

The Way of the Cross for Children



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Opening Prayer

Everyone stands around a crucifix to begin.

**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 patience and love.
In the end, your enemies killed you
because they didn't like what you taught.

**ALL: We gather to remember how you died
on that terrible day in Jerusalem.
You faced your death with courage
and we want to learn from that.**

LEADER: We also have crosses to carry in our lives.
Teach us how to carry them
as you did.

ALL: Amen.



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Jesus Is Condemned to Death

1

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

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

LEADER: Pontius Pilate had a feeling there was something different about the prisoner Jesus before him. He saw that Jesus was arrested without a good reason. His wife told him she had a dream about Jesus and warned him to leave this innocent man alone. But people in the crowd were angry and becoming violent because they wanted Jesus killed.

ALL: **"Crucify him! Crucify him!"**

LEADER: Pilate gave in, even though he knew it was wrong. He ordered Jesus to be whipped and then crucified.

ALL: **Christ Jesus,
you did nothing wrong.
We are so sorry this happened to you.**

LEADER: Pontius Pilate could have set Jesus free, but instead he did what the crowd wanted him to do.

When have we been like Pilate and gone against what we knew was right? When have we gone along with the crowd when we shouldn't have?

ALL: **Jesus, help us to be strong and do the right thing,
even when we are pressured not to.**

Jesus Takes Up His Cross

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

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

LEADER: Sometimes we have to do hard things, but Jesus knows what that is like. Even though he had already been whipped, teased, and spit at, Jesus lifted up and carried his own cross.

ALL: **Christ Jesus,
we are so sorry you had to carry that heavy cross.**

LEADER: What are some hard things in your life that might feel like a cross you have to carry? Maybe it's a learning disability or a sickness. Maybe you have a hard time making friends, or your parents are divorced, or someone you love has moved away or died.

ALL: **Lord Jesus,
give us the strength to carry our own crosses.
Help us know you are helping us to carry it.**

Jesus Falls the First Time



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

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

LEADER: Even though Jesus was strong, he couldn't carry the heavy cross by himself all the way to the place where he would be killed. He was so tired and hurt that he fell down under it.

ALL: **Christ Jesus,
sometimes we aren't strong enough
to keep going and we fall down.**

**When that happens, give us the strength
to get up again and keep going.**

LEADER: Have you ever felt like something was so hard you couldn't keep going? What was it?

ALL: **Jesus, help us to know that you never leave us,
especially when things are very hard.**

Jesus Meets His Mother

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

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

LEADER: Jesus suffered so much before he was killed, and it must have been horrible for his mother, Mary, to watch. She couldn't do anything to help him, except stay with him so he knew he wasn't alone.

ALL: **Mary, give us the courage
to be with others when they are hurting,
so that they know they are not alone.**

LEADER: When have you seen someone in your own family hurting and there wasn't much you could do to make it better?

ALL: **Mary, Mother of Sorrows,
teach us your love
for all those who are suffering.**

Simon Helps Jesus Carry the Cross



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

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

LEADER: When Jesus was too hurt and weak to carry the cross on his own anymore, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, helped him carry it.

ALL: **Everyone in this world has a cross to carry,
whether we can see it or if it is invisible to us.
Jesus, help us to help others,
like Simon helped you.**

LEADER: I wonder how old Simon's sons were when they watched their dad carry Jesus' cross. I wonder how they felt watching that. Were they confused about what was happening? Scared? Proud? Worried?

ALL: **Jesus, may we be have the courage to help others,
even if we are scared.**



Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

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

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

LEADER: Most of Jesus' friends ran away when they realized he was going to be killed, but some people stayed with him, including Veronica. She used a clean cloth to wipe off Jesus' face, which probably had blood, spit, sweat, and tears on it.

ALL: **Thank you, Lord, for all the people
who have taken care of me
when I've been hurt, scared, or crying.**

LEADER: Jesus is inside of everyone who is hurt and crying.
Is there some way you can be like Veronica for them?

ALL: **Help me, Lord, to recognize your face
in the faces of all those who are in pain or crying.**

Jesus Falls a Second Time



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

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

LEADER: Even though Simon was helping Jesus carry his cross,
Jesus fell down again because he was so hurt and weak.

ALL: **Jesus, you know how hard it is
to keep going sometimes.**

LEADER: So many people keep falling down in our world because
their lives are hard: those who don't have enough food
to eat every day, those who can't find a job, those who
are sick or injured, and those who don't have friends or
family members to care for them. Take a few moments
to pray in silence for these people.

ALL: **Jesus, help us to lend a hand to people
who can't keep going on their own.**

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

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

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

LEADER: A group of women from Jerusalem stayed close to Jesus before he was killed. They were crying when they watched what was happening to him.

ALL: **Give us soft hearts when we see
something terrible happening, Lord.**

LEADER: The women were brave to stay with Jesus instead of running away. When have you been courageous and stayed with someone instead of leaving them alone? Or when has someone stayed with you?

ALL: **Lord, give us the courage to be
like the women from Jerusalem
when we see someone hurting.**

Jesus Falls the Third Time



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

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

LEADER: Jesus fell down AGAIN. He was so, so weak and tired
that he could hardly keep walking, even with Simon
helping him.

ALL: **Jesus, we are sorry that it was so terrible for you.**

LEADER: No matter how hard things are for us or our friends or
our family members, Jesus knows what it is like and is
always with us.

ALL: **Jesus, give us the strength to keep going,
even when it is difficult.**

Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

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

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

LEADER: After all of the ways the soldiers had already hurt Jesus,
next they did something to embarrass him in front of
the crowd. They stripped off all his clothes except for his
underwear. How could they be so mean?

ALL: **Jesus, keep us from ever doing anything
to embarrass others.**

LEADER: Some people still do mean and hateful things to
embarrass other people and strip away their dignity
today. Take a moment to pray silently for those who are
humiliated in front of others.

ALL: **Lord Jesus, give us the courage
to stand up to anyone
who is embarrassing someone else.**

Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross



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

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

LEADER: How did Jesus stand the pain when the soldiers pounded nails through his hands and feet to nail him to the cross? And how could the soldiers have done something to hurt someone so badly? Some people today still do things to hurt others terribly.

ALL: **Jesus, we are so sorry you had to
suffer so much pain.**

LEADER: While Jesus was being nailed to the cross, some friends and loved ones stayed near him, including Mary Magdalene and his mother. All they could do was to let him know he wasn't alone. Who is suffering today that needs to know they are not alone?

ALL: **Jesus, help us be aware of the people
who are hurting so we can let them know
that they aren't alone.**

Jesus Dies on the Cross

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

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

LEADER: Just before he died, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" God is like the sun; we can't always see the sun because it's night time, or it's behind the clouds, but it's still there. It's okay if sometimes we can't feel God with us. It happened to Jesus too.

ALL: **God, help us to remember
you are always with us,
even when we can't feel it.**

LEADER: When Jesus died, his pain was finally over, but the sadness was just beginning for his friends and family. Take a moment to pray in silence now for people (maybe even yourself) who are sad about a friend or family member who died.

ALL: **Jesus, help us to know that even when we are sad,
we will feel better in the future.**

Jesus Is Taken Down From the Cross



LEADER: The Thirteenth Station:

Jesus is taken down from the cross.

We remember you, O Christ, and we bless you.

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

LEADER: After Jesus died, a rich man named Joseph took Jesus' body down off the cross and wrapped it in a clean cloth while his mother watched. Then Mary got to hold her baby one more time.

**ALL: Mary, we are sorry you had to
watch your child be killed.**

LEADER: Even now parents watch their children die: from hunger, disease, gunshots, war, and accidents. What can we do to help prevent so many children from dying?

**ALL: Mary, Mother of Sorrows,
help us know what we can do
to make the world a safer place
for all children and all people.**

Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb

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

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

LEADER: Joseph laid Jesus' body in a tomb and then rolled a
great stone in front while the women watched.
What could his friends do or say after that?

ALL: **God of life and God of death, help us to have hope
that dying isn't the end of the story for us.**

LEADER: We may wish we could skip ahead three days so we
don't have to think about or feel what it was like for
Jesus' friends after he was put in the tomb.
But sometimes all we can do is go through all our
feelings until we get to the other side.

ALL: **God of life and God of death,
give us hope and trust in the Resurrection,
even when things seem terrible.**

Closing Prayer

LEADER: Jesus, as we go out, help us to care more for all those
who are suffering in the world today, near and far.

ALL: **Jesus, help us to see your face in those who are
struggling. May we always look to you for strength
when life is hard. Give us trust that things will get
better. We pray this all in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**