

The Way of the Cross

An Interactive Experience for All Ages

The devotion known as the Way of the Cross is an adaptation to local usage of a custom widely observed by pilgrims to Jerusalem: the offering of prayer at a series of places in that city traditionally associated with our Lord's passion and death. The number of stations, which at first varied widely, finally became fixed at fourteen. Of these, eight are based directly on events recorded in the Gospels. The remaining six (numbers 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 13) are based on inferences from the Gospel account or from pious legend. If desired, these six stations may be omitted.

This interactive adaptation walks through all 14 stations. Traditionally, all 14 Stations are completed within same time frame. However, due to the interactive nature of these stations and the varied attention spans of children and youth, the following Stations could be completed over a period of time.

Suggested materials to have available:

Basic craft supplies – paper, glue/tape, scissors, crayons/markers

Blocks or Legos

Older family member or friend to call or videoconference

A piece of string or strip of cloth

Small amount of vinegar in a cup for tasting

A piece of cloth

The following is an adaptation of “The Way of the Cross” (*The Book of Occasional Services*, 2018) and the service developed by Michelle McDonnell from St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church (Columbia, South Carolina.)

Images from thekidsbulletin.com

Opening Devotions

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Leader Lord, have mercy.

People *Christ, have mercy.*

Leader Lord, have mercy.

Leader and People

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Leader We give thanks for the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

Help us, Lord God, to know your love as we walk the way of the cross,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

First Station

Jesus is Condemned to Death



When it was morning, Jesus was arrested. He was taken to the governor, a man by the name of Pontius Pilate. Jesus' enemies condemned him and said, "He deserves to die." They made fun of Jesus, dressing him in a purple robe and a crown of thorns, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews." They beat him and cried, "Crucify him, crucify him." When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat at a place called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. Then he handed Jesus over to them to be

crucified. The people took Jesus and led him away.

It is not okay to be teased, made fun of, or mistreated. Our friend Jesus understands.

On Palm Sunday, people hailed Jesus as a King. Later that week, instead of giving him a crown of gold, Jesus' enemies gave him a crown of thorns. All are invited to design a crown that YOU would make for our "King of Kings".

Leader God did not spare his own Son:
 But delivered him up for us all.

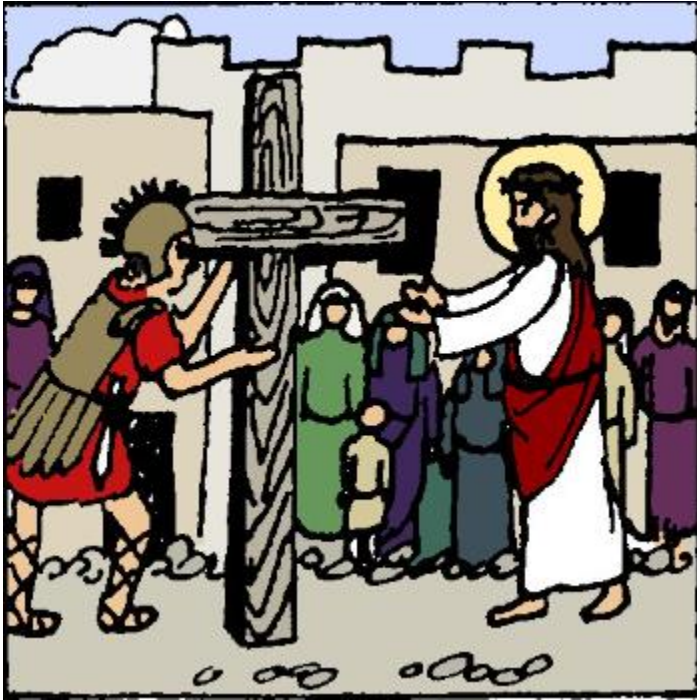
People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

Almighty God, whose most dear Son suffered pain and was crucified:
Help us, especially when we are teased or made fun of or mistreated, to
remember the cross. Help us to find peace; through Jesus Christ your Son
our Lord. *Amen.*

Second Station

Jesus takes up his Cross



Jesus went out carrying his own cross. He was going to the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. He was obedient. Like a lamb he was led to be killed and didn't make a sound. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

Sometimes we find it hard to obey. Our friend Jesus understands.

All are invited to create their own cross. Consider using building materials (such as Legos or blocks) or art supplies (such as paper or cardboard.) Keep your cross in a sacred space throughout Holy Week and Easter.

Leader The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all:
For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

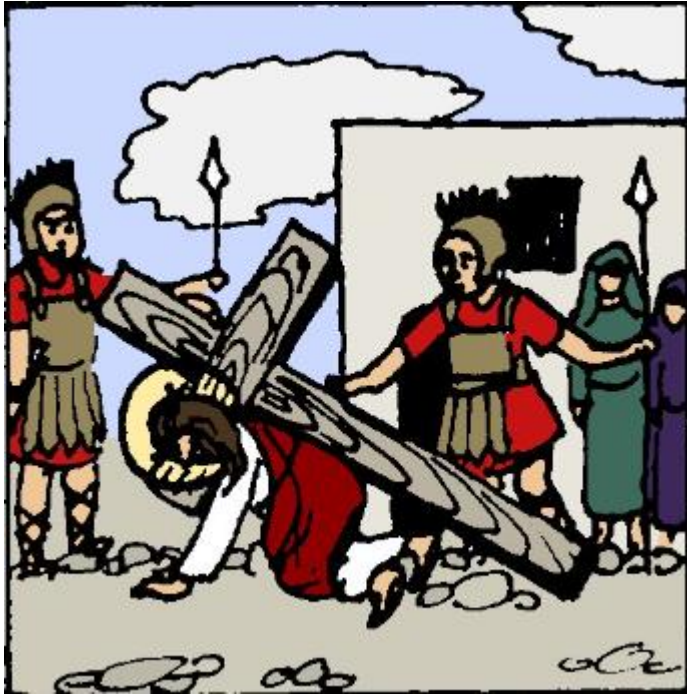
People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

Almighty God, whose beloved Son obeyed and chose to endure the agony and shame of the cross so that we would be saved: Give us courage to take up our own cross and follow him; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Third Station

Jesus falls the first time



Jesus had a long walk with the cross. It was not easy, and he fell into the dust and rocks of the road. The cross was very heavy, and Jesus was in pain. Jesus could have asked God to take the cross away, but Jesus obeyed for our sake. He got up again and kept walking. Therefore, God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name.

Sometimes, we fall and must get up and try again. Our friend Jesus understands.

Wonder...

What did the cross feel like?

What did Jesus see on the road?

What did Jesus hear?

Leader Surely he has borne our griefs:
And carried our sorrows.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

O God, we need you in our lives. Help us carry our own cross. When we fall, help us to get up and try again. Grant us strength and protection; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Fourth Station

Jesus meets his afflicted mother



Jesus had a mother, Mary, who loved him. Jesus saw his mother as he walked with the cross. She was very sad, and she was crying. Her tears could have filled an entire sea. But God says that those who mourn shall be comforted. The Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.

Sometimes we are sad and need to cry. Our friend Jesus understands.

Wonder...

Why do we cry when we are sad?

Why does God allow sad things to happen?

When Mary was sad and crying on the road, who was there to comfort her?

Leader A sword will pierce your own soul also:
 And fill your heart with bitter pain.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

O God, you know the sorrow that Mary felt. Like Mary, we are also sad when we remember the sufferings your Son Jesus Christ. Having shared in his passion, may we be made worthy to share in the joys of his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Fifth Station

The Cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene



Jesus was no longer able to carry his own cross. He needed help. A man named Simon from Cyrene was traveling from his home in the country. The soldiers gave him the cross to carry it behind Jesus. It wasn't easy, but Simon continued to follow Jesus because it was the right thing to do. Jesus has said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

It can be hard to follow Jesus and do the right thing. Our friend Jesus understands.

We can all choose to carry our own cross and help Jesus every day. Take a piece of paper and write or draw how you will carry your cross and help Jesus. Think how you can serve those around you. Take your paper and place it with your cross in your sacred space throughout Holy Week and Easter.

Leader Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me:
 Cannot be my disciple.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be helped but to be a helper: Bless all who, following in his steps, help others; that they may offer love and care in his Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the love of Him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sixth Station

A woman wipes the face of Jesus



Jesus had been beaten, mocked, and rejected by everyone around him. He had been so badly beaten that you could no longer recognize him. Nobody wanted to look at or touch Jesus. However, a woman showed Jesus kindness. She saw his hard journey and offered to wipe his face. She looked into his face and did not reject him. Jesus was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

Kindness is the best gift that we can give. Our friend Jesus understands.

Call or videoconference an older family member or friend that may be feeling lonely. Give your kindness by sharing your life with another. Ask how they are doing and bring joy to their day.

Leader Restore us, O Lord God of hosts:
 Show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

O God, help us to see you in our lives. Help us to look into your face, bear our cross, and draw ever closer to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Seventh Station

Jesus falls a second time



Even though Simon was carrying the cross, Jesus was still struggling to walk. He was burdened with his injuries, but also the griefs and sorrows of the entire human race. It was a difficult burden to bear. Jesus fell a second time, but he was determined to continue on his path, because he loved us. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. For the transgression of my people was he stricken.

When you love someone, you will do anything for them. Our friend Jesus understands.

Wonder...

Could you possibly measure how much Jesus loves you?

What makes you feel loved?

When you love someone, what do you do for them?

Leader But as for me, I am a worm and no man:
Scorned by all and despised by the people.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

Almighty and everliving God, you loved us so much that you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to us, first a small baby and then as a man who would willingly walk this path. Grant that we may walk with Jesus and share in his resurrection; who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

Eighth Station

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem



There followed after Jesus a great multitude of the people, and among them were women who wailed and cried. They were crying because of Jesus' suffering. But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Jesus was reminding them that the sins of the world were more devastating than even his own suffering. Jesus wants us to turn away from our sins and turn towards God.

Sometimes we need to be reminded to turn away from our sins and turn towards God. Our friend Jesus understands.

Take a piece of string or a strip of cloth. Loosely tie a series knots, each representing something you want to turn towards God. Maybe you are easily frustrated and lose your temper. Perhaps you forget to be kind. Maybe you realize you don't always speak nicely to yourself. Sit quietly, inviting God to work in your heart and help you. When you are ready, untie each knot.

Leader Those who sowed with tears:
 Will reap with songs of joy.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

Teach your people, O Lord, to be sorry for their sins and to repent and change their ways; that each generation that follows may grow to love you more; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Ninth Station

Jesus falls a third time



Jesus did not have any strength left. He fell for a third time. As he lay on the ground, he could feel darkness coming over him. It was as if there wasn't any light at all. Jesus could not even bring himself to cry for help, for he knew that no help would come. "Remember, O Lord, my affliction and bitterness, the wormwood and the gall!"

Sometimes life is very hard, and we feel like there is no hope. Our friend Jesus understands.

Wonder...

What is it like to be in total darkness?

Was Jesus afraid?

When you feel like there is no hope, where can you find it?

Leader He was led like a lamb to the slaughter:
 And like a sheep that before its shearers is mute,
 so he opened not his mouth.

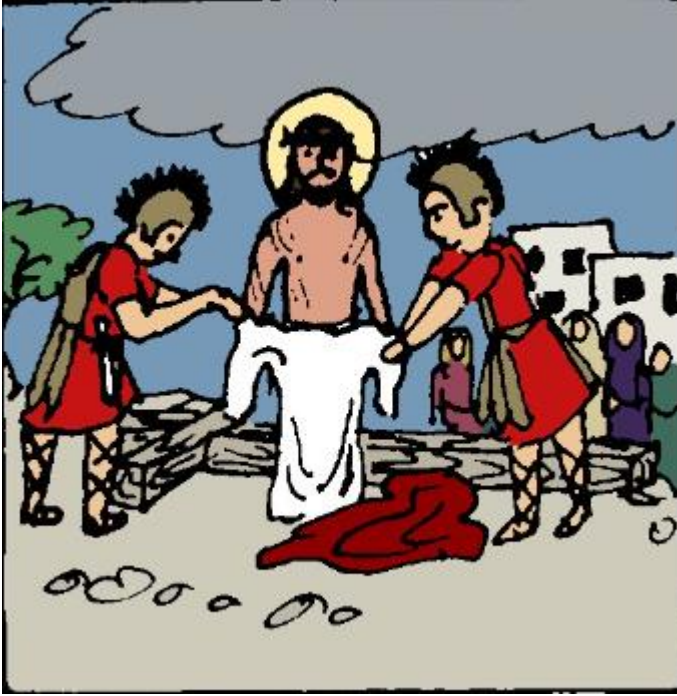
People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

O God, you who made Jesus' death on the cross to be for us the means of life: Help us to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Tenth Station

Jesus is stripped of his garments



When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And they divided his garments among them by casting lots. This was to fulfill the scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.”

We need water to drink and clothes to wear. Our friend Jesus understands.

The wine the soldiers offered Jesus was sour. It tasted like vinegar. Take a small amount of vinegar and try to drink it. As you taste it, think about how important it is to have clean drinking water. Pray for those who do not have access to clean drinking water.

Leader They gave me gall to eat:
 And when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

Lord God, whose blessed Son Jesus gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spat upon: Help us to accept the sufferings of the present time; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Eleventh Station

Jesus is nailed to the Cross



When they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him; and with him they crucified two criminals, one on the right, the other on the left, and Jesus between them.

It is easy to forget how much Jesus loves us. Our friend Jesus understands.

Wonder:

What did Jesus say to the two criminals on either side of him?

Was God crying?

What can I do for Jesus today?

Leader They pierce my hands and my feet:
 They stare and gloat over me.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. *Amen.*

Twelfth Station

Jesus dies on the cross



When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished!” And then, crying with a loud voice, he said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” And he bowed his head and handed over his spirit.

Please stand in silence.

Sometimes we wonder what it must be like to die. Our friend Jesus understands.

Leader Christ for us became obedient unto death:
Even death on a cross.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

O God, who gave your only Son to the death of the cross, help us to do your will that we may evermore live with Jesus in heaven; who lives and reigns now and for ever. *Amen.*

Thirteenth Station

The body of Jesus is placed in the arms of his mother



Jesus was placed into the arms of his mother, Mary. She wanted to hold him, as she used to do when he was a little boy. She wept bitterly. All you who pass by, behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow. My eyes are spent with weeping; my soul is in tumult; my heart is poured out in grief.

It is hard to lose someone you love. Our friend Jesus understands.

First, make a heart out of paper. Then, think of someone you love and write their name or draw their picture on the heart. Place the heart with your cross in a sacred space for Holy Week and Easter.

Leader Her tears run down her cheeks:
And she has none to comfort her.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Help us to follow you so that when we die, we will open our eyes again and be with you for our eternal life; for your tender mercies' sake. *Amen.*

Fourteenth Station

Jesus is laid in the tomb



When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had carved in the rock; and rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb.

Sometimes we wonder if we can be your disciple, like Joseph of Arimathea.

Our friend Jesus understands.

Take a piece of cloth and use it to cover the items you have placed in your sacred space (cross, paper saying how you will take up your cross, and heart.) On Easter, take off the covering and reveal the risen Lord!

Leader You will not abandon me to the grave:
Nor let your holy One see corruption.

People *We thank you, Lord Jesus.*

Leader Let us pray.

O God, your blessed Son was laid in a tomb in a garden: Grant that we who have been baptized may be his disciples now and dwell forever in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Concluding Prayers before the Altar or Sacred Space

Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed us:
Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

Leader Let us pray.

We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

To Christ our Lord who loves us, and washed us in his own blood, and made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*