

**FaithAustralia**  
**local books on faith and theology**

Helen Barnes. *The Cross: An Australian Journey. A resource for schools and parishes. Powerpoint.* St Pauls 2010. ISBN 9781921472565.

Helen Barnes has presented us with a resource based around fourteen paintings that call to mind the people of our land who share in the cross of Jesus. The intention is to invite us to recognize signs of new life and to celebrate them. The fourteen stations depicted touch into the Australian story. Underpinned by the traditional stations of the cross we are led to reflect upon unjust treatment, suffering, families in tragedy, separation from loved ones, responding to people in need, care for others, isolation, hidden injustices, facing weakness, the pain of separation, supporting others, a dying earth, human dignity and remembrance of the dead. We are brought to discover Christ in his Australian journey. A series of slides is allowed for each station, with a painting as the first image, then repositioned and overlaid with biblical texts. The art works are in a 'naïve' style, painted in a deep blue reminiscent of the Australian sky, a darkish brown of the earth and a strong yellow with a hint of the Australian sun and sand. Each work bears reflection well, with a liveliness and stillness that allows the prayer to reflect into the art and find a place of belonging, challenge and comfort. There is pain in these works, but also familiarity and hope. The accompanying music works well with the feel of contemplation, not intruding but mindfully guiding. The overlaid slides are clear, unfussed and do not undo the mood created.

The resource comes with a continuous version for use in prayer services as well as one for the facilitator with pauses between each station for discussion etc. As well there is a small booklet attached offering necessary and compelling background information on each of the stations, along with some suggestions.

This is a worthwhile resource for prayer and reflection sessions with parish groups, high school classes, youth retreats and catechetical groups.

**Gerard Moore**

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