people Israel.”*

Luke 2:29-32

Waiting is becoming increasingly unacceptable in a society that prides itself on instant results. Perhaps our technology has advanced in the 21st century, but the impatient, “I want it now” feeling has probably always been a part of the human experience. There have always been people who were better at waiting than others.

Through the ages, God promised Israel the hope of a Messiah. The book of Isaiah refers repeatedly to the coming of the Messiah. This book was written 400 years before the birth of Jesus. People waited. As the years passed, the excitement must have grown. When would the Messiah be born? Who would birth the Messiah? Finally, Scripture tells us of Simeon, a man of advanced years. (Luke 2:25). He was full of the Holy Spirit and “it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.” (Luke 2:26). When Jesus’ parents brought Him to the temple as was required by the law of Moses, Simeon was there waiting for Him. When Simeon saw the child Jesus, he took him in his arms and praised God! Simeon knew that the promise of the Messiah had been fulfilled. He was holding that promise in his arms. The waiting was over. The Messiah had come! Now Simeon could depart in peace.

As we celebrate Christmas, may we be awed by the birth of the Messiah, an event that occurred over two thousand years ago. May we remember that God’s promises are always fulfilled. In Revelation, He says, “Behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book.” (Revelation 22:7)

Two thousand years is a long time to wait. May we never underestimate the magnitude of the promise that Jesus will return. May we live each day as Simeon did – in righteousness, devotion and expectation.

Questions to ponder:

What happens when we become weary of waiting? How do we behave?

What is the most difficult thing you ever had to wait for?

Are you waiting for something now?

Can you compare the birth of a child with the 2nd coming of Christ?

**The Walk to Jerusalem
devotions
for 12 weeks of walking**

12 Weeks of Walking

Weekly devotions and Scriptures

Week I

Making the Decision:

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

2 Corinthians 5:7

The 259 steps up to the Whispering Gallery of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London are challenging. The passageway is narrow, the steps sometimes slippery and the light is dim. The view at the top, however, is breathtaking.

Not all visitors to St. Paul’s make the decision to climb to the Whispering Gallery. Some have legitimate physical reasons for bypassing the challenge, but others are too hurried or not convinced that the climb is worth the exertion and energy.

We make decisions everyday regarding our physical, spiritual and emotional health. It is so easy to procrastinate and fill our days with everything but that which is good for us. This week as you begin on this walking journey and decide to be good stewards of the body God has given you, may you walk by faith and grow stronger spiritually and physically as you spend time with your Heavenly Father. Congratulations on making that decision to come on this journey!

Questions to ponder:

How has my faith developed throughout the years?

Were there special people who mentored me in my faith?

What steps am I taking to strengthen that faith?

Is God telling me to step out in faith about some issue?

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Week 2

Preparing for the Journey

He told them, "Take nothing for the journey – no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic."

Luke 9:3

I remember the excitement I felt as a child, anticipating a journey to grandparents who lived 1200 miles away. The suitcases were out for a month prior to departure. We wanted to make sure that all items were in place and that we would be well equipped for the journey. Nothing could be left behind that might be necessary for the journey!

When Jesus commissioned the disciples to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick in the Gospel of Luke, He instructed them to travel light! No staff – no bag – no bread – no money – no extra tunic! Now that is light travel! Ah – to travel light! What a feeling to be able to simplify our lives of clutter and things and enjoy those things in life that truly last – God, people and the Word of God. Those are the only "items" we will take into eternity – our ultimate journey.

What preparations am I making for that final journey? A deep and personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ will make Heaven an easy transition and continuation of that relationship. Loving relationships with family and friends will continue into eternity. So – to life! Seize the moment! Enjoy God and people! Keep short accounts! Repair relationships as much as it is in your ability to repair! Forgive! The energy and time put into those relationships will bring life, hope and health – physical, spiritual and emotional.

Questions to ponder: Are there any relationships in my life that need some repair?

Do I need to make some phone calls?

Do I need to simplify my life?

Week 3

Taking the Time

“All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

Psalm 139:16

Have you ever said, “There just aren’t enough hours in the day ...” Our days can become pretty cluttered – and yet God says in Psalm 139 that “all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” Does that mean that God knows when we waste time or when we pack too much into our days? Isn’t it a mystery that we don’t know the number of our days or what the future holds? Only a wise God – ever knowing and ever wise – could create such a system. And yet, we live and act as if we know everything and can control our future! Maybe we need to ponder how we fill our days. We can take the time to ponder, and while we walk this week, let’s do just that – take the time to ponder the mystery of our all knowing, all loving God who knows what lies behind, before and with us today.

Questions to ponder: God thinks of me constantly. How often do I think of Him?

What percentage of my day is spent on God?

What percentage of my day is spent on enriching my relationships with family and friends?

Week 4

Plotting the Journey

**“In his heart a man plans his course,
but the Lord determines his steps.”**

Proverbs 16:9

It was one of those long automobile rides through Tennessee on Interstate 75. The triptik did not indicate any detours or road construction, but the large orange “detour” sign and the accompanying orange barrels were unavoidable. The course had been smooth and sleek up until this point with nicely angled roads and well planned rest stops. The detour would delay our arrival and change our plans. We exited the freeway and found ourselves on a narrow winding road dripping with fresh mountain streams, fringed with delightful wild flowers of purple hues, bright yellows and soft magenta. The turns in the road were hard and narrow, and the prospect of an unseen approaching car suddenly appearing on one of those hard turns kept us alert and expectant. But the flowers were beautiful and the streams refreshing even though the road was difficult. The road was also quite brief. It seemed like time stood still as we focused on the beauty and the winding road. In a minute we were back on the super-highway. The drone of the widely paved road lulled us into a senseless stupor of grey cement, blurry green forests and flashy billboards. We struggled to keep awake.

As you walk this week, let your senses come alive as you ponder God’s creation and creativity.

Questions to ponder: Am I including God in my decision making? Do I trust Him to direct my paths?

Am I taking the time to see and appreciate people, things, blessings in my life or am I riding the superhighway ?

How do I handle detours along the way? Am I flexible to change or very rigid?

Week 5

Where am I Going?

**“I press toward the goal for the prize
of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”**

Phil 3:14

Are we almost there now? Are we really going to Jerusalem? How much longer before we get there? Are you sure we're heading in the right direction? These are questions that may bring to mind memories of past journeys traveled as a child or with children. Most of us know what it's like to be the child and the adult in such a situation. As a child, we must trust that the adult really knows the way. As an adult we must press on toward the goal, knowing that if we follow the map and continue to travel, we will eventually reach our goal. Having a goal helps us to continue until we reach the prize or the destination.

Your physical goal this week may be to walk 2 miles – or 5 miles – or 50 miles. Having that goal helps us to continue on. Your spiritual goal may be to read the Word of God daily, pray daily or memorize a Bible verse. The deeper spiritual goal may be to have a deeper personal relationship with Jesus, to confront each other in a kinder more loving manner or to forgive someone. The ultimate spiritual goal is to become more Christ-like in our everyday encounters with people and society.

Questions to ponder:

Do I have physical and spiritual goals for this week?

Do I have physical and spiritual goals for my life?

What is one thing I can do to help achieve my physical goal?

What is one thing I can do to help achieve my spiritual goal?

Week 6

Walking Cheerleaders:

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

Hebrews 12:1

Being the mother of a cross country runner, I know what it is like to be in the “cloud of witnesses” that cheers on the runners. The runners disappear in a flash as they emerge from woody trails, but I am told that a familiar face – an encouraging “Go Dave” – or a thumbs up gesture is energizing to the runner. Likewise surrounding ourselves with encouragers and being encouragers ourselves is uplifting to our spirits and helps us continue on the course set before us. It has been said that there are no “lone-ranger” Christians. We need each other. Walking with a companion makes the walk seem much shorter. This week as you walk, think also about that “great cloud of witnesses” in heaven – cheering you on to run the race and persevere in your faith.

Questions to ponder: How can I encourage someone in their faith this week?

Think of a time when someone has been a great encouragement to you.

Do I have someone in my life with whom I can share deep spiritual thoughts, hopes and desires? If not, is there someone I know who might be willing to share their spiritual journey with me?

Week 7

What kind of walker am I?

**“Praise the Lord, O my soul;
all my inmost being,
praise his holy name,
Praise the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits —
Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,
Who satisfies your desires with good things
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.**

Psalm 103:1-3, 5

When was the last time you walked with a spring in your step? Was there a reason for that feeling of joyous abandon while you walked? Perhaps you just received an “A” on a difficult exam or maybe it was news of a baby’s birth, or maybe your soccer team won the championship or you were offered a much needed job. While you walk this week, dwell on the verses from Psalm 103. We have many reasons to rejoice and praise God. He forgives all our sins and heals our diseases. He satisfies our desires with good things so that our youth is renewed like the eagle’s. Now that is something to rejoice about!

Questions to ponder: What are some of the benefits of following God?

Think of some good things God has given to you...the things that made you walk with a spring in your step.

What desires has He satisfied?

Think about your deepest desires. Do you think they are in line with God’s will?

Week 8

Visitors along the road:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Galatians 5:22-23.

When we think of visitors along the road, the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 naturally comes to mind. We can all somehow relate to that story. The Good Samaritan actually stopped to help the hurting person while others ignored the hurting person. How often can we say that we have walked past a hurting person? How often have we helped a hurting person? The person may not even be a stranger. The excuses are many. To help the hurting person means stepping out of our comfort zone, rearranging plans and yes, showing and living the fruits of the Spirit which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. This week as you walk you may not see a physically hurting person, but ask God to help you see others as He sees them. If we are willing, He will show us the hurting of this world and fill us with His compassion and love.

Questions to ponder: Have you ever unexpectedly and spontaneously helped a stranger?

How did you feel?

Think about hurting people you know. As you walk this week pray for those hurting ones. Does God want you to take some action?

Week 9

Who is My Neighbor?

He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and, Love your neighbor as yourself."

Luke 10:27

How's the neighborhood? That is sometimes one of the first questions a perspective buyer asks when looking at a house, but for many, gone are the days when neighbors sit on porches and spend time with each other. It's difficult enough carving out time for family, let alone neighbors. Jesus says we should love our neighbor as ourself!

This week if you walk through your neighborhood, consider it an opportunity to pray for your neighbors. Pray as you walk by each house. If you see bikes and swing sets, pray for the children in the house. If the drapes are drawn and there's little activity, pray for those who live in the house. Sometimes homes become secret cocoons of pain and strife.

Just as only God knows what is going on inside our lives, God is sometimes the only one who knows what goes on in our homes. Pray that the Holy Spirit can break through and ease the pain and strife that your neighbors may be experiencing.

Questions to ponder: What can it possibly mean to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind?

Think about yourself. Are you pleased with yourself? Do you love yourself? Are you able to love others?

Week 10

Walking the Walk

**“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
They will run and not grow weary,
They will walk and not be faint.”**

Isaiah 40:31

One of my fondest memories of 22 years at an inner city church was when Bertha would lead us in “Hold to His Hand, God’s unchanging Hand” “Put your Hope in things Eternal!” “Hold to God’s unchanging Hand!” When Bertha led that song, she would strut across the room and bring us all into an electrifying cadence of agreement. Yes, when our hope is in the Lord, we can strut, we can sing and we can walk the walk! Our walk with the Lord should be one of confidence and determination – not of gloominess and defeat. May we step out this week and walk the walk with the One who gives us hope eternal.

Questions to ponder: Think about what you place your hope in.

Consider hopefulness vs. hopelessness. Does outlook affect outcomes?

Do you need your strength renewed? Do you know someone who needs their strength renewed?

Week 11

Are You Thirsty?

Jesus answered her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

John 4:13,14

Never have I experienced a greater physical thirst than when driving through the Mexican-Arizona desert in a non air-conditioned car with a screaming 9 month old. How that thirst becomes an ache and a desperate longing when we don't know when or where we will obtain a refreshing drink of water! Desert travel brings thirst. I wonder how thirsty the Israelites must have been traveling through the desert for 40 years. Our lives too sometimes become like deserts. We neglect to replenish our souls with the Word of God.

We forget to pray – or we're just too busy trying to survive the desert experience to stop long enough for refreshment. The Scripture says that if we drink of the refreshing water that Jesus gives, we will never thirst. In fact, that water that Jesus gives us will become a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. May we drink deeply of the water that Jesus gives.

Questions to ponder: Consider times when you've been physically thirsty.

Have you ever been so thirsty that you could only think of satisfying that thirst?

Have you ever been spiritually thirsty? What does that feel like?

Week 12

Satisfaction and Keeping On

“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 3:13-14

We're at the end of our walk to Jerusalem. Are you weary or are you physically more alive and spiritually more attuned? Hopefully this has been a journey of physical and spiritual renewal. Hopefully you've satisfied your soul with spiritual food and living water. Hopefully the increased exercise has renewed and revitalized the body God has given you and you are able to have more energy for His vital work on earth. Serving God and being good stewards of our physical body requires perseverance and commitment. It helps if we keep our eyes on the prize and run this race to win.

- Questions to ponder:**
- How much energy and commitment am I putting into the spiritual race that Paul speaks of in Philippians?
 - Am I more likely to strive for excellence in my secular life or my spiritual life?
 - How can I keep on striving for excellence in my physical & spiritual life?
 - Do I need to rearrange priorities?
 - Do I need to eliminate some activities?

The “Culturally Fit” Congregation

Expanding Our World of Understanding

Ways to shrink our globe, shrink our waistlines and expand our minds and understanding of our neighbors on this planet.

Defining neighbor and neighborhood in the 21st century

The terms “neighbor” and “neighborhood “ have taken on new meanings in this generation. Mr. Roger’s neighborhood has changed. The neighbors on our street might as well be 3,000 miles across the ocean and the people 3,000 miles across the ocean have suddenly come into our living rooms via the evening news. We are connected instantly to places with strange names and to people who speak differently, eat different foods and in most cases, live with much less than we do.

How do we, “the church,” respond to our world? Are we apathetic, ignorant or hostile? Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”(Matthew 28:19)

Jesus also said in reference to the hurting of this world, “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? And the King will answer and say to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ (Matthew 25:37-40)

The beginnings of understanding and reconciliation come with awareness and knowledge. When we take the time to learn about people, we can begin to experience community with those people. Knowing their history, values, living conditions, customs and geographical location expands our knowledge and understanding. They are no longer statistics, but living, breathing, feeling, and sometimes hurting people created by God. We share this planet with 6 billion people and according to the Human Genome Project completed in 2000, in terms of genetics, all human beings, regardless of race, are more than 99.9% the same. (*U.S. News*, 11/11/02)

What made Jesus’ ministry and life so effective and remarkable is that He met people where they were and understood the very core of their being. We the church of the 21st century need to respond to the rest of the world with the compassion of Jesus. This imaginary Walk to Bethlehem/Jerusalem is a beginning. Our minds will be filled with new information about our neighbors and our world. Our body will become more physically fit as we walk. Our spiritual lives will be enriched by prayer and meditation.

To increase global and cultural awareness, a cultural quotient test is a fun learning activity that you may want to use in a small group setting, as part of a kickoff “Walk to Jerusalem” celebration, or as part of a packet of information to give to walkers for their individual learning.

Cultural Quotient Pre-Test

Let's begin our Walk to Jerusalem with a cultural quotient test. Hopefully by the end of this journey our cultural quotient will improve and we will know more about our global neighbors.

It's easy to take things for granted. As Americans, we forget that most of the world is starving. We have no idea what it would be like not to have religious freedom. Because we begin our Walk to Jerusalem in the USA, the land of the free and the home of the brave, we need to review some of those places, people and principles which make us so privileged and blessed.
True or False:

1. The motto for the state of Ohio is , “With God all things are possible.”
2. The first soda pop made in the United States was created in Detroit in 1862 and was called Vernor’s Ginger Ale.
3. The Great Lakes consist of 5 lakes: Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron and Lake Ontario.
4. The first inhabitants of Pennsylvania were American Indians.
5. The Iroquoian speaking tribes in the New York/Pennsylvania area were first known as the Five Nations.
6. The signing of the Constitution of the United States took place on July 4, 1776.
7. The U.S. Constitution is the oldest written constitution of any government in the world.
8. A proclamation by President George Washington and a congressional resolution established the first national Thanksgiving Day on November 26, 1789. The reason for the holiday was to give “thanks” for the new constitution.

Multiple Choice:

9. The current population of the US is approximately:
- a.) 276 million b.) 225 million c.) 307 million d.) 323 million
10. All were US presidents except:
- a.) John Hancock b.) Chester A. Arthur c.) James Garfield d.) Herbert Hoover
11. The Declaration of Independence was penned and signed at:
- a.) College of William & Mary b.) Jamestown c.) Independence Hall d.) White House
12. Which president was fined \$20 for speeding on his horse?
- a.) William Henry Harrison b.) George W. Bush c.) Ulysses S. Grant d.) Lyndon Johnson
13. The youngest president ever elected was:
- a.) Bill Clinton b.) John F. Kennedy c.) Teddy Roosevelt d.) John Adams
14. The population of the world is approximately:
- a.) 1.6 billion b.) 6.7 billion c.) 2.5 billion d.) 9 billion
15. The main point of entry into the US for immigrants from 1892-1954 was:
- a.) Staten Island b.) Ellis Island c.) Long Island d.) The NY Port Authority
16. The Statue of Liberty was presented to us by:
- a.) the British b.) the French Canadians c.) the French d.) the Germans

Multiple Choice:

17. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" This inscription on the Statue of Liberty was written by:

- a.) Thomas Hardy
- b.) Ralph Waldo Emerson
- c.) Emma Lazarus
- d.) Henry David Thoreau

18. The average depth of the Atlantic Ocean is:

- a.) 5,233 ft.
- b.) 2,974 ft.
- c.) 12,881 ft.
- d.) 24,233 ft.

19. The following are ports or harbors of the Atlantic Ocean except:

- a.) Helsinki
- b.) London
- c.) Hamburg
- d.) Milan

20. The distance across the Atlantic Ocean from New York City to Casablanca, Morocco is:

- a.) 3,607
- b.) 1,243
- c.) 6,282
- d.) 2,149

21. The capital of Morocco is:

- a.) Rabat
- b.) Casablanca
- c.) Fez
- d.) Acaba

22. The official language of Morocco is:

- a.) Berber
- b.) French
- c.) Spanish
- d.) Arabic

23) The state religion of Morocco is:

- a.) Sunni
- b.) Islam
- c.) Christian
- d.) Coptic

24. The country immediately east of Morocco is:

- a.) Sudan
- b.) Monaco
- c.) Algeria
- d.) Ethiopia

25. The capital of Algeria is:

- a.) Constantine
- b.) Annaba
- c.) Tindouf
- d.) Algiers

Multiple Choice:

26. Algeria's leading export is:
a.) wine b.) petroleum c.) citrus fruits d.) cereals
27. The capital of Tunisia is:
a.) La Goulette b.) Bizerte c.) Tunis d.) El Kef
28. The predominant religion in Tunisia is:
a.) Muslim b.) Christian c.) Jewish
29. The official language of Tunisia is:
a.) Tunisian b.) Arabic c.) French d.) Greek
30. The type of government in Tunisia is:
a.) republic b.) dictatorship c.) monarchy d.) communist
31. The capital of Libya is:
a.) Tripoli b.) Tobrick c.) Libania d.) Yabel
32. The capital of Egypt is:
a.) Alexandria b.) Aswan c.) Cairo d.) Cleo
33. The Nile River is the longest river in the world stretching for:
a.) 1,100 miles b.) 4,187 miles c.) 6,000 miles d.) 2,458 miles
34. Which country withdrew their mandate of Palestine after World War II, which resulted in the UN partitioning the area into Arab and Jewish states?
a.) USA b.) Russia c.) Great Britain d.) France

Multiple Choice:

35. The official language of Israel is:
a.) Arabic b.) English c.) Hebrew d.) Aramaic
36. The capital of Israel is:
a.) Tel Aviv b.) Jerusalem c.) Bethlehem d.) Nazareth
37. The US Embassy to Israel is located in:
a.) Tel Aviv b.) Jerusalem c.) Bethlehem d.) Nazareth
38. Jerusalem is a Holy City to all the following religions except:
a.) Christian b.) Buddhist c.) Muslim d.) Jewish

ANSWER SHEET

1. True. The motto, which also is used on tax forms and some official stationery, was adopted in 1959 at the suggestion of a Cincinnati schoolboy after he learned that Ohio was the only U.S. state without an official motto.
2. True. Vernors ginger ale was created in Detroit and became the first soda pop made in the United States. In 1862, pharmacist James Vernor was trying to create a new beverage when he was called away to serve our country in the Civil War. When he returned, 4 years later, the drink he had stored in an oak case had acquired a delicious gingery flavor.
3. False. The Great Lakes consist of: Lake Erie, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Ontario and Lake Superior. Lake St. Clair is not one of the great lakes.
4. True. The first inhabitants of Pennsylvania were American Indians. They were people of Mongoloid ancestry unaware of European culture.
5. True. The Iroquoian speaking tribes were known as the Five Nations and included the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas.
6. False. The signing of the U.S. Constitution took place on September 17, 1787. The Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776.
7. True. The U.S. Constitution is the oldest written constitution of any government in the world.
8. True.

Multiple Choice:

9. c. 307 million

10. a. John Hancock
John Hancock was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Chester A. Arthur was the 21st president of the United States, serving from 1881-1885. He dedicated the Washington Monument on 2/21/1885 during his term of office.

James Garfield was the 20th president of the United States, serving from 3/4/1881-9/19/1881. On 9/19, after only serving a few months in office, he became the 2nd United States president to be assassinated.

Herbert Hoover was the 31st president of the United States, serving from 1929-1933. During his term, Hitler came to power and he was president during the 1929 Stock Market Crash. (americanpresidents.org)

11. c. Independence Hall

12. c. Ulysses S. Grant

13. b. John F. Kennedy
John F. Kennedy was 44 when elected president. He was the 35th president and served from 1961-1963.

Bill Clinton was the 42nd president and was 47 when elected president.

Teddy Roosevelt was the 26th president and was 43 when he became president. Although the youngest president, he was not the youngest elected president. With the assassination of President McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt became the youngest president.

14. b. 6.6 billion (US Census Bureau)

In 1990 the world population was 5.2 billion. Population projection for 2020 is 8.2 billion.

15. b. Ellis Island

16. c. The French. The Statue of Liberty is the tallest statue of modern times measuring 151 feet high on a 154 foot pedestal. It was presented to us by the French in 1884 to commemorate the alliance between the 2 countries during the Revolutionary War.

17. c. Emma Lazarus, a Jewish American poet saw the statue as a beacon to the world. She wrote a poem to help raise money for the pedestal. The poem is carved on the pedestal and captures what the statue came to mean to the millions who migrated to the United States seeking freedom, and who have continued to come unto this day. The name of the poem, written in 1883 was "The New Colossus".
(usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/63.htm)

Multiple Choice:

18. c. 12,881 Ft. (www.atlanticocean.ca)
19. d. Milan
20. a. 3,607 (indo.com)
21. a. Rabat (travel.state.gov/morocco.html)
The largest city in Morocco is Casablanca. The official name of the country is the Kingdom of Morocco.
22. d. Arabic
French is the dominant business language.
23. b. Islam

Almost all are Sunni Muslim. 1% are Christian and 0.2% are Jewish.
(arab.de/arabinfo/morocco)
24. c. Algeria (travel.state.gov/Algeria.html)
25. d. Algiers
26. b. Petroleum
Algeria has the 5th largest reserves of natural gas in the world and is the 2nd largest gas exporter.
27. c. Tunis
28. a. Muslim
29. b. Arabic
30. a. Republic
Following independence from France in 1956, President Habib Bourluiba established a strict one party state. He dominated the country for 31 years, repressing Islamic fundamentalism and establishing rights for women unmatched by any other Arab nation.
31. a. Tripoli
Tripoli is Libya's largest city and port. Tripoli is also mentioned in a key line of the Marine's Hymn. "From the Halls of Montezuma, To the Shores of Tripoli; We fight our country's battles On the land as on the sea".

Multiple Choice:

The four Barbary States of North Africa – Morocco, Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli – had plundered seaborne commerce for centuries. It was in 1805 that a small force of Marines participated in the capture of Tripoli and hoisted the American flag for the first time over a fortress of the Old World. The colors of the Corps was inscribed with the words: “To the Shores of Tripoli”. After the Marines participated in the capture and occupation of Mexico City and the Castle of Chapultepec, otherwise known as the “Halls of Montezuma”, the words were added, “From the Halls of Montezuma, To the Shores of Tripoli.” (www.mclwestchester.org/USMC/Hymn)

32. c. Cairo

33. b. 4,187 miles

The Nile River flows from South to North. At the end of its 4,187 mile journey, it drains into the Mediterranean Sea. Its major source is Lake Victoria in east central Africa. The name Nile comes from the Greek Neilos, which means a valley or river valley. The river’s water and the fertile soil along its banks created the perfect setting for the evolution of the civilizations that existed in the ancient world. Those ancient people who lived along the banks of the Nile developed the art of agriculture and were one of the first to utilize the plow.

34. c. Great Britain

After World War II, the British withdrew from their mandate of Palestine, and the UN partitioned the area into Arab and Jewish states. The Arabs rejected this arrangement.

35. c. Hebrew

36. b. Jerusalem

37. a. Tel Aviv

38. b. Buddhist

The name of the city, Jerusalem, derives from an expression for peace “shalom” or “salam,” . It’s ironic that of all the cities on earth there is no city that has had so little peace. For Jews Jerusalem is the place where the Messiah will come and unite all peoples in peace, for Christians it is the place of the Apocalypse where heaven will descend to earth, for Muslims it is the site of the Last Judgment where all souls are waiting for deliverance. (www.owlnet.rice.edu)

Three important places in Jerusalem that are important for each of the respective religions are:

For the Jews: The Western Wall is the venerated remnant of the 2nd temple (destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE). It is Judaism’s most revered site.

(Continued)

Multiple Choice:

For the Muslims: The Dome of the Rock is one of the oldest and most beautiful examples of Muslim architecture, a mosque built in the 7th century by the Umayyad Khalif Abed el-Malik, on the site of the destroyed Jewish Temple.

For the Christians: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built at the beginning of the Byzantine era, contains the last 5 Stations of the Cross and serves as a focal point for Christian pilgrimages. This church is the site of Jesus' crucifixion as well as His burial and Resurrection.

Jerusalem has been a spiritual center to Christians, Jews and Muslims. Christians consider it a holy city because many events in the life of Jesus took place there. Jews revere the city because it was their religious and political center. It was on Mount Moriah, in the city of Jebus (Jerusalem) where God called Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. (Genesis 22) Finally, the Muslims consider Jerusalem holy because they believe that the prophet Muhammed rose to heaven from there.

The city of Jerusalem is unique because it has three Sabbaths – Friday (Muslim), Saturday (Jewish) and Sunday (Christian).

The Muslims believe that Friday, the 6th Day, is the day in which the first human being was created and the creation was completed. Thus they feel it is the most significant day of the week. Unlike Judeo-Christian traditions, Muslims do not believe that on the 7th day God rested. They believe that God is far above the need for rest. (www.oneummah.net/faq/index).

The Jewish Shabbat or Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday evening because in the story of creation it says in Genesis 1 "And there was evening and there was morning one day." From this is inferred that a day begins with the evening sunset.

The Christian Sabbath is traditionally on Sunday, primarily to represent the 3rd day that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. Thus Sunday becomes "resurrection day".

NOTES

NOTES