

WAY OF THE CROSS:

How to create a Way of the Cross in your community.

Introduction

The Way of the Cross was started by the Franciscans in the 17th Century. Franciscans had pastoral care of all of the shrines in the Holy Land, and when the friars (particularly, St. Leonard of Port Maurice) saw that most people would never get to Jerusalem, they started installing "a traveling pilgrimage", similar to the portable labyrinths, which allowed many persons near and far from the original labyrinths to walk it.

In the beginning, the Franciscans placed 14 crosses to mark the 14 stops on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem, and people would walk them, meditate, and pray on the passion and death of Jesus. Soon they were installed in almost all Catholic Churches around Europe, and are now a normal part of the side walls of most of them.

In the late 1970's Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM, began this Good Friday event in Cincinnati, Ohio, where it became very popular and continues to this day. It was always an attempt to bring the passion of Christ to the contemporary and local ways that Jesus still suffers in our midst. In 1987, Rohr relocated to Albuquerque where the event was re-created also. There were many permits, insurances, and even problems from some of the churches at its inception due to the fact that there was no precedent for such a thing. Ministers thought it was going to take people away from "church", meaning of course in house church services. But eventually it became the most regular ecumenical church event in the city. Today it continues as an annual city wide event, hosted by the Center for Action and Contemplation, an ecumenical non profit organization dedicated to social justice, teaching and prayer in the way of Christ.

This handbook is a template for your community or organization as you seek to create a Good Friday event around the Stations of the Cross. We hope this helps you create a successful and meaningful event!

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WHERE TO BEGIN

Gathering community around you to create this event will make it a cooperative, fun event as well as ease the burden of planning and implementing all the elements involved in this project. It is a good idea to begin 4-5 months before the actual event occurs on Good Friday. This will ensure you plenty of spaciousness and time to contact people, plan the logistics and enjoy yourself without feeling stressed out.

Handpicking or inviting a steering committee of 5-7 persons who have a variety of gifts is a good way to begin the process of brainstorming. You might want to choose someone who is a visionary, a pastor or liturgist, a graphics/visuals person, a good public relations person, an administrator, but most of all, those who have **time & energy** for this event, and are deeply committed to social justice and their faith. Following are a few of the things for the committee to consider:

- **Overall purpose/goals** for the stations this year i.e. “what audience is this for?” “who do we want to reach out to?” “What is the main message we want to convey?”
- **The theme** for the Way of the Cross (e.g. *A Pilgrimage for Justice, Path of Nonviolence, Mindless Violence to Mindful Being*) which can come from a scripture, a song title, a poem, a saying, an idea, etc.
- **A visual image** which embodies the theme. This will be used for the front of the programs and all publicity such as flyers, posters, church mailings

Potential topics, mediums and groups/individuals to work with each station. **** You can choose to create 14 stations, but for this event to be within 3 hours, 10 stations can suffice.

- Each station will have a short scripture which tells the story of Christ’s journey (the Gospel of Mark can be the primary text).
- After this is read (Stations alternate in Spanish and English), the **issue** is identified by a reader. Then there is a very simple 5-7 minute presentation about the issue identified with the station. The planning group crafts each station, choosing the medium to convey the scripture/issue in a heartfelt way **and then**, asks a group or individuals to plan and rehearse the station. Those who will bring the presentation alive for each station with confidence and compassion are crucial. Mediums used can be song, movement, instruments, poetry, storytelling, sacred ritual, visual art, etc. See the following example:

Example: Station #2 Jesus is Condemned to Death/ Mark 15:1-5; 12-15

Issue: Repeal the Death Penalty (location: County Jail)

MEDIUM: *A Prayer for those on death row, written by Sr. Helen Prejean is read aloud by a volunteer. In the background there are 4 drums, building slowly throughout the reading. As the reader finishes the prayer with AMEN, the drums crescendo to an all out frenzy, and then suddenly stop. Silence. The visual is one of a large wooden cross held up by a few volunteers on stage.*

Remember, it is powerful to symbolically pair the station location with the issue at hand and the scripture e.g. the station above where Jesus is condemned to death, focuses upon the death penalty and is located in front of the county jail.

WORKING WITH YOUR CITY/TOWN

This is a critical piece that must fall into place simultaneously as you begin the brainstorming process. Every town or city has a town council or a group of persons at City Hall, who process requests and provide permits for public events. The application can include, but is not limited to the signatures of approval from persons in the following departments: *Public Works Dept., Community Events Division, Fire Dept., Parks & Recreation Dept., Community/Civic organizations, Police Dept., environmental health, Dept. of Finance & Administration.*

Larger cities will most likely have regular meetings at which all of these departments are represented. You can ask to attend one of these meetings and request a permit or signatures from each department for this event all at one time.

Another very important logistical detail is **planning your route**. Cities/towns will request a map of your route for their purposes. You will want to meet at a public park or outdoor civic plaza to begin the Way of the Cross, and then proceed from there to the stations around the city/town, most likely moving in a circular pattern so that you end up where you began. It is important to walk the route beforehand, and calculate exactly how much time will be spent at each station, and how much time it takes to walk between the stations. 5-7 minutes is optimum for the presentation at each station, and 10 minutes of walking between stations will keep the event moving along, and hopefully ending within 3 hours.

Some cities or towns require **police escorts**, depending on the nature of the parade/event, the amount of people it will draw, safety issues, visibility of the event. In this case, a special trip will need to be made to the Police Dept. to discuss how many officers can accompany the event, and whether they will require extra compensation.

Finally, if it is a large city, where there are parking meters along the street or high traffic streets where the walkers will stop for the stations, it will be necessary to rent **barriers** to set up the night before. The Traffic Division in the city/town may require that barriers be pre-arranged. This will insure that traffic flow or parked vehicles will not impede this solemn procession.

EXAMPLE OF CIVIC PLAZA RENTAL APPLICATION

IMPORTANT: A \$1,000 Damage Deposit is required to use Civic Plaza. The Damage Deposit will be returned after the event providing there is no damage to Civic Plaza and/or the surrounding area as a result of your event.

Civic Plaza is available for rental for general arts, entertainment and/or educational purposes only. The City may deny a Civic Plaza Rental Application if the Mayor determines that the proposed use is not in the best interest of the City.

A Temporary Food Permit is required by all vendors serving and/or selling food at the event. It is the event organizers responsibility to notify Environmental Health (768-2643) as soon as possible. Any individual selling food and/or merchandise is also required to have a valid City of Albuquerque Business Registration.

Please fill in the following information, which will become a part of the Agreement. Any proposal that is left incomplete will delay confirmation of dates requested.

Name of Organization: _____
Contact Person: _____ Title: _____
Phone: _____ Address: _____ Zip: _____
Event Name: _____ Event Date(s): _____

Please provide a complete description of your event. Also, attach a site plan of the event including all equipment to be used? (I.E. chairs, tents, displays, vendors, fun jumps,etc.) _____

Provide a timeline below, including event dates and times, as well as dates and times for set-up and tear-down:

Please describe your clean-up plan during and after the event, including when the clean-up will be complete. Clean-up must be completed in a timely manner, immediately following the event.

Will there be vendors (merchandise, crafts, novelty, etc.) at the event? _____ yes _____ no

If yes, what type of vendors and how many? _____

Will there be food at the event? _____ yes _____ no

If yes, please describe the types and number of food vendors you will have, and/or if the event will be catered: _____

Will there be liquor at the event? yes no
(If yes, an area must be fenced off with required security, so liquor can be contained. All necessary permits must also be obtained.)

Will there be entertainment? yes no

Will there be amplified Sound? yes no **(If yes, a noise permit is required.)**

Who will be providing the sound equipment for the event? Please include contact person and phone number.

Who will be running the sound at the event? Please include contact person and phone number.

Will you require electricity? yes no

Please describe your electrical needs. List everything and everyone that will require electricity and if they will require 110 or 220. (I.E. vendors, fun jumps, sound, etc.) An electrician may be required, for an additional cost, depending on your electrical needs. _____

Will you need the use of the Dressing Rooms? yes no
(Dressing rooms are for performers to change only. Restrooms in dressing rooms can not be used by general public.)

What type of Security Plan will you have in place at the event? Include number of APD officers, private security officers, volunteers, etc.: _____

This event is Public Private. Approximate number of persons expected to attend: _____

VEHICLES ARE NOT ALLOWED ON CIVIC PLAZA FOR ANY REASON WHAT SO EVER.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

CREATING A TIMELINE

A timeline is a very important tool as you begin to lay out the Way of the Cross. This will give your committee a road map as you move through the months of planning, keeping you on track.

Following is an example of a timeline:

IV. Tentative Timeline

- 1) Convene Committee in Nov. 2004/begin to plan theme/images for the stations
- 2) by Dec. 15/create proposal for stations and image
- 3) by Jan. 24, 2005 apply for permit with city and begin this process
- 4)by January 30, 2005---contact individuals/groups to present for each station
- 5) Throughout Jan/Feb. 2005 work with groups/individuals to achieve goals for stations
- 6) **Feb.10, 2005—Address PR strategy and all major logistical areas (stations, promotions, permitting process, sound, musicians, "day of" logistics with water station, elderly transport, peacekeepers , medical on call**
- 7) WOC Letter with flyers included, by Feb. 15 to mail to local churches
- 8) By Feb. 24, Tap people in congregations to give announcement re: WOC 2005
- 9) March 1, 2005 layout and design for program begins
ALSO, send scripture text to readers
- 10) March 1, contact local media, including radio and newspaper, T.V. for publicity, interviews, articles
- 11)March 4, promotions with posters & media
- 12) March 10, final logistics with all volunteers and committee members
- 13) **March 25, GOOD FRIDAY WOC event!**
- 15) Event Evaluation with committee

THE PROGRAM

STAGE

The logistics for sound and stage are by far the most challenging detail for this event. The stage will need to be large enough for at least 3-4 persons to move about at a given time for each station, as well as accommodate the sound system, e.g. speakers, mics, soundboard. You will need a

rolling/movable stage in order to move from station to stations location. One option is a flatbed truck which a local garage, private individual or towing company may be willing to donate or loan. You will also need a volunteer driver, which may be arranged with the same garage whose truck you use. A stipend is in order for the driver, since the time for this will be at least three hours. Another option could be vehicles which are used for floats for local parades.

SOUND SYSTEM

It is important to note that some cities or towns require a sound permit to use a sound system. Sometimes cities/towns have a sound “ceiling” which, if you observe the limit and do not exceed a certain amount of decibels, you may have the permitting process and fee waived. Another reason for waiving the permit/fee may also be the fact that the event is a processional or of a religious nature. Checking this out with the right person at the city hall, will be important.

In terms of a sound system which will provide ample sound, a system which has an output of **at least** 150 watts will provide sufficient sound. It is good to have a system which has the option for up to 4 mic hookups. Local audio equipment rentals are always available for a fee of at least \$300 for 3 hours or less. They will have rentable speakers which need to be carefully set up, arranged and taken down at each station. A simple sound board which a volunteer is able to technically use, will be necessary to regulate sound output for the various mics. You may use a small generator to power the system, stored in the back of a pickup truck, following the flatbed at a reasonable length to ensure that the sound of the generator doesn't compensate for the sound of the presenters. Another option which also works well, is an inverter which attaches to the truck battery, converting the power from DC to AC in order to power the system. An 800 watt inverter should be ample for what is needed. Any of these options will probably not exceed the decibel levels needing a city permit. ***A good sound technician is an invaluable player in this event---whether volunteer or paid.***

A rehearsal ahead of time with all musicians and as many presenters as possible will ensure that the sound levels are balanced and equal.

IMPORTANT LOGISTICS AND DETAILS

Liability Insurance

If you are doing this event through a nonprofit organization or church, find out if all participants are covered by your liability insurance. Proof of this insurance will most likely be required by the city/town permitting process. A copy sent by the insurance company can be included in the permit application.

If not covered by a nonprofit or church, you may want to check with a local insurance agent re: short term liability coverage.

The city or town council you are working with may also be able to inform you of liability issues for which you need to be prepared/covered.

Peacekeepers

Approximately six (6) peacekeepers should be invited to cover for every 100 persons. A major role of peacekeepers is to assist with the flow of traffic and set of tone of prayerfulness and peace. Peacekeepers should be set apart either by wearing all white clothing with a colorful armband, or wearing orange safety vests. These volunteers will space themselves out and work in pairs on either side of the procession to keep people off the streets and on the sidewalk while walking. They will also help direct traffic at intersections and keep the flow of people moving if necessary.

Bathroom

Keep in mind that this is a three hour event, and there will need to be a bathroom break. Local churches along the way, who support this event, are often happy to open their doors for participants to use bathrooms. Make certain that the bathrooms are handicapped accessible. When the event is downtown, there are hotels, civic centers, town halls, etc. who may be willing to open their large lobbies for a 10-15 minute bathroom break. The General Manager should be petitioned ahead of time and have a copy of the program or be very clear about the nature of the Way of the Cross.

Water Break

A couple of gallons of water need to be available at all times for participants. Hopefully the event is at a time of the year where there is not sufficient concern for heat-related emergencies, etc. But the participants should know ahead of time, which vehicle will carry the water, and at which station(s) the water will be handy---either in the program or announcement.

Medical On Call Volunteer

A nurse or doctor with a cell phone will ease everyone's worries about a medical emergency, should this happen. Find a professional medical person in your community to offer their skills on-call ***as they participate in the event***, and post this information in the program as well as announce it at the beginning of the event. Give the number to all the staff and peacekeepers who will be at the event.

Cross Bearer and drummer

A rough hewn wooden cross approximately 6X4 feet is the symbolic head of the procession for the Way of the Cross. A volunteer will be needed to carry the cross, and lead the procession and/or coordinate other participants to carry this along the way.

A drummer is a very important part of the processional. S/he walks with the cross bearer and keeps a steady drum beat as people walk from station to station.

Station participants

Each station will need scripture readers, preferably a woman and a man----one for the Spanish translation (if you choose to alternate Spanish/English or another language/English) and one for the English translation.

You may also have a moderator who begins each station by calling people to silence, or reads a common prayer at each station, and then reads the statement of the issue at hand.

Musicians

Finally, good musicians are an invaluable part of the event. At the beginning of each station, you may have a gathering song, a simple refrain or chant, in which the musician(s) will lead the participants. Musicians can also lead the participants in new songs or perform songs at various stations, instrumental or vocal.

PUBLICITY/PROMOTIONS

The best way to spread the good news for the Way of the Cross is, of course, word of mouth. Over a number of years, a critical mass of followers will evolve as the event itself evolves and becomes a more permanent sacred community experience.

Following are some simple guidelines for promoting the Way of the Cross:

1) Create a marketing/PR strategy which includes the goals and the objectives for the event.

For example:

Goal: To invoke active participation by parishes, churches and Peace & Justice groups and create an ecumenical event.

Objectives: To invite and encourage attendance at the event by members of the target groups, and active participation by volunteers from the target group

2) Create practical applications to meet Goals & Objectives.

For example:

- Create a colorful and visually engaging flyer or pamphlet
- Create a list of places/addresses/contact names (congregations, non profit organizations, individuals), a cover letter, and a bulk mailing for these places
- Create a list of public places where flyers can be posted, and organize Volunteers to post these in their neighborhoods
- Seek local, sympathetic listservs and newsletters in which to publicize the event
- Organize volunteers in congregations and faith communities to make regular announcements regarding this upcoming event

Following is a cover letter which may be used to send to parishes and congregations:

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARISHES AND CONGREGATIONS

March 16, 2004

Greetings!

The 15th annual Way of the Cross procession will take place in downtown Albuquerque, beginning at the Civic Plaza, from noon to 3:00pm on Good Friday, April 9, 2004. In a time of increasingly senseless violence, we will focus the Stations of the Cross upon "**Mindless Violence, Mindful Being**".

Traditionally 300 or more people have joined this Good Friday pilgrimage where we prayerfully recall a particular event in Christ's journey to the cross on the day he died. The purpose of this ecumenical event, is to look at contemporary peace and justice issues where the suffering and death Christ experienced continues in our midst even today. This year we will be looking at hunger, the nuclear industry, prisons, sacred lands, consumerism, fair trade. **Mindful Being** calls us to look at the roots of violence that live within each of our daily lives, and how we can begin to transform our attitudes and behaviors which can also redeem the world around us. That is the good news of the gospel which Christ offers us.

There are a few ways your congregation can be involved in this important event.

- 1) Make your congregation aware of this event by posting the enclosed color flyers at your church. Please feel free to make as many black and white copies as needed to hand out to your congregants.
- 2) Please post the following bulletin announcement on the Sunday's, March 21, 28 and April 4 to inform and encourage your congregants to participate in the Way of the Cross
- 3) Your community may donate financially to defray the cost (police escorts, sound system, truck rental, program printing fees, marketing) OR you may enlist volunteers to assist in publicity

On the back of the Way of the Cross flyer, you will find a flyer for our next upcoming event, THE TRINITY series with Richard Rohr teaching in May 4, 11, 18, 25. Please turn the flyer over and post this after the Way of the Cross event.

Thank you for your consideration to this significant event and God's peace to your community as you pray and work for peace in an age of war.

Sincerely,

Center for Action and Contemplation
Events Coordinator
242-9588 ext. 205
outreach@cacradicalgrace.org

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT for March 21, 28, April 4, 2004

Please join us on Good Friday in the **Way of the Cross: Mindless Violence to Mindful Being**, April 9, noon-3pm, beginning at the Civic Plaza in downtown Albuquerque. There will be a solemn processional throughout the streets of Albuquerque, with prayer, scripture, song, and reflections on the **Mindless Violence** of hunger, suffering in prisons, nuclear arms, consumerism, sacred lands, fair trade. **Mindful Being** is the gospel message which can transform the roots of violence that live within each of us in our daily lives, changing the world around us. **Call 242-9588 for information or if you would like to volunteer or financially support this event.**

MEDIA

- Local media is your friend for this event! It is a way to get the word out and engage the broader community. You may find that local convention/tourist centers and/or The Chamber of Commerce have lists of local newspapers, T.V. channels and radio stations which they are willing to share with you. Make a plan to fax each of them a Public Service Announcement (PSA) or Press Release and ask to be posted on their community calendar website-----or ask to be announced as a community event during airtime. Follow up with a call a day or so later to make sure this gets into the right hands.
- Schedule an interview on your local radio stations, with a T.V. personality on your public service stations, and your local reporter for the newspaper.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

March 22, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: (Your Contact Person)

Media Contact for Religious Events

Phone number (for your contact)

EVENTS CALENDAR or PSA (*Public Service Announcement*)

WHAT: *The Way of the Cross/Mindless Violence to Mindful Being---*

This Free Event to the public is neither a protest nor a demonstration. Rather it is a solemn pilgrimage of prayer, scripture and song. The purpose of this ecumenical event is to remember the stations of the cross and reflect upon places where the suffering that Jesus experienced continues to exist in our world today. We will stop at 10 locations to reflect upon hunger, suffering in prisons, nuclear arms, consumerism, sacred lands, fair trade and the legacy we are handing our children.

WHEN: Good Friday, April 9, 2004 12 NOON-3pm

WHERE: Downtown Albuquerque beginning at the Civic Plaza, 4th & Tijeras

WHO: Sponsored by the Center for Action and Contemplation
Telephone Number _____

WEEK OF THE EVENT

The more you can do ahead of time, the calmer you will feel on the big day! Make sure that you have created a task list before the day of the event, with clear instructions and committee members assigned to their task (*e.g. persons to hand out programs, set up sound system, hand out media packets, coordinate peacekeepers*) The sooner this can be done ahead of time, the smoother things will run. It will give everyone time to prepare for their duty and ask questions as they come up.

Create a media packet, which includes the Press Release (*SEE ABOVE*), a copy of the poster/flyer, and a program of the event, with each station outlined.

Following are examples of other details to finalize:

- Touch base with the organizer of the peacekeepers to make sure they have their instructions and safety vests
- Visit all businesses along the route, office buildings, etc and handout the promotional poster and “make friends” with those in the neighborhood of the event
- Determine events announcements and work with the moderator to answer any questions
- Finalize truck/stage route with the driver and line up a “support car” to follow the processional with water and those persons who need to ride due to physical limitations
- Finalize the program and assure quality throughout printing
- Touch base with all presenters and participants of stations, including moderator, musicians, sound persons, scripture readers, presenters of issue, etc.

- Contact local radio or T.V. station newsrooms to request that they specifically attend this event and give it publicity
- Touch base with the business taking care of the barriers to assure that they have set up the barriers in front of buildings/blocked off parking meters, streets where necessary

DAY OF THE EVENT

Following are a few final details for the Day itself.

- Two hours in advance, make certain that the barriers have been put in place
- Meet with all volunteers to give final instructions/hand out programs with maps inside
- Load Sound System onto truck
- Load cross, instruments, music stands, and other ritual objects onto truck
- Give a map to driver and go over any questions
- Pay police escort and truck driver
- Be prepared for on site interviews with media
- Arrive at the beginning station and meet with all station presenters, moderator & musicians for any final instructions/questions
- Say a prayer and Vaya con Dios!

EVALUATING THE EVENT

This final piece of the Way of the Cross is very important. It will allow you to reflect on what worked and what didn't work as you begin to craft next years event. A good place to do this is with your committee, volunteers and perhaps a few participants who were not part of the planning process. Ask them ahead of time to give you feedback, so that they will be considering this throughout.

Send an evaluation form out and go out to dinner together or have a final potluck at someone's home. That is a good time to debrief and go over everyone's evaluation.

Following is a sample form:

WAY OF THE CROSS 2005 EVALUATION

Please fill out and send back by email or snail mail, your subjective/objective evaluations of this years WOC. I want YOUR experience---- favOrites, irritations, touching moments... It will help me craft next year's WOC more effectively. Don't puzzle on this too long, but jot down first impressions which come to you. Be honest! I'd like your impressions before our next meeting, where We will discuss your evaluation. THANKS!

1. Station Presenters (e.g. Earth station, Death Penalty, Children are made for Peace, homelessness and poverty)

a) evaluate length

b) evaluate content

c) Creative mediums which were effective/not effective to convey message

2. Musicians

a) evaluate flow, quality

b) suggestions?

3. Organizational and logistical clarity

a) was there a chaotic feel or smooth sailing re: volunteers, route, sound system, transitions of presenters, bathroom/water breaks, publicity?

b) Were there clear instructions for you as staff or volunteer in the particular job you did?