

Outdoor Stations of the Cross

Although we cannot gather for Holy Week together, we can still participate in Holy Week activities. We are allowed to go for walks, bike rides, etc. We can be outdoors, so long as we stay six feet apart from others who are also outdoors.

Being outdoors, in God's creation, connects us to God, and reminds us that God made the Earth and everything in it. During Holy Week, we can remember God's beautiful creation, we remember the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The Stations of the Cross are a 14-step devotion from the Catholic tradition, remembering Jesus' last day on Earth (Good Friday). Each of the 14 devotions (stations), focus on a specific event in the last day of Jesus. There are specific prayers to say at each station, and different devotions to remember Jesus' last day on Earth.

This Outdoor Stations of the Cross can be an individual or family activity. Each station will include a traditional prayer, which you are invited to meditate on. As you meditate, just breathe and be with God. Try to clear your mind, so God may speak to you.

If you are doing this with children, each station will have a children's prayer and activity to engage in. Some activities will require the materials, listed above. Make this a meaningful outing for yourself and/or your family, by both having fun and talking about the importance of Good Friday.

Materials (for Children's Activities): Paper and coloring Supplies, like markers or colored pencils, Sidewalk Chalk, A backpack full of books (heavy for kids, but not as heavy for grownups), Some old clothing, Dice, Hardware Nails

Opening Prayer: To be said as you step out the door.

Traditional: O my God, my Redeemer, behold me here at Thy feet. From the bottom of my heart I am sorry for all my sins, because by them I have offended Thee, Who art infinitely good. (Meditation)

Children: Dear God. I know that I don't always do the right thing. I am sorry. Help me to do better, for you. Amen.

Activity: *Talk about a time when you knew you did something wrong, and you apologized for it. How did it feel to admit that you had done something wrong? How did you feel after you apologized?*

Walk for 5 minutes

Station 1: Jesus is Condemned to Death

Jesus was treated like a criminal by the Roman authorities. He was accused of a lot of crimes he didn't commit, but he didn't try to defend himself in court. He stayed silent, because he knew that he needed to go to the cross, to die for us.

Traditional: Jesus, you stand all alone before Pilate. Nobody speaks up for you. Nobody helps defend you. You devoted your entire life to helping others, listening to the smallest ones, caring for those who were ignored by others. They don't seem to remember that as they prepare to put you to death. (Meditate)

Children: Jesus, I don't like it when people say I did something I didn't do. I get defensive and want to say, "I didn't do that!" Help me to be honest, like you. Help me to also never tattle on someone just to hurt them.

Activity: *Draw a picture of Jesus' face, when he was on trial. How do you think he was feeling? Was he sad? Angry? Calm? How would you feel if you were in Jesus' situation?*

Walk for 5 minutes

Station 2: Jesus Carries His Cross

The cross was big and heavy. It was hard for Jesus to carry, but he carried it.

Traditional: Jesus, as you accepted your cross, you knew you would carry it to your death on Calvary. You knew it wouldn't be easy, but you accepted it and carried it just the same. (Meditate)

Children: Jesus, sometimes things in life are hard, like school or chores, and I complain. Help me not to complain. Help me to keep trying, even when I think something is hard.

Activity: *Take the backpack full of books and walk with it for about a minute. Is it hard to carry? Is it heavy? Would you want to carry something heavy like this with no help?*

Take 7 steps

Station 3: Jesus Falls for the First Time

Jesus was already badly wounded when he fell for the first time. It must have hurt him a lot. But he picked up the cross and kept going.

Traditional: Jesus, the cross you have been carrying is very heavy. You are becoming weak and almost ready to faint, and you fall down. Nobody seems to want to help you. The soldiers are interested in getting home, so they yell at you and try to get you up and moving again. (Meditate)

Children: Sometimes, things in life make us feel defeated. Jesus was hurt but never defeated. Jesus, I want your attitude of hope even if I am not succeeding.

Activity: *Get out the sidewalk chalk, and mark an X, to symbolize the first time Jesus fell. How do you think Jesus felt when he fell? How would you have felt?*

Take 7 steps

Station 4: Jesus meets his mother.

Jesus knew that his mother, Mary, was sad to see him suffering so much, heartbroken even. But she was still there, in the crowd for him. A comforting, loving, presence. Mary was strong, because she was there for her child, all the way to the end. She loved him very much.

Traditional: Jesus, you feel so alone with all those people yelling and screaming at you. You don't like the words they are saying about you, and you look for a friendly face in the crowd. You see your mother. She can't make the hurting stop, but it helps to see that she is on your side, that she is suffering with you. She does understand and care. (Meditate)

Children: Our parents love us very much, and sometimes we don't let them hug us and care for us because we are mad or sad or don't want them to see us in trouble. Jesus, I thank you for my parents and their love for me.

Activity: *Draw a heart on the sidewalk, to remember the love Mary had for Jesus. Then talk: How do you know your parents love you? What is the best thing they've done for you? How do you show your parents you love them?*

Take 7 steps

Station 5: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus

Simon didn't come to help Jesus, but to see what was going on. Then he was ordered by the soldiers to carry the cross, because Jesus was having such a hard time.

Traditional: Jesus, the soldiers are becoming impatient. This is taking longer than they wanted it to. They are afraid you won't make it to the hill where you will be crucified. As you grow weaker, they grab a man out of the crowd and make him help carry your cross. He was just watching what was happening, but all of a sudden he is helping you carry your cross. (Meditate)

Children: Sometimes I don't want to help my friends or siblings or parents when I am told to. Jesus, help me know that when I do help others, it is like helping you. I want to be kind and helpful.

Activity: *Draw a cross on the sidewalk. Take the backpack full of books and try carrying it again. This time, ask for help carrying it. Is it easier to carry it alone, or with someone else? Why do you think helping others is important?*

Take 7 steps

Station 6: Veronica Wipes Jesus' Tears

In some Christian traditions, St. Veronica was a woman who stepped out of the crowd to wipe Jesus' face. She was sad to see him carrying his cross and felt the need to help, the best way she knew how.

Traditional: Jesus, suddenly a woman comes out of the crowd. Her name is Veronica. You can see how she cares for you as she takes a cloth and begins to wipe the blood and sweat from your face. She can't do much, but she offers what little help she can. (Meditate)

Children: Jesus, I want to love you like Veronica. Help me to be brave and love others who are unpopular.

Activity: *Draw a tear on the sidewalk, to remember how Veronica helped Jesus. Was there a time you helped someone who was in need? Did you know them? What was their response? How did you feel?*

Take 7 steps

Station 7: Jesus Falls a Second Time

Jesus fell again because he was so weak and tired from all his wounds. He still didn't give up. He got back up and continued on.

Traditional: This is the second time you have fallen on the road. As the cross grows heavier and heavier it becomes more difficult to get up. But you continue to struggle and try until you're up and walking again. You don't give up. (Meditate)

Children: Think of something that makes you feel weak, something that is hard for you to do. Ask Jesus to help you with this.

Activity: Draw another X on the sidewalk, to mark the second place Jesus fell. What do you do when you feel like something is hard? Do you give up? How do you feel when you give up? Do you keep going? How does it feel to keep going?

Take 7 steps

Station 8: Jesus meets the Women of Jerusalem.

A lot of people were against Jesus, but a lot of people followed him. They were mostly women. These women were his faithful friends.

Traditional: Jesus, as you carry your cross you see a group of women along the road. As you pass by you see they are sad. You stop to spend a moment with them, to offer them some encouragement. Although you have been abandoned by your friends and are in pain, you stop and try to help them. (Meditate)

Children: Help me to be a faithful friend. When my friends are going through a hard time or are being made fun of, I want to help them and be a true friend.

Activity: Draw a picture of your best friend. What makes them your best friend? Why are you friends with them? What is the best thing about having friends?

Take 7 steps

Station 9: Jesus Falls for a Third Time

Jesus fell again, and the soldiers still didn't help him. They only yelled louder for him to get up and continue on. Jesus didn't get mad at them; he forgave them.

Traditional: Jesus, your journey has been long. You fall again, beneath your cross. You know your journey is coming to an end. You struggle and struggle. You get up and keep going. (Meditate)

Children: Sometimes people say or do hurtful things to us or don't help us when we need them. Jesus, help me to forgive everyone like you did. Help me not to get angry or hold a grudge against someone who has hurt me.

Activity: Draw an X on the sidewalk. Has anyone ever said something hurtful to you? Has anyone ever been mean to you? How did that make you feel? Did you want to forgive them? Did you forgive them?

Walk for 5 minutes

Station 10: Jesus is stripped of his clothes

Before putting him on the cross, the soldiers took Jesus' clothes off of him, in order to shame and embarrass him. They sought to humiliate him and make fun of him. They wanted others to do the same.

Traditional: The soldiers notice you have something of value. They remove your cloak and throw dice for it. Your wounds are torn open once again. Some of the people in the crowd make fun of you. They tease you and challenge you to perform a miracle for them to see. They're not aware that you'll perform the greatest miracle of all! (Meditate)

Children: Jesus, I know that it hurts when people make fun of me. When people tease me. Help me to remember your love for me, and God's love for me.

Activity: Get out the old clothing and dice. Pretend that you are the Roman soldiers, and cast lots for it. Call out a number, and whoever gets the number right, gets the clothing. Was this game fun? How would you feel if you were Jesus, watching the soldiers playing games for your clothes? What do you think would have been a better thing for the soldiers to do?

Walk for 2 minutes

Station 11: Jesus is crucified

This is one of the saddest moments of the day, because this is when the soldiers put Jesus on the cross. They drove nails in his hands and feet, and then stood the cross up. Jesus was in a lot of pain.

Traditional: You are stretched out on the cross you have carried so far. The soldiers take big nails and drive them into your hands and feet. You feel abandoned by the people you loved so much. People seem to have gone mad. You have done nothing but good, yet they drive nails through your hands and feet. (Meditate)

Children: Many people suffer pain every day from being sick, hungry, poor, and because of war or natural disasters. Jesus, please comfort everyone who is in pain today.

Activity: Look at the nail. Do you think that it would hurt if it went through your hand? What other types of pain are there in the world? How can we help those who are in pain?

Take 6 steps

Station 12: Jesus dies on the cross

This is the saddest station at the cross, because Jesus dies. After six hours on the cross, he takes his last breath. Before he takes his last breath he says "God, forgive the people, for they know not what they do." Jesus' final action on the cross was to ask forgiveness for people. He knew that people will mess up and make mistakes, but they're never beyond love and forgiveness.

Traditional: As Jesus hung on the cross, he forgave the soldiers who had crucified him, and prayed for his mother and friends. Jesus wanted all of us to be able to live forever with God, so he gave all he had for us, out of love. (Meditate)

Children: Jesus, help me to admit when I make mistakes. Help me to say I'm sorry. Thank you for always forgiving me. I love you, and I want to do the right thing.

Activity: *On the ground write "FORGIVE THEM."* Talk about a time that you messed up and had to seek forgiveness. What did being forgiven feel like? Talk about a time when you had to forgive someone else. Was it easy to forgive them? How do you think forgiving people shows them love?

Take 7 steps.

Station 13: Jesus' body is taken down from the Cross

Jesus' friends and followers treated his body with great gentleness. He had died in a horrible way, but they made sure his body was cared for. They wiped the blood and dirt off of him. His mother, Mary, held him. This was risky, because he had been called a criminal by Romans and others, and many people didn't believe that criminals were worthy of being treated with love.

Traditional: Jesus, how brutally you were put to death. How gently you're taken from the cross. Your suffering and pain are ended, and you are put in the lap of your mother. The dirt and blood are wiped away. You are treated with love. (Meditate)

Children: Jesus, sometimes it's risky to show love to people in need, and to treat hurting people with kindness. Sometimes the world tells me that's the wrong thing to do. Help me to be like your friends and followers, who loved you and cared for you, even if it was risky. Give me the courage to be loving.

Activity: *List people who you think the world says you shouldn't love (either out loud, on a piece of paper, or on the sidewalk with chalk.) Why do you think the world says we shouldn't love them? What do you think God says? How can you show love to them?*

Take 7 steps

Station 14: Jesus is laid in the tomb.

Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man who was a friend and follower of Jesus, gave his own tomb for Jesus' body. So, Jesus' friends and followers prepared Jesus' body for burial, took it to the tomb, and laid it to rest (or so they thought.) It was a sad day. We know what happens next, and that gives us hope, but his friends and followers didn't know what was going to happen. They thought everything was over.

Traditional: Jesus, your body is prepared for burial. Joseph gave you his own tomb. He laid your body there and rolled a large stone in front of it, then went home. What a sad day it has been for so many people. (Meditate)

Children: Jesus, we know what happens next. We know that you are resurrected, raised from the dead, so it's easy for us to have hope. But your friends didn't know what was going to happen, so it was hard for them to have hope. Sometimes there are times where it's hard for us to hope, when we don't know if things are going to get better. When those times come, help us to find even the smallest glimpse of hope, and hold on to it.

Activity: *On the ground write "HAVE HOPE" on the sidewalk. Talk about hope. What is hope? What does hope mean to you? Have you ever felt like there was a time it was easy to have hope? Why was it easy? Have you ever felt there was a time it was hard to hope? What made it so hard?*