

A Walk to Remember Resource Guide



About the Journey

The “A Walk to Remember” Campaign is a spiritual growth campaign that will emphasize connecting with Jesus on a deeper level as we strive to live like Him and follow in His footsteps. We will be journeying together through the life of Christ on earth.

This campaign is for every person in our church and community, and it uses the power of alignment at three levels to help us put into practice what we learn from Jesus’ life:

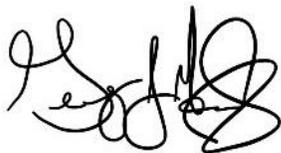
Individual Level – Use this resource guide for the “A Walk to Remember” (AWTR) campaign. This guide includes key verses and passages to review, examples of community outreach activities and next steps to take, an AWTR commentary, daily Scripture readings, Deep Dive Discussion Questions, and suggestions for prayer and reflection.

Group Level – United Groups and Micro-Groups are encouraged to discuss and study “A Walk to Remember” together in their groups.

Congregational Level – I am asking for everyone to commit to this collection of talks by being a part of an on-campus gathering for the next 10 weeks.

Imagine the impact on our lives and community if we all moved from isolation to community with those around us and we invested in and invited people to join us on the journey.

Enjoy the Journey!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Pastor Gary

Introduction

For over 3 years, Jesus walked this earth as a human being. He put aside His heavenly rights and home to complete the work of salvation. He understands the daily pressures, struggles, and temptations we all face.

When we follow Jesus and walk with Him, we gain the insight and strength we need to press on in this life. Jesus challenges us to trust Him, learn His ways, and do His work. When we do this, our life becomes *A Walk to Remember*.

"So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, ⁷being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude." Colossians 2:6-7

In this 10-week collection of talks, we will walk with Jesus through His earthly life and ministry and ask Him to show us our next steps on our journey with Him. This collection will include:

- Week 1 - Jesus' Birth
- Week 2 - Jesus' Childhood
- Week 3 - Jesus' Baptism
- Week 4 - Jesus' Temptation
- Week 5 - Jesus' Ministry
- Week 6 - Jesus' Transfiguration
- Week 7 - Jesus' Last Meal - Communion
- Week 8 - Jesus' Death
- Week 9 - Jesus' Resurrection
- Week 10 - Jesus' Second Coming

United Group Leaders

The “A Walk to Remember” Campaign is a great opportunity for your group to discuss the weekly messages through the Deep Dive Discussion Questions which can be found in this resource guide. Feel free to utilize any of the resources in this guide in your preparation for your group meeting. However, it is important to remember that some members of your United Group may also be members of a Discipleship Micro-Group that is also working through this resource guide.

The time spent in your United Group can focus on discussing insights, reflections, and reactions to the weekly messages in the collection through the Deep Dive Discussion Questions, as well as talking through potential next steps as identified in the “Your Next Steps” map on page 10. This campaign is also a great opportunity for your group to focus on a community service/outreach project that you work on together to make a local impact. Challenge your United Group to come up with a project to work on during this campaign.

Micro-Group Leaders

The “A Walk to Remember” Campaign is a great opportunity for your group to go deeper in their study of the different events in the life of Jesus. Encourage your members to download a copy of this guide or to pick up a physical copy on the Connect Side of the Worship Area and to work through the resources provided for each week of the campaign.

During your time together feel free to discuss reflections and insights from the weekly Scripture readings and the commentary provided for each week of the campaign. You can also follow the sample format below to talk through each event/story from Jesus’ life.

Sample Discipleship Micro-Group Format

Looking Back – The first 1/3 of your discipleship micro-group meeting should be looking back on the week. This also provides accountability.

Ask your micro group:

1. How was your week?

2. What are you thankful for?
3. What is the biggest challenge you are facing?

Then pray for each other.

Looking Up – The next 1/3 of your discipleship micro-group meeting should be looking up to Jesus. Discuss whatever week of the campaign you are on.

Ask 4 Questions:

- Q1 What does this story/event teach us about God?
- Q2 What does this story/event teach us about people?
- Q3 Is there a command to obey, a temptation to avoid, a promise to claim, an example to follow? (Depending on the text)

Now, as a result of this passage, what should your RESPONSE be?

- Q4 Who do you know that needs to hear about this?

PRAYER (Ask the Lord who to share this with. Tell us next week how they responded).

Looking Forward – The last 1/3 of your discipleship micro-group should focus on what each member of the group is going to do during the next week to put the principles learned into action. Think of this in the terms of an “I will ...” statement. Also, who are you going to share this with during the next week?

Lastly, close in prayer.

It is always helpful to have someone designated to write things down such as prayer requests, needs in the group, and actions that group members are going to take.

Outline of Jesus' Life

According to the Gospels, Jesus is the Son of God who came into the world to inaugurate God's kingdom. He is the Messiah—the Anointed One—whom the Old Testament prophets had envisioned, and His coming is seen as the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel. Each of the four Gospels presents Jesus and His teachings, actions, passion, death, and resurrection as the climax of God's dealings with His people in salvation history. A rough outline of Jesus' life in the canonical Gospels can be sketched as follows:

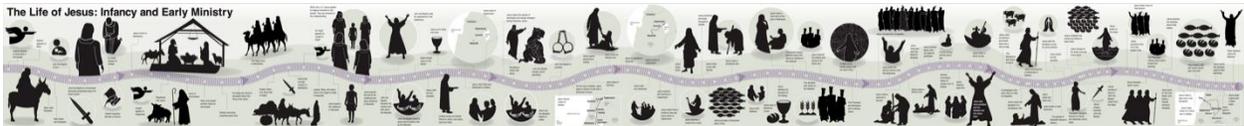
- Jesus was miraculously conceived by the Virgin Mary through the work of the Holy Spirit, as announced by the angel Gabriel (Matthew 1:18–23; Luke 1:26–38).
- He was born in Bethlehem at the time of Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1–7; Matthew 2:1) and spent His early years in Nazareth (Matthew 2:23).
- Jesus was baptized at the Jordan River by John the Baptist. He was confirmed by the voice from heaven and the descending Holy Spirit that He is the Son of God (Matthew 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22).
- Jesus worked as an itinerate preacher who called disciples, taught people in parables, traveled around Galilee and Judaea, performed miracles, healed the sick, cast out evil spirits, associated with sinners and social outcasts, and announced the coming of God's kingdom.
- Around AD 30, Jesus went to Jerusalem for Passover and created a disturbance in the temple area.
- After His final meal with His disciples, Jesus was arrested and interrogated by Jewish religious authorities, Herod, and Pontius Pilate.
- Although He was found innocent by Pontius Pilate, Jesus was beaten, mocked, and eventually crucified. He died on the cross as a criminal at Golgotha, outside Jerusalem. Most of His disciples deserted Him.
- On the third day after Jesus' crucifixion (including counting the day of his crucifixion as one day), a few of His followers reported that His tomb was found empty, and angels announced that Jesus was raised from the dead.
- The disciples encountered the resurrected Jesus on several occasions and witnessed Him ascend into the heavens. As a consequence, they believed Jesus is indeed what He claimed to be—the Lord, the Savior, the Son of Man, and the Son of God. They formed a community to practice what He taught, in anticipation of His return, and sought to persuade others to place faith in Him as the Messiah.

Essentially, the Gospels present Jesus as the revelation of God, confessed and worshiped as the Living Lord, God incarnate, and the manifestation of God who sacrificed His life to redeem sinful humanity.

Four Gospels on One Jesus

Each of the four Gospels presents a distinct portrait of Jesus. Historical critics tend to attribute the differences to different audiences, authorial purposes, or multiple layers of editorial work. However, the canonical approach emphasizes that the portraits of Jesus in the four Gospels display harmony on a deeper level, despite their differences (Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 707–32). Two predominant unifying elements include:

1. The four Gospels tell Jesus' stories in the light of Israel's Scripture. The biblical stories of God's dealings with the people Israel provide the larger narrative context within which Jesus' stories are to be understood. If any part of the Gospels is taken out of the framework provided by the canonical texts, misinterpretation will inevitably follow (Hays, "Canonical Matrix of the Gospels," 53–75).
2. The four Gospels demonstrate a similar Christology. Although the details and sequences of events vary, all four Gospels agree that Jesus is the Lord and Christ, and that He was seen as alive, as a resurrected one, by His disciples after His crucifixion.¹



Download this map on www.cityunited.church/walk

¹ Kwok, H.-L. (2016). [Jesus, Canonical Approach to](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, L. Wentz, E. Ritzema, & W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Lexham Press.

Your Next Steps Map

As we journey with Jesus, it is important that we understand where we are at on our own journey with Him. Where are you on the journey? What next steps do you need to say "Yes" to?

Use the "Your Next Steps" map on the next page to answer these questions.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

SAY "YES" TO EACH NEW STEP

1



BELONG
Saved, Baptized,
Added to the Church

1.1 "Yes" to a Gathering

- Worship with Others
- Regularly Attend an Online or On-Campus Gathering

1.2 "Yes" to Jesus

- Decide to Follow Jesus
- Be Baptized

1.3 "Yes" to Church Membership

- Attend Open House
- Join City United Church
- Give 10% Financially

3



SERVE
Loving God by
Serving People

3.1 "Yes" to Personal Ministry

- Leadership Training
- Learn & Use Your Spiritual Gifts
- Involved in Church Ministry
- Ministry Team Member

3.2 "Yes" to Personal Influence

- Leading in Your Home
- Leading a Group/Class
- Personally Discipling Someone
- Fasting & Praying
- Worship as a Lifestyle

4



BRING
Invest In &
Invite Others

4.1 "Yes" to Personal Mission

- Trained in & Sharing Your Story
- Investing In & Inviting Others
- Viewing Every Day as a Missional Opportunity
- Making a Local Impact
- Starting a Church and/or Ministry (Non-Profit)

4.2 "Yes" to Global Mission

- Short-term Mission Trip
- Praying for the Nations
- Developing a Global Vision
- Sacrificial Giving
- Making a Global Impact
- Long-Term Missions

2



CONNECT
Connect with
God and Others

2.1 "Yes" to Connecting with God

- Daily Bible Reading
- Prayer
- Scripture Memory
- Personal Worship

2.2 "Yes" to Connecting with Others

- Church Events
- Meet-Ups
- United Group
- Micro-Group

Week 1 - Jesus' Birth

Jesus' birth redeems us.

Key Verses/Passages: Luke 2:11-12; Isaiah 7:14; 9:7-8

Commentary

While thinking about the circumstances surrounding Christ's birth, Christians can rejoice that the Messiah has come to earth and dealt with our sin. We can praise God for fulfilling His promises. and we can have complete confidence that He will always be faithful to do what He has declared. Despite what many believe today, the religions and religious leaders of the world are not the same.

Many people in our culture promote the ridiculous claim that Jesus was just another religious leader—a good person who tried to make life better for others—but Jesus is unique in so many respects. He alone was a “good person” since He lived a sinless life.

Every other religious leader has been sinful and needed a Savior. But Jesus did not need a savior; He is the Savior. He is Your Savior.

There are no prophecies foretelling details about the birth of other religious leaders. No prophecies alerted the world to the coming of Muhammad (Islam), Joseph Smith (Mormonism), David Koresh (Branch Davidians), Charles Taze Russell (Jehovah's Witnesses), Siddhartha Gautama (Buddhism), or any other founder of the world's religions. Yet the Old Testament pinpointed numerous details about the life of the Son of God and Savior of the world.

As we kick off this journey and study of Jesus' life, *A Walk to Remember*, we must understand the background of the way He came and why we are studying Him.

Jesus Birth in Isaiah

- A. Understanding the Old Testament prophecy of Jesus' birth is crucial.
- B. Isaiah was the most eloquent of the prophets in writing about Christ's birth.

Jesus Birth in Matthew

The lineage in Matthew is very Important. Even more intriguing is the inclusion of four women (five, counting His mother, Mary). It was rare for women to be listed in Jewish genealogies. These aren't the women we might expect either. Instead of Sarah or Rebekah, we get Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah. Why? For starters, all four have some past connection to sexual immorality. Tamar seduced her father-in-law, and Rahab was a prostitute. Ruth was part of the Moabites, a people group with origins in incest (Genesis 19). The child born to Uriah's wife was conceived because of an adulterous relationship with King David. But there's more. All four women had Gentile connections. Tamar and Rahab were Canaanites; Ruth was a Moabite; Uriah's wife was married to a Hittite.

Here we encounter a theme that runs throughout Matthew: the expansion of "His people" (Matthew 1:21) to include Gentiles who join with the godly Jewish remnant (Matthew 3:9; 8:11; 28:19). Knowing this results in the fact that God's grace is for all people, not a select few.

Without Jesus' birth, we will experience death. The Savior's glorious birth resulted in the brutal deaths of several baby boys in Bethlehem. (For the record, there were likely no more than 20, given the population of Bethlehem at the time.)

As if the report of this event isn't horrific enough, Matthew forces us to linger on it by quoting Jeremiah 31:15 and asserting that the killing of the Bethlehem babies fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy about the weeping and great mourning in Ramah. This turns out to be a brilliant strategy. By quoting Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew invites us to go back to Jeremiah 31:16–17 to hear the rest of the story: God will act to rescue and restore His people from the terrible situation. Matthew wants us to understand that the hope promised to the mothers who wept for their children taken to Babylon is the hope promised to the mothers in Bethlehem who lost their children—and to all who face horrendous evil and injustice.

Daily Scripture Readings

- **Monday:** Matthew 1
- **Tuesday:** Mark: 1:1-7
- **Wednesday:** Luke 1

- **Thursday:** John 1
- **Friday:** 1 Timothy 3:16
- **Saturday:** John 5:39
- **Sunday:** Attend City United Church and listen to the next message.

Deep Dive Discussion Questions

1. How important is the virgin birth to our faith as Christians?
2. Read Isaiah 9:6 and reflect on the different names of Jesus. Which name brings the most comfort to you?
3. How should we live in light of Jesus' return as King?

Next Steps for the Journey

4. On the "Your Next Steps" Map on Page 10, where are you at and where do you need to go?

Outreach Opportunities

Determine to invest in and invite one person to a gathering at City United Church this weekend. As we reflect on Jesus' birth, it reminds us that the upcoming holiday season is quickly approaching. Most of the world pauses to celebrate Christmas. Start praying now for ways that you can make a difference this holiday season. What friends and family are you going to see and spend time? Do you need to have a gospel conversation with any of them? Start thinking about ways to make a Kingdom impact this upcoming Christmas season.

Prayer & Reflection

God, what needs to change in my life to make me more like You? Who around me needs to hear the story of your birth and that You came to redeem us? Thank you for sending your Son to this earth to take my sin and shame upon Himself so that I can receive salvation and eternal life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Week 2 - Jesus' Childhood

We must grow like Jesus.

Key Verses/Passages: Matthew 2:13-23; Luke 2:39-52

Commentary

We know very little about the childhood years of Jesus. What we have is the ability to see how Jesus developed on earth. He grew up in three locations: Egypt, Nazareth, and Jerusalem. Understanding these locations better can help fill in the holes of how and where Jesus grew up. The key verses and passages above help us better understand these times and places. We know that Jesus developed in four ways. He developed mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially.

"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deuteronomy 29:29

Jesus' childhood home is identified in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew as the town of Nazareth in Galilee, where He lived with His family. The Gospel of Mark records the conflict that Jesus faced with His neighbors and family. Jesus was looked at by those who watched Him grow up as crazy or out of His mind. Jesus responded to His followers that they were His true family. In John, Mary follows Jesus to His crucifixion, and He expresses concern over her well-being. He places the future of her care in the hands of the disciple, John.

Jesus is called a τέκτων (tektōn) in Mark 6:3, traditionally understood as carpenter, but it could cover makers of objects in various materials, including builders. The Gospels indicate that Jesus could read, paraphrase, and debate Scripture, but this does not necessarily mean that He received formal scribal training.

"When Jesus is presented as a baby in the temple per Jewish Law, a man named Simeon says to Mary and Joseph that Jesus "shall stand as a sign of contradiction, while a sword will pierce your own soul. Then the secret thoughts of many will come to light." Several years later, when Jesus goes missing on a visit to Jerusalem, His parents find Him in the temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking questions, and the people are amazed at His understanding and answers; Mary scolds Jesus for going missing, to which Jesus replies that He must "be in his father's house".²

² Wikipedia. 2022. "Jesus." Wikimedia Foundation. Last modified September 18, 2022. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus>.

Daily Scripture Readings (Prophecies of Jesus)

- **Monday:** Genesis 3:13; Galatians 4:4
- **Tuesday:** Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23
- **Wednesday:** Psalm 2:7; Matthew 3:17
- **Thursday:** Genesis 32:18; Galatians 3:16
- **Friday:** Genesis 21:12; Luke 3:23; 34
- **Saturday:** Numbers 24:17; Luke 3:23-34
- **Sunday:** Attend City United Church and listen to the next message.

Deep Dive Discussion Questions

1. Think about your life and journey. How has God taken care of (preserved) you through the years?
2. Jesus grew in both wisdom and stature. What spiritual disciplines are you participating in to grow on your journey with Jesus? What spiritual disciplines are lacking in your life?
3. Even Jesus' siblings did not believe in Him. What relationships are you having trouble with regarding your relationship with Jesus? What steps can you take towards improving these relationships?

Next Steps for the Journey

4. On the "Your Next Steps" Map on Page 10, where are you at and where do you need to go?

Outreach Opportunities

Determine to invest in and invite one person to a gathering at City United Church this weekend. As we reflect on Jesus' childhood, it reminds us that we too need to continue to grow in our relationship with Jesus and others. Are there any broken relationships that need to be mended in your life? Are there people in your family that you need to reach out to and have a gospel conversation with? Start praying now for opportunities to spend time with and talk to these family members. Pray

for wisdom on the best way to approach each situation, for the conversation that you will have, and for God to work in you and in each person.

Prayer & Reflection

God, what needs to change in me and my life to make me more like You? What areas of my life do I need to grow in? Help me to be a light to those in my family and circle of influence. Please give me the humility and discernment I need as I strive to repair any broken relationships and to grow closer to those around me. In Jesus' name, Amen.