

What is CaraMayan ?

CaraMayan is standing movement meditation that brings peace and focus in the spirit.

CaraMayan is a pattern of movements and breathing that is set to a prayer or scripture.

CaraMayan gently warms up the body as it engages heart and mind.

CaraMayan the name comes from words that mean *to bow* and a *spring* or *well*.

CaraMayan can be moved outside or inside, by yourself or in a group.

CaraMayan or CM is a series of dance movements based on contemporary, folk and classical techniques together with worship movements many of which have been used for thousands of years.

The movements for each meditation or prayer have been chosen to complement the words and to warm up the body. They help the mover to experience the meaning of a portion of the Judeo-Christian scriptures, a prayer or a blessing. Prayer and meditation on and through the words are encouraged.

The sequence of movements is mostly slow and calming. Breath is important and is normally matched to the bending and straightening of the legs and body. The meditation can be moved as an individual alone or experienced in a class situation. It only needs a small space and as it is done in a standing position is suitable for both outside and inside.

Attention should be given to doing the movement in a way that will benefit the body. Pointers are given for things to watch in the section on Warm Up. In a class teaching situation the teacher can first teach how to do the movement correctly and then move on to the deeper meaning of the meditation.

The movement meditations on the DVD have been set to particular music but they can also be moved in silence or to quiet music at the individual's own pace.

Why use the word *meditation*?

The word *meditation* is used extensively when describing various forms of Eastern meditation. It is also a term used to describe a different process in the Judeo-Christian tradition where the term usually refers to deep thinking about and maybe verbalising a passage of scripture or appreciating other works of God. In the Bible the word is particularly found in the Psalms.

Ps 119: 27

*Let me understand the teaching of your precepts;
then I will meditate on your wonders.*

Ps 119: 99

*I have more insight than all my teachers,
for I meditate on all your statues.*

Ps 119:148

*My eyes stay open through the watches of the night
that I may meditate on your promises.*

Joshua 1:8

Do not let the Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition the term *contemplation* is more akin to Eastern Meditation but with an important difference. Contemplation in this context is directed to God, Yahweh, who not only dwells within those who believe but is an external and separate personal Being. In the Judeo-Christian form of contemplation the believer focuses on and dwells in the love and person of God and in their relationship.

The Meaning of *CaraMayan*

The name is based on two Hebrew words used in the Hebrew scriptures/Bible:

Kara - to bow, kneel or prostrate

Mayan - well, spring or fountain

As we worship and come into the Lord's presence we experience the peace and depth of the well and the quenching of our spiritual thirst. Out of this renewing, life starts bubbling up and out like a fountain, refreshing others as well as ourselves.

CaraMayan helps to stretch, strengthen and refresh body, soul and spirit so that we can live and give life more effectively.

Word study

Kara – 1. (*prim root*) to bend the knee, bow, kneel, prostrate

Kara is translated *bow down* in Psalm 95

Ps 95:6

*Come let us **bow down** in worship,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;
for he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.*

Hebrew words that are close in sound and spelling

Kar – lamb – ram – pasture (see Ps 95:6 above).

Karah 1.- Dig. The passage below where *kara* is used talks about the digging of wells. It often takes some searching and digging to find the wells of water that God provides for us.

Gen 26:23-25

*Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants **dug** a well.*

Karar – to dance (i.e. whirl). The only instance of *Karar* in the Bible is in 2 Sam. 6:14, 17

2 Sam 6:12-15

*David went down and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. When those who were carrying the ark of the Lord had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. David wearing a linen ephod **danced** before the Lord with all his might while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets.*

Karath – to make a covenant. Our praying and moving out of the scriptures express our covenantal relationship with God.

Mayan – well, fountain, spring

Well

Isaiah 12:3

*Surely God is my salvation
I will trust and not be afraid,*

*the Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song
He has become my salvation (from Ex.15).*

***With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.***

*In that day you will say:
'Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;
make known among the nations what he has done,
and proclaim that his name is exalted'.*

Spring

Psalm 84:6

*Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
who have set their hearts on pilgrimage,
**as they pass through the Valley of Baca (weeping),
they make it a place of springs;**
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.
They go from strength to strength,
till each appears before God in Zion.*

Psalm 87:7 (RSV)

*Singers and dancers alike say
'All my **springs** are in you'.*

Fountain

Song of Songs 4:15

*You are a garden **fountain**,
a well of flowing water
streaming down from Lebanon.*

New Testament

John 4:13

*Jesus answered: "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a **spring of water** welling up to eternal life."*

John 7:37

*On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, **streams of living water** will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him would later to receive.*

Story

The story of CaraMayan began in the 1980s when I started to think about the popularity of Eastern ways of meditation combined with movement and to wonder why there wasn't something similar in the Christian tradition that was widely available. Certainly, symbolic movement has been a part of Judeo-Christian practice for thousands of years in worship and prayer but systems similar in function to Yoga and Tai Chi were not available. My association with Sacred Dance Ministries International and with the director Paula Douthett, whom I regarded as my mentor, had shown me what was possible, and I knew of others in dance ministry around the world who had experimented in the area but were not widely known.

The Way of the Cross

In the late 1980s I developed *The Way of the Cross*. This was a twenty minute meditation using a modern dance sequence of movements that explored the spiritual journey through scriptural verses. It included both standing and floor work. *Prepare Dance Group*, which I directed, recorded it on video. Through the 1990s I explored a way of teaching the meditation in ten weeks, expanding it into a weekly dance/movement class that included a warm-up, relaxation, discussion and exploration of the concepts. This was followed by learning one part of the meditation and a review of what had previously been learnt. I found that both Christians and non-Christians appreciated this form of faith

expression and it therefore had potential as a non-confrontational way to explore the Christian journey.

The Way of Zion

At around the same time I developed another long meditation based on entering the Tabernacle. This came out of my experiences through the 1980s of taking part in the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem and spending time in Israel. Based on a number of mostly Old Testament scriptures, it was taught at the 1990 national CDF Australia conference and has since developed into a workshop that I have led around the world.

The Lord's Prayer

In 2000, responding to awareness that meditation was practiced outdoors by thousands or even millions around the world and especially in the East, I was challenged to develop a meditation that I could do on my regular morning walks. If groups could practice Tai Chi down at the local beach why shouldn't I move out my Christian faith in prayer and exercise? I started with the Lord's Prayer which is widely known as the pattern Christ gave for prayer. Because this prayer is a summary, it is tempting to pray it quickly without giving adequate time to each part. Therefore praying it in movement should help to give more time and attention to each part.

Since first developing *The Lord's Prayer* I have used it regularly myself and taught it to my students at Wesley Institute. One Christmas in the mid-nineties I showed it to my sister and sister-in-law. My sister-in-law, who is always very forthright, declared that it was too long and complicated and that if I could develop a five-minute version she would do it. I immediately saw the value of her suggestion and found it a challenge I couldn't resist! Since then most of the meditations have been around five minutes and have the features which now characterise the CaraMayan method.

The Lord is my Shepherd - Psalm 23

Some of the Shepherd's psalm was part of the *Way of the Cross*. I worked on a separate version that included floor and standing work in 2002. In 2009 I adapted it as a standing meditation. This psalm is a favourite one as it includes so many aspects of life's experiences. The Bibliography includes a book written by a modern shepherd. The insights that he gives greatly enhanced my understanding and appreciation of the psalm.

Under Your Wings

Psalm 36:3-9 was first developed in 2003 and taught as part of workshops on Ruth and Naomi at the ICDF Conference in Dallas, Texas, in July that year. The image in the psalm of finding refuge in the shadow of God's wings parallels Boas' words to Ruth when he first met her and said, "May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge". (Ruth 2:12)

Gaelic Blessing

I first choreographed this to a beautiful sung version of the blessing. This was for my youngest daughter's outdoor wedding reception on New Year's Eve 2005 where I danced it for them as a blessing. A few months later I developed it as a meditation and taught it to her and then at the International Conference in Malaysia the same year. In 2008 I included it at our first Celtic Retreat where we learned it outdoors in the early morning.

Live

The idea for this was given to me by my daughter Miriam (mentioned above). It is a more active meditation that has been developing over the last two years. I love the way it moves through a series of experiences in our spiritual walk and the scripture from Acts really suits that.

The Earth is the Lord's - Psalm 24

The present version was developed for the 2008 national CDF conference in Indonesia, Psalm 24 being one of the scriptures received for their Formation in 2004. The class shared it at the final concert which was attended by 5000 people. The previous week it was part of our devotionals at the first Asian CDF Leaders Meeting in Manila, Philippines.

A New Thing

Over the last few years, when I have been teaching at a conference I have taken the scriptural theme of the conference and developed a meditation on it to teach to a group that would then share it on Class night as a presentation. In October 2007 I taught *A New Thing* at the first conference CDF Australia had held in the centre of Australia which is dominated by desert. Searching for the “new thing” had been a prophetic word and focus for CDFA in responding to the changes felt in the country, the world and the new generations coming up.

Crossroads

This meditation follows the scripture for the 7th International conference held in St. Andrew's Scotland, July 2009. The theme of the conference *Ancient Paths, New Horizons* captured the spirit of the early Celtic Christians who had such a deep spirituality in tune with nature and God's goodness.

Finding the Context

It is important to start each session with prayerful focus on the person of Jesus, our God and saviour, partner and friend.

Individual experience

The DVDs will help you learn the movements and technique for the meditations. The meditation can then be repeated with

- the DVD
- the CD or your ipod
- other quiet music
- without music

The meditations can be a helpful way to get the body and spirit going in the morning or to prepare for a good sleep at night. They can be a part of your regular bible reading and prayer time. They may be part of your regular walk or run or a stretch break from the computer and other work patterns.

Journaling as a part or result of the process is helpful, writing down or drawing what thoughts and impressions you have and what you feel God is showing you.

In a group situation for dance and movement

This may be a dance class, workshop or small group context.

The meditations can be incorporated into a regular class or a class can be planned around the meditation.

Suggested order might be:

- Introduction to the scripture
- Warm-up exercises
- Relaxation
- Creative time
- Meditation