

Good Friday

The way of the cross at home

Introduction

This is a resource to help you walk the way of the cross with Jesus, through simple activities and reflections that you can do at home. It is suitable for all ages but is designed specifically with children and families in mind.



Instructions

Use it in a way that works best for you, adapting the resources as necessary.

A suggested format for each station is:

- announce it by saying, for example, 'Station 1: Pilate condemns Jesus to death'.
- read the story and reflection for that station;
- complete the activity, ideally in a prayerful and reflective way;
- read the prayer;
- all say the response together.

You will need

- Station 1: bowl, water, soap, towel
- Station 2: two twigs (per person) and some string or wool to tie them into a cross
- Station 3: a red make-up pencil (or anything red that you can draw on yourself with)
- Station 4: paper, pens etc - things to make a card, draw a picture, or write a letter
- Station 5: a bag and assorted heavy items (such as big books)
- Station 6: some face cloths, wipes, or cotton wool, and water
- Station 7: red lipstick (or anything red that you can draw on yourself with)
- Station 8: some pictures of women weeping to look at, either on the internet or perhaps in a newspaper. Paper and pencil.
- Station 9: red face paint (or anything red that you can draw on yourself with).
- Station 10: nothing!
- Station 11: paper, pencil, scissors, hammer and nails (or drawing pins)
- Station 12: a piece of cloth that can be torn, or a piece of paper
- Station 13: strips of cloth, bandage, or tissue
- Station 14: a hard-boiled egg to decorate, or a picture of an easter egg to colour, or paper and pens to draw your own

Don't worry if you don't have all these resources - be creative and adapt as necessary.

With due thanks and acknowledgement to those people whose ideas and resources have contributed to and inspired the material used herein.

Station number 1: Pilate condemns Jesus to death

Story

Jesus has been arrested and is taken to see the Governor who asks him if he is the Son of God. Jesus tells the truth: 'yes'. The crowds shout out to Pilate to crucify Jesus. Pilate knows it is the wrong thing to do but doesn't want to upset the crowd. So, he condemns Jesus to death and washes his hands, trying to wash away his guilt.

Reflection

Pilate goes for the easy option even though he knows it is wrong. Sometimes we do the same. We ignore things that are unfair, like bullying, poverty and injustice because it seems easier than doing the right thing.

Activity:

Wash your hands. As you do so, reflect on the times you 'wash your hands' of things that are unfair and choose the easy thing rather than the right thing.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us to choose the right thing even when it's not the easy thing.

Help us to stand up against things that are unfair, like bullying, poverty and injustice. Amen.

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.

Station number 2: Jesus accepts his cross

Story

Jesus' body is cut and sore from being whipped and beaten. Then the soldiers bring a large, heavy wooden cross for him to carry. He has to carry it down a long road and up a steep hill to the place where he would die. Though he is tired and in pain, Jesus accepts his cross.

Reflection

Think about what it feels like to put clothes on a sunburned back, or to be bumped where you have a cut or a bruise. It is hard to get through the day when we are sick or in pain. Jesus knows how this feels. He carried his cross out of love for us and we remember this every time we make the sign of the cross.

Activity:

make a cross by collecting two twigs from your garden and making them into a cross, by wrapping some string or wool around the centre.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank you for taking up your cross out of love for us. Help us to see you in all who struggle.

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.

Station number 3: Jesus falls for the first time

Story

As he is walking along the pain and the weight of the cross become too much for Jesus to bear. He falls down. Some people in the crowd laughed at him. But somehow, he found the courage and strength to get up, to put the cross back on his shoulder, and to keep going.

Activity:

Draw a wound on with a make-up pencil as you think
.....
about a time when you've been down and found the
.....
strength to get back up again.
.....

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us to follow you by making a fresh
.....
start each day. Give us strength to get up and keep
.....
going when things are tough, just like you did. Amen.
.....

Reflection

There are times when we struggle at school or at home; times when we fall down. Times when people laugh at us and tease us. When we have difficult things to bear, such as worries or fears or sadness, think of Jesus. We may be down for a while, we may be wounded by our fall, but Jesus can give us the strength we need to get back up and keep going.

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.
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Station number 4: Jesus meets his mother

Story

Jesus is tired, bleeding and in pain. As he walks along the narrow roadway, he turns the corner and as he glances up, he sees his mother, Mary. She reaches out to touch him, sobbing. Mary feels so much hurt and pain to see what is happening to Jesus.

Activity:

Think of someone you know who is sad or in pain at
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the moment. Do something to cheer them up -
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maybe phone them, send an email, make a card, draw
.....
a picture, or write them a letter so they know you are
.....
thinking of them.
.....

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us to appreciate those who love us
.....

Reflection

Think of a time when someone you love has been in pain and upset. Jesus knows and can see how sad his mother is feeling but he is comforted to know she is there. It can be hard to stay with people who are suffering but we all need support when things are tough.

and stay with us in difficult times. Help us to love and
.....
support other people when they are struggling. Amen.
.....

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.
.....

Station number 5: Simon helps Jesus carry the cross

Story

The soldiers notice that Jesus is tired, weak and having a hard time carrying his cross. So they pull a man from the crowd to help him; his name was Simon. Simon didn't really know what was going on and he didn't know Jesus. He probably felt afraid, but he did as they asked and helped Jesus carry his load.

Activity:

Fill a bag with some heavy things, so it's tricky to carry on your own. As you put the things in the bag, for each one, think of a trouble or a worry people have. Then take them out of the bag and take some each, so the heavy load is shared.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us to appreciate those who love us and stay with us in difficult times.

Reflection

Sometimes, if we are struggling, we need someone to help us. We may need someone to listen to us when we are sad or give us a hand with a difficult task. Simon reminds us that many people are willing to help if we ask.

Help us to love and support other people when they are struggling. Amen.

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.

Station number 6: Veronica wipes Jesus' face

Story

Jesus is hot and sweaty. He is covered in dirt from the dusty road and has cuts on his head from the crown of thorns. There is a woman in the crowd, called, Veronica, who is a friend of Jesus. She notices his pain and, even though she is scared, she bravely comes forward to wipe Jesus' face with her veil, showing how much she loves and cares for him.

Activity:

Dip a piece of cloth or cotton wool in a bowl of water (or use a wipe) and gently wipe one another's faces.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, give us the strength and the compassion to do what we can to show love and

Reflection

Veronica's love and kindness overcame her fear. When we see people who are hurt or suffering in some way, are we brave enough and kind enough to speak up, to come forward and do what we can to help, even if people around us might not like it?

kindness to those in need, even if it means going against the crowd. Amen.

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.

Station number 7: Jesus falls for the second time

Story

Jesus is only half way there but he is exhausted. Even with Simon's help, he falls again under the weight of the heavy cross. The people around are yelling at Jesus to get back up. This is probably the hardest thing he has ever had to do. Somehow, he found a little bit more strength to push himself up and keep going.

Activity:

As you think about this person, draw another, bigger,
wound on you, with red lipstick.
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Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us when things are tough and we feel
like giving up. Give us the strength to get up again and
keep going. Amen.
.....

Reflection

Think about someone you know or someone you have heard about who is going through a painful time. They may have moments when they feel they can't go on, that they can't take any more pain. Jesus knows how they feel. Jesus is with them in their pain.

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.
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Station number 8: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Story

The Bible tells us that many women helped Jesus with his work while he was alive. They cared for him and went with him from town to town. On his way, he passes by a group of women from Jerusalem. They are crying for Jesus but he tells them to weep for themselves and their children, rather than for him, because cruel things will happen to them too.

Activity:

Look at some the pictures of women weeping,
perhaps on the internet or in the newspapers. Think
of a woman you know who weeps. Draw your own
picture of a woman weeping.
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Reflection

The world can be unkind and it is often women and children who suffer the most. In many places around the world and in this country, women are not treated fairly compared to men and they are often the first to suffer when there is war and violence.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you love us all equally: men, women and
children. Help us to treat each other equally. We pray
for women around the world who weep today. Amen.
.....

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.
.....

Station number 9: Jesus falls for the third time

Story

Jesus is nearly there. He has climbed a hill carrying his heavy cross but now he has no more strength left. He falls again. Many in the crowd watch him struggle but do nothing.

Activity:

As you think about people who suffer around the world, draw a third, bigger, wound on you, this time with face paint.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we pray for everybody who is suffering around the world.

Reflection

A lot of people around the world are suffering from war, poverty, natural disasters or disease. Other people have the resources to help them and to stop the suffering but they stand by and do nothing. Jesus remind us to be aware of the suffering of all people and to do all we can to help them.

Help us all to do all we can to help them. Amen.

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.

Station number 10: Jesus is stripped of his clothes

Story

Jesus has arrived at the place where he will die. While he stands in front of the crowd, the soldiers pull off his clothes so Jesus is wearing almost nothing. They divide his clothes up amongst themselves. One cloth that he was wearing didn't have any seams to tear, so the soldiers drew lots to see who would get it.

Activity:

Jesus lost his clothing. Choose one piece of clothing that you could manage without and put it on one side to donate to a charity shop.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us to treat other people kindly, and not to be spiteful and try to embarrass them. Amen.

Reflection

Jesus is treated as if he were worthless and is left standing embarrassed and humiliated. Sometimes people do mean things to make others feel embarrassed. We may find it funny, but these experiences can hurt people for many years. Jesus reminds us not to treat other people in this way.

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.

Station number 11: Jesus is nailed to the cross

Story

The soldiers make Jesus lie down on the cross. They hammer big nails through Jesus' hands and feet to hang him on the cross. This is a slow and painful way to die. There was no escape.

Activity:

Draw and cut out a paper 'Jesus' that will fit on the cross you made at station 2. With careful supervision, use a hammer and some nails to nail Jesus to the cross. Drawing pins might also work, as a safer alternative.

Reflection

Whenever we are injured or sick or in pain, we can remember how Jesus died. We can remember that Jesus understands what it is like to feel trapped and to be in agony.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we pray for all people who are sick or in pain. For doctors, nurses, carers and all those working to relieve people's pain. Be with them and comfort them. Amen.

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.

Station number 12: Jesus dies on the cross

Story

Jesus has been hanging on the cross for several hours. Then, even though it is daytime, the sky turns dark. The earth shakes. The large curtain in the Temple tore into two pieces meaning the way to God was now open. Jesus asks God to forgive those who are killing him. He says, "Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit. And then Jesus dies.

Activity:

Take a small piece of cloth (or a piece of paper) and rip it in two, hearing the sound that it makes. As you do so, in your heart, forgive anyone you need to forgive. Thank Jesus that the way to God is now open.

Reflection

Even in his last moments, Jesus is thinking of others. He gives us a wonderful example of gentleness and thoughtfulness despite his own suffering. Jesus teaches us how important it is to forgive and be reconciled to one another and to God.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we pray for all those who are dying now. We remember those people we love who have died. Help us Jesus, as we remember you dying, to remember to forgive one another. Amen

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.

Station number 13: Jesus is taken down from the cross

Story

Jesus' friends take his body down from the cross. They wash his body and wrap it in strips of cloth. His mother Mary holds him in her arms and weeps.

Reflection

In Jesus' time whenever someone died, their families would wrap their bodies in cloth as a sign of respect and love. How terrible Mary must have felt holding Jesus. When we are sad, because someone we love has died, Mary understands exactly how we feel.

Activity:

Take your paper Jesus of your cross and wrap him lovingly either in strips of cloth, or bandage, or tissue.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we pray for everybody who is sad because someone they love has died.

We pray especially for mothers and fathers whose children have died. May your mother Mary console them and help them to cope. Amen.

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.

Station number 14: Jesus is placed in the tomb

Story

Jesus' friends carry his body and place it in a tomb. Then they push a large stone in front of the entrance so his body will be safe there.

Reflection

Jesus' friends feel discouraged. They have lost all hope. They think this is the end of the story. They think this is the end of Jesus. But we know better, don't we? Jesus has died but we wait, with hope, for the joy that is to come.

Activity:

Eggs are associated with Easter as they symbolise new life. Either decorate a hard-boiled egg, or draw a picture of an egg, or download a picture from the internet to colour. Then place your egg, and your paper Jesus in a 'tomb' in your house - somewhere that is cold and dark. Get them out again on Easter Day.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us to trust God when things seem to go wrong. Help us to remember that death was not the end of the story. After death comes new life. And so we say together, repeating after me: Thank you, Jesus. Amen. Thank you Jesus, Amen.

Response:

It was slow and painful for Jesus but he did it for us.