

# **STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR FAMILIES**



**Also translated into Afrikaans, Zulu and Sotho and Tswana**

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# STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR FAMILIES

## PREFACE

The Stations of the Cross are most often prayed during Lent because they are a way of thinking about the suffering and death of Jesus, but they can also be prayed at other times. The Stations, or what is often also called the Way of the Cross is usually prayed in a Church in a formal way. For families, taking into consideration the different ages of the children, there may be other more suitable ways as well. The reflections could be more meaningful if they are more directly related to the family's own life experience and situation.

This text is designed mainly for families with primary school age children and tries to address the children as well as the parents as much as possible. It uses the method of first reflecting on a possible life experience relevant to that particular Station, then on the experience of Jesus and then ending with a brief prayer. Families can also begin with reflecting on the Station and then linking it with a more personal life experience.

Other ways of praying the Stations could be:

- Pray just one or two stations at a time on different days.
- Read the reflection on the experience of Jesus and then think about and share on or discuss one's own family situation for the life experience.
- Allow spontaneous prayer after the reflections.

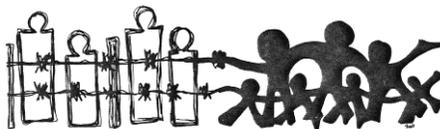
## PROCEDURE

Different family members can take the roles of Leader and narrators.

At each station follow the procedure below:

1. Make a gesture of respect, i.e. kneel or bow heads and say:  
LEADER: JESUS, WE HONOUR YOU.  
ALL THANK YOU LORD JESUS FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE FOR US
2. Go through the text for that station.
3. End each station by singing, if possible, the chorus of Hymn 340 in the Celebration Hymnal.

WALK WITH ME O MY LORD  
THROUGH THE DARKEST NIGHT AND BRIGHTEST DAY  
BE AT MY SIDE O LORD  
HOLD MY HAND AND GUIDE ME ON MY WAY.



## INTRODUCTION

### LEADER:

When I ask someone the way to do something, cover a book, bake a cake, learn to ride a bike or use a computer I listen carefully and follow their instructions

Jesus said "I am the Way, anyone who comes to the Father comes through me." He also said, "if anyone wants to be my disciple, he must take up his cross and follow me."

By reading the gospels and learning more about him, we find the way to follow Jesus. During Lent we especially look at the way he suffered and died and from that we try to learn the way to cope with our problems and suffering.

A hardship, problem or time of suffering in our lives can be compared to carrying a cross. What are the crosses in our lives? Problems at home, in our family, money problems, or problems at work or school, with our friends. Maybe I feel unhappy at school, the teacher seems to pick on me or my friends don't get on. Whatever my cross is, when I put up with it and try to accept it, I am carrying my cross, like Jesus. When it feels as if it is too much, it is like dying with Jesus, and when things eventually come right again and I am really happy it is like rising with Jesus. A 15<sup>th</sup> Station is added as is sometimes done.

The Way of the Cross is the journey Jesus took from the time he was condemned by Pilate until his resurrection, his coming back to new life.

Let us travel along that journey with him, stopping along the way to think about the things that happened to him, and seeing what they can tell us about our way through life.

## FIRST STATION – JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

### NARRATOR 1.

#### DO NOT CONDEMN OR JUDGE OTHERS.

How often do I condemn or judge others, unjustly or to keep the peace. How often am I not strong enough to stand up for what I believe?



How do I behave when I am unfairly treated by others, my family, friends, teachers, fellow workers?

Do I argue or fight, have to have the last word or do I try and accept that life isn't always fair?



### NARRATOR 2.

Jesus had been betrayed by his friend Judas. The Jewish leaders had arrested him and handed him

over to Pilate to be judged. They did not believe that he came from God, but saw him as a troublemaker. Pilate realised that Jesus was innocent, but wasn't strong enough to stand up for his beliefs. He condemned Jesus to please the people and try to keep the peace.

Because Jesus was human too, like us, he felt sad and rejected at being unjustly treated.

**LEADER:**           **PRAYER**

God, our Father, forgive me for the times when I like Pilate, have been unfair to others. Help me too to learn there are times when I have to accept unfair treatment without complaining, as Jesus did.

## **SECOND STATION – JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS**

**NARRATOR 1.**

**ACCEPT YOUR CROSS FOR JESUS CHRIST**

How do I accept the crosses, the sufferings in my life? Do I complain when someone asks me to go out of my way to help them, or when I am sick, do I bear it patiently or do I make a fuss and demand attention?



**NARRATOR 2.**

The cross was put on Jesus' shoulders. It was heavy and awkward to carry and the journey through the streets of Jerusalem long. He did not complain but set out on his painful walk.

**LEADER:**           **PRAYER**

Dear God, sometimes I know that you are asking me to carry a cross like sickness, problems at school, at home or at work or unhappiness. Help me to pick it up and carry it brave and willingly, to follow Jesus' way.

## **THIRD STATION – JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME**

**NARRATOR 1. BE GENTLE WITH THE SICK IN BODY, SPIRIT AND MIND**

Having decided to carry my particular burden with Jesus, I am sometimes weak and fail. No matter how hard I try to be patient and gentle with others, especially someone telling me their problems, or old people needing help, sometimes my patience wears thin and I refuse to listen. Then do I apologise and try again?



NARRATOR 2.



Jesus was already weak from being beaten by the soldiers before he started out on his journey. His weakness and the heavy cross made him fall down to the ground in pain, but he got up and struggled on.

LEADER : PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for giving me the example of Jesus. I know that he also fell because his cross was too heavy, but he also got up to carry on again. Make me brave like Jesus.

## FOURTH STATION – JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

NARRATOR 1. SHOW LOVE IN YOUR FAMILY

As a child do I repay my mother and father with love and obedience or with cheekiness and grumbling?

As a parent do I give my children the love and care they deserve or am I too busy with my own affairs?

As a husband or wife do I show real love and appreciation to my partner? Do we allow each other

to be a real part of each other's lives, do we talk and spend time together as a family?



NARRATOR 2.

Imagine how Jesus and Mary must have felt meeting on this journey? There was nothing Mary could do now to help the son she had cared for all these years except to let him know that she was there because she loved him. And there was nothing Jesus could do to comfort his mother.



LEADER: PRAYER

God, you care for us as a Father, and on the cross before he died, Jesus gave us Mary to be our mother. Help us as families to learn from you and from Mary and Jesus how to love and care for those in our families.

## FIFTH STATION – SIMON HELPS JESUS TO CARRY HIS CROSS

NARRATOR 1. HELP OTHERS TO CARRY THEIR  
CROSSES

Do I ever stop to help strangers, maybe someone who is lost or is asking for food? Would I help someone if my friends were watching, or would I be too ashamed if they saw me? Do I only help when am forced to?



NARRATOR 2.

Simon didn't want to help Jesus at first. The soldiers realized that Jesus was too weak to go on, so they just picked someone who happened to be passing by. Jesus was a total stranger and after his beating he looked a mess. Simon must have been ashamed to be seen with a criminal.

LEADER: PRAYER

Jesus, you have said that whenever I help someone in need I help you. Show me yourself in other people, especially the old, the poor and the sick.

## SIXTH STATION – VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

NARRATOR 1. BE KIND TO EACH OTHER AS  
VERONICA WAS.

Do I care enough about others to go out of my way freely, without being asked to help someone? At home, do I look for ways to help or wait until I am nagged to do my chores? At school do I ever go up

to another child who is looking lonely and ask them to join me and my friends?



NARRATOR 2.

While Simon was forced to help Jesus, Veronica seeing that Jesus' face was full of blood and dirt came forward of her own free will from the crowd to wipe his face. Tradition tells us that Jesus rewarded her by leaving a picture of his face on her cloth.

LEADER: PRAYER

Jesus, you rewarded Veronica for her kind deed as an example to us. Let us also see that helping others brings true happiness and kindness leads to friendship.

## SEVENTH STATION – JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

NARRATOR 1. HAVE YOU SHARED TODAY?

What is my weakness? Am I selfish, not prepared to share, not just to give a little of my sweets or lunch but share it all. Am I willing to share my toys or other things, my time and talents? As an adult am I willing to share with those in need as we encourage our children to do? Each time when I try to do so but fail through my own weakness I fall with Jesus.



NARRATOR 2.

It was Jesus' weakness that caused him to fall again. Simon was helping him to carry the cross. Veronica had wiped the blood out of his eyes, but he still had to battle to find enough strength to struggle on to his death and our salvation.

LEADER: PRAYER

Father, your son fell on his journey and showed us that our weaknesses are what make us human, but our will to learn to overcome them makes us like Jesus.

## EIGHTH STATION – JESUS COMFORTS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM.



NARRATOR 1. COMFORT THE  
SAD AND LONELY.

When I am feeling sad and lonely am I able to consider others who may be feeling the same or worse or am I too worried about myself to care about the others in or outside my family?



**NARRATOR 2.**

Jesus knew he was soon going to die. Like us, he didn't want to suffer and he was also frightened. Even so, he thought of others. As he passed a group of women who were crying for him, he spoke to them and comforted them.

**LEADER: PRAYER**

Dear Father, your world is full of sad and lonely people. Don't let me be so wrapped up in my own life that I cannot look beyond my own problems at the problems of others.

## **NINTH STATION – JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME**

**NARRATOR 1.**

**WHEN YOU FALL GET UP AND GO ON.**

When I have tried something and failed how often am I willing to try again, or do I give up easily. When little children learn to walk they fall down and get up many times before they can walk and run. Sportsmen practice regularly. In following Jesus' way it is not enough to say I tried once – to do a difficult exercise, to make up after a fight. We have to learn to keep on trying, even to the point of always being the first one to say sorry.



**NARRATOR 2.**

Near the top of the hill of the crucifixion Jesus fell one more. He had seen his mother and the other mothers and their children crying for him, some like Simon and Veronica had helped him, but many people just ignored him and pushed past in the streets not caring. All this was too much for him, and he fell again but he knew too that he had to get up and go on.

**LEADER: PRAYER**

Dear Father, forgive me for the times I have given up too soon. I will try to follow Jesus' way and get up when I fall and keep on trying.

## TENTH STATION – JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHES

NARRATOR 1.

**DO NOT BE ATTACHED TO MATERIAL THINGS**

What are the most important things in my life, the things I want the most? Are they my toys, bicycle, radio, clothes, car i.e. material things, or are they the care and love of my family and friends.



NARRATOR 2.

Nearly all Jesus' friends had left him. They were afraid. His own people, the Jews had turned against him. Then his clothes were taken off in public, even his dignity was lost. He had no possessions left.

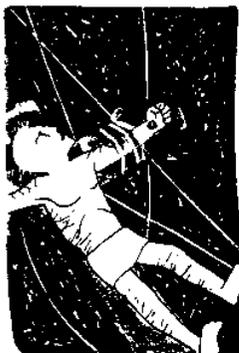
LEADER: PRAYER

Father, help me to recognize that the really valuable things in life are my family and friends, my self respect and the respect of others. Don't ever let me trade these for material possessions.

## ELEVENTH STATION - JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

NARRATOR 1. **DO NOT MOCK OTHERS**

Do I laugh when I see other people praying? Do I mock others when they are helpless or when they stand up for what they believe in? Or do I admire them for their courage? It is easy to admire the strong and powerful and look down on the weak and helpless even though the powerful may be bullies and the weak may be right.



NARRATOR 2.

Cruel, selfish men had bought about this situation, Jesus' hands and feet were nailed to the cross and

the cross was put upright. Jesus hung there quite helpless. Other cruel and selfish men came by and mocked him, making fun of him. They laughed and said "He saved others, let him now save himself and come down from the cross". But Jesus suffered in silence. He knew that was the right thing to do.

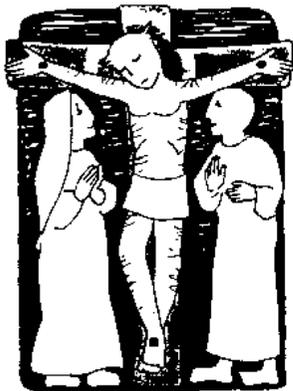
LEADER: PRAYER

Help me Father, when I am utterly helpless, as Jesus was, to be brave and strong. Help me too not to mock others who are doing what they believe to be right.

## TWELFTH STATION – JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

NARRATOR 1. MAY SIN DIE IN US

The world around us is a mixture, there is good and there is evil. Each time I choose God's way by being honest, helpful and obedient instead of choosing the lazy, easy way, sin dies in me.



NARRATOR 2.

Jesus said "The greatest proof of love is to give your life for your friends." He gave his life for us, he died to show his love and save us from our sins. Sin died with him and in him.

LEADER: PRAYER

Lord Jesus, how can I ever thank you for this greatest gift of your life for me and for all of us. All we can give in return are all our efforts to make sin die in us by trying to follow your way.



## THIRTEENTH STATION – THE BODY OF JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

NARRATOR 1  
KEEP UP YOUR COURAGE

Have I ever felt completely discouraged, as if my world is falling apart; everything has gone wrong and no one seems to love me any more?

All I want to do is run away or sit down and die. What courage it takes to carry on.





NARRATOR 2.

Imagine how Jesus' friends felt. He was dead, had deserted them just when they thought he was going to be their king. Jesus' mother Mary, the apostle John and some of Jesus' other friends didn't run away but stayed. The Roman soldier stuck his spear into Jesus' side and blood and water came out proving that he was really dead. His body was taken down and put into his mother's arms. His friends must have wondered if all was finished.

LEADER: PRAYER

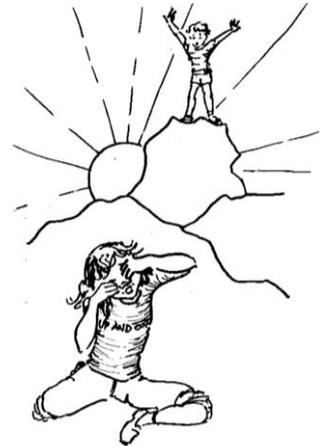
Father God, do not let me give up hope but give me courage of Mary and John to carry on following

your way even when it seems that everything is wrong.

## FOURTEENTH STATION – THE BODY OF JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB.

NARRATOR 1.

When someone close to us dies, how do we feel? We feel a desperate sense of loneliness and loss, we are sad because they are not with us anymore. But we also believe that they live on and that we will one day meet again in the presence of God where all God's friends live forever.



NARRATOR 2.

As the Sabbath was starting soon the body of Jesus was hastily put into a nearby tomb and a big stone rolled in front. Although some people, then and even now, believe there is no life after death Jesus had taught his apostles that he would rise again. In overcoming death he finished the work God had given him and people were reconciled with God through His life, death and resurrection.

LEADER : PRAYER

Dear God, the friends of Jesus had heard him say he would rise again but they found it difficult to understand. Help us too, when we lose members of our

families or our friends to understand that death is only a parting but that we will meet again. Comfort those who have lost dear ones and help them too to understand.

## **FIFTEENTH STATION – JESUS RISES FROM THE DEAD**

### **NARRATOR 1.**

After a big upset in my life when I have made up and we can be friends again there is sometimes a greater feeling of happiness and closeness than before. That would not be possible if we did not first have the upset. Also when I manage to overcome a weakness in myself, like jealousy or always being critical, my life seems better than before. That is what dying and rising again to new life is like. Greater happiness can come after greater suffering.



### **NARRATOR 2.**

Early on Easter Sunday morning the women of the group went to the tomb to embalm the body of Jesus. When they arrived there they found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. Two angels were sitting there and told them that Jesus had risen. They rushed back to tell the others, hardly able to believe, but overjoyed at the news. Jesus had overcome sin and death and had risen to a new and glorious life.



### **LEADER:**

### **PRAYER**

God, our Father, we praise you and thank you for new life in Jesus. May we grow ever closer to you in following his way.

### **SING:**

**Alleluia, alleluia, he is risen, alleluia  
Alleluia, alleluia, he is risen, alleluia**

**Alleluia, alleluia, and I love him, alleluia  
Alleluia, alleluia, and I love him alleluia**

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