

## ARTICLE REVIEWED

### *Physical Activity for Lent: Changes in and Associations Between Religiosity, Enjoyment, Motivation, and Physical Activity*

Kahan, D., & Lorenz, K. A. (2019). Physical activity for Lent: Changes in and associations between religiosity, enjoyment, motivation, and physical activity. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 1-10.

#### THE PROBLEM:

A maximum of 40% of children have been meeting the daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity guidelines in the United States, and approximately 35% of middle schools have recess.

The elimination of opportunities to be physically active throughout the school day increases as youth become adolescents, and adolescents become adults. However, when it comes to faith-based schools, reports on physical activity are few and far between. Opportunities to be physically active in a religious school setting are abundant — especially as it relates to Christianity and the six-week Lenten period leading up to Easter.



#### Research Summary:

Three Catholic middle schools (grades 6-8) in the state of California participated in a six-week physical activity Lent (PAL) program. Students were provided with a physical activity log so they could record their daily steps. Students were also provided a religious workbook to help them understand the virtual journey they were about to embark on. More specifically, this workbook contained the life path of Jesus from Bethlehem to Jerusalem (11 locations). Students were awarded one token for every 5,000 steps or every 50 questions answered correctly in the workbook. A total of 128 middle school students with a mean age of 12.6 participated in this study. Students were provided with pedometers to track their steps. The ultimate goal was to complete 110,000 steps in four weeks. Pedometers were only worn throughout the school day, and students recorded their daily steps at the end of the day, before school dismissal.

#### Conclusion:

Upon measuring student religiosity, physical activity enjoyment, motivation, and steps it was discovered that there were grade-level differences. For example, sixth-grade students accumulated 2,499 more steps per day than seventh-grade students and 2,482 more steps per day than eighth-grade students. In addition, one of the four schools had a greater step count compared to another school. The religiosity component may have influenced students to take more steps like Jesus, rather than be sedentary.

#### Key Takeaway:

Themed physical activity interventions may very well help students become more physically active throughout the school day. In addition, using a virtual-based intervention, such as pedometers, can help to motivate students to be physically active throughout the school day.



### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Yamax Digi Walker SW 200: <https://www.yamaxx.com/digi/sw-200-e.html>
- Sample page from the Savior's Sandals workbook:

## The Savior's Sandals Bethlehem

1. What does Bethlehem mean?
2. What did David request from this town? (II Samuel 23:13-17)
3. In this town, who was anointed king over Israel? (I Samuel 16:1-13)
4. Why is this town significant in the life of Jesus? (Luke 2:1-7)
5. What was prophesied concerning this town? (Micah 5:2)
6. Who are the parents of Jesus? (Luke 1:30-35)
7. Who were Jesus' first recorded visitors? (Luke 2:15-16)
8. Who told these first visitors about the birth of Jesus? (Luke 2:8-11)
9. What was the sign to these visitors? (Luke 2:12)
10. Who also came to visit Jesus? (Matthew 2:1-11)

**Next stop: Egypt**  
Journey length: 200 miles  
Steps needed: 20,000



*A shepherd watches his sheep outside of present-day Bethlehem.*



*A stone manger, much like the one in which Jesus was laid.*

### Bethlehem

**History:**

- ❖ First settled by Canaanite tribes.
- ❖ Hometown of Naomi, Boaz and later, Ruth.
- ❖ David's birthplace, home and where he tended his father's sheep. I Samuel 17:12,15
- ❖ Place of Rachel's tomb. Genesis 35:19

**Present Day:**

- ❖ **Population:** 50,000
- ❖ **Government:** Under Palestinian Authority jurisdiction
- ❖ **Points of interest:** The Church of the Nativity: the oldest church in Israel, commemorating birth-place of Jesus. This church was originally built by Constantine's mother in 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. It was spared destruction by Persia, possibly because of Magi depiction on church walls.
- ❖ **Economy:** Tourism, mother-of-pearl carving, and embroidered jackets and head dresses.