

Calvary Walk

by Ann Naffziger

Jesus told us that whatever we do to the least of our brothers and sisters, we do to him. Jesus continues to suffer and die in many of the hurting people of the world. Pray this Stations of the Cross service as a family to reflect on the connections between the Passion story and suffering in the world today.

Setting

There is nothing special that you have to set up for this service, but it can add to the experience if you prepare your environment. Here are some optional suggestions:

- Light some candles and/or lower the lights.
- Play some meditative instrumental or prayerful music in the background.
- Designate spots around your home for each Station and then move to each of them as you go through the service. You could simply tape a sheet of paper with numbers/names of the Stations to the wall or use the coloring pages found on the Good Friday page.

Instructions

If you have younger children, read through the text first and decide whether or not it is age-appropriate for them. The Stations of the Cross can be intense.

Decide who will read the various reflections. You can simply rotate through each family member who is old enough to read clearly.

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OPENING PRAYER

ALL: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

LEADER: Lord Jesus, you came to teach us how to live with great love and caring.
You died because you followed your Father and his laws of love.

We, too, have crosses to carry in our own lives.
Teach us how to carry them faithfully
as you did.

ALL: Amen.

THE FIRST STATION

Jesus Is Condemned to Death

LEADER: The First Station: Jesus is condemned to death. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: Pontius Pilate knew that there was something different about this prisoner who had been brought to him. Pilate didn't want to condemn Jesus, hearing that he was innocent. But the crowd was angry, so Pilate ordered Jesus killed and said it wasn't his fault.

LEADER 2: Pilate was not strong enough to do the right thing, and he took the easy way out.

When do we give in to fear and remain silent instead of doing the right thing? Have we condemned Jesus all over again, by condemning others? **What are ways that we can stand up for what is right?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: not letting a bully get his or her way; pointing out that jokes which put down certain people or groups of people are not okay, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

THE SECOND STATION

Jesus Takes Up His Cross

LEADER: The Second Station: Jesus takes up his cross. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: Jesus never asks us to do anything that he wouldn't do himself. He welcomed people that everyone else hated. He forgave those who crucified him. He even took up his own cross, a heavy load for someone who has already been hurt and made fun of.

LEADER 2: Jesus said whoever wants to be his disciple has to take up their cross every day and follow him.

We all have our own crosses to bear. **What are some of the difficult things in our lives that we carry with us?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: illness, learning disabilities, staying at home during the coronavirus shutdown, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

THE THIRD STATION

Jesus Falls the First Time

LEADER: The Third Station: Jesus falls for the first time. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: For Jesus' friends and followers who had seen him working miracles, watching him fall under the weight of his cross must have been scary. A man who used to be so strong just a day earlier is now so weak that he can't even stay standing. He had fed 5,000 hungry people, cured paralytics, and raised Lazarus from the dead, but now he falls down.

LEADER 2: God the Father doesn't send angels to bear Jesus up. God allows him to fall without coming to his rescue. Like anyone else in that situation, Jesus fell under the weight of something too heavy for any human to carry alone. **What are some things that feel too heavy to bear sometimes?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: Worry about a friend or family member, watching a loved one who is sick, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the
beginning is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

THE FOURTH STATION

Jesus Meets His Sorrowful Mother

LEADER: The Fourth Station: Jesus meets his mother. We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: Jesus was in pain on this day, but Mary had her own pain watching him. It was hard to watch Jesus suffer and be humiliated, but Jesus' mother also suffered because she couldn't do anything to make it better.

LEADER 2: After his best friends left him and the crowds turned against him, what would it have been like to meet his mother? He knew she couldn't do anything to stop his pain, but she loved him and wouldn't leave him. **When has someone stayed with you during a hard time?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: a parent who stayed by your bed when you were sick, a friend who stuck up for you when other kids were mean, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the
beginning is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

THE FIFTH STATION

Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

LEADER: The Fifth Station:
Simon helps Jesus carry his cross.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: Mark's gospel tells us that the soldiers made a man named Simon of Cyrene, the father of two children, help Jesus carry his cross. By this time, Jesus was so weak that the soldiers didn't think he could reach Golgotha on his own, so they made Simon help him. ?

LEADER 2: Did Simon do it willingly? Was he scared? What about Simon's children, Alexander and Rufus? How old were they? Were they there too, watching their father ? **How do you think they felt watching their father?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: they were scared their father would be hurt too, they were proud how he helped, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the
beginning is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

THE SIXTH STATION

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

LEADER: The Sixth Station:
Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: So many people had left Jesus or turned against him, but there were a few who reached out to try to make him feel better: his mother, Simon, and now Veronica. With her cloth, she wiped off the blood, spit, sweat, or tears on his face.

LEADER 2: Jesus preached that whatever we do to the least of his brothers and sisters, we do to him. **Who are you called to reach out to in courage in order to ease their pain or suffering? Can you recognize Jesus in them? What might you do to "wipe their faces"?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: someone whose friend or family member has died, a neighborhood child who has a hard time in school, an elderly neighbor, a homeless person, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the
beginning is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.
Grant me the courage to reach out to them.**

THE SEVENTH STATION

Jesus Falls a Second Time

LEADER: The Seventh Station:
Jesus falls for the second time.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: Jesus falls again because he doesn't have any energy left after so many terrible things have happened to him. Even though his mother, Simon, and Veronica did what they could to help him, he fell down a second time.

LEADER 2: There are many people in our world who experience terrible things and can't always keep going on their own. **Who is it in our neighborhood, school, community, or the wider world who might need our help?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: people who are very sick, refugees who had to leave their home countries, those who are experiencing war, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

THE EIGHTH STATION

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

LEADER: The Eighth Station:
Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: A group of women cried for Jesus by the side of the road. Even though Jesus' best friends ran away when he was about to be killed, some women stayed. They are not ashamed to raise their voices to cry out at how unfair and cruel these events were.

LEADER 2: The women who followed Jesus had great courage to stand by him when he was hurting. **Who has stood by us during a hard time? How can we stand by others who are hurting?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: our parents, a good friend, not running away if a friend is being picked on or made fun of, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

THE NINTH STATION

Jesus Falls the Third Time

LEADER: The Ninth Station:
Jesus falls for the third time.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: After he fell a third time, Jesus might have wondered if he could ever get up again. Maybe we have also had a time when something hurt us so badly that we didn't know if we would be okay again.

LEADER 2: Jesus knows what it feels like when bad things happen to us. He also showed us that no matter how bad something is, we can still get up and keep going. **What helps you to try again or keep going when something is really hard?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: someone encourages you, a friend leaves you a helpful note, you think about the gifts God gave you, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the
beginning is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

THE TENTH STATION

Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

LEADER: The Tenth Station:
Jesus is stripped of his garments.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: After all the horrible things that the soldiers did to Jesus, they embarrassed him even more by taking his clothes off. Then they gambled over who would get to keep them.

LEADER 2: Remember that Jesus said that whatever we do to the least of his brothers and sisters, we do to him. **What things do people do today to embarrass others?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: making racist comments, being mean to someone who is different, gossiping, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the
beginning is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

THE ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

LEADER: The Eleventh Station:
Jesus is nailed to the cross.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: It is horrible to imagine Jesus being nailed to the cross. When we feel bad seeing anyone else hurt that is a good sign, because it means we have a good and loving heart.

LEADER 2: While Jesus was nailed to the cross, some good people stayed near him, including Mary Magdalene, his mother, and many other women. They couldn't help him, but they could show him that he was not alone. **How can we stand by people who are hurting so they know they aren't alone?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: visiting someone who is sick or dying, sending cards to someone who is lonely, regularly calling family members who live by themselves, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the
beginning is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

THE TWELFTH STATION

Jesus Dies on the Cross

LEADER: The Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the cross.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: Right before he died, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus felt abandoned by God, even though he wasn't. God was with him through Simon helping him carry the cross, Veronica wiping his face, his mother Mary, and the other women who stayed with him.

LEADER 2: When we are having a hard time, we may not feel God's presence, but God is still with us. It's like the sun—we can't always see it behind the clouds, but that doesn't mean it's not there. **Have you ever felt abandoned or alone? How might God have been with you, even if you didn't feel it at the time?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: when a loved one died you felt abandoned, but you remember how other people did things to help you, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the
beginning is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

THE THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross

LEADER: The Thirteenth Station:
Jesus is taken down from the cross.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: One of Jesus' rich disciples named Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Joseph took the body down and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. In 1498, Michaelangelo sculpted the Pietà imagining the moment when Mary held her dead son in her arms.

LEADER 2: Many parents all over the world still watch their children die: from hunger, diseases, gun violence, war, and accidents. **How can we stand by these parents in their suffering? How can we fight for justice so that more innocent lives are not lost?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: we can donate to agencies that provide food for the hungry, support gun safety laws, lobby against warfare, etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

THE FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb

LEADER: The Fourteenth Station:
Jesus is laid in the tomb.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

ALL: **Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.**

LEADER 1: After Jesus was wrapped in a clean cloth, Joseph buried him in a tomb he had carved out of rock. He then rolled a great stone to seal the doorway. Then the terrible day was finally over.

LEADER 2: We know the ending of this story that Jesus' friends and family didn't know at that time. Jesus taught that just as seed has to fall into the dirt and die before it can make food for us, we also must go through death to come to new life. **What are some examples of bad things happening but something good came out of it later?**

Share for a few minutes as a group. (For example: you didn't get the teacher you wanted, but the teacher you got turned out to be better than you expected; a parent lost their job but found a better one; etc.)

LEADER 1: Together, we pray.

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER

LEADER: Jesus, as we end today,
may we leave with better understanding
of all who are suffering their own Passions
today.

ALL: Jesus, help us to see your face
in the lives of those who are struggling.

**We know that suffering and death
are not the end,
and that Love always has the final word
because of your death and resurrection.**

We pray this all in your name.

Amen.