

Stations of the Cross: A Sensory and Experiential Walk

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Stations of the Cross

The custom of walking the Stations of the Cross has long been observed by pilgrims to Jerusalem who want to walk in the footsteps of Christ on his journey to the Cross. Since pilgrimage to Jerusalem isn't a possibility for everyone, stations based on the Scriptural and pietistic accounts of Jesus' journey to the cross, have been compiled and adapted to local custom in a variety of ways over centuries of Christian practice. At times, there have been as many as twenty stations and at others as few as five or six. The Stations of the Cross can be found in several different forms, but it's most popular form may be found in the *Book of Occasional Services*.

The Way of the Cross invites us to reflect together on the suffering of Christ as we journey *with* him to the cross. Stations of the Cross are observed in many and diverse ways. Some churches have images or icons. As a way of inviting our Parish's youngest members to join this practice, at Church of the Holy Family, we not only pray the Stations of the Cross on Fridays in Lent, but use a tactile set of Stations on the Wednesday of Holy Week. A simple service that takes about 30 minutes, it invites participants of all ages to carry the weight of the story with them.

Materials for Station Set Up

- [The Way of the Cross Pamphlets](#)
- Burlap bags from [Michaels](#) (Celebrate it Occasions burlap favor bags, 4.5x7, 6 count) or party favor section at Target (Spritz burlap drawstring favor bags, 4 count)
- Small olive wood prayer cross—From the [My Caring Cross shop on Amazon](#)
- Toothpicks
- Miniature bottles with corks—[Purchased from Amazon](#)
- Sea sponges (cut into small pieces)
- Bowl of vinegar
- Square-cut flooring nails, 2.25—3 inches from Home Depot or [Amazon](#)
- Wire
- The Crucifixion Icon Holy Cards from [The Printery House](#)
- Ashes or oil
- Paper towels
- Small waste basket
- River stones
- White fabric, cut into small squares

- Half-Sheet printouts of stations (Page 9 of this document)

- MDF cut to your preferred size
- Burlap
- Fabric glue
- Time

For Burlap boards



Extension Ideas

1. *Walk the Stations of the Cross together on a Friday in Lent.* Set up each of the materials at the appropriate station. Using the liturgy in the *Book of Occasional Services* walk the stations together. Offer a description before participants join in, explaining the significance of symbols that aren't necessarily apparent—burlap, stations at which there is no symbol to collect (descriptions offered during workshops).
2. *At-Home Faith Formation.* Encourage Families to take their items home and place them in the middle of their table, discussing one each day of Holy Week.
3. *Godly Play-esque Presentation.* Use a purple or red felt underlay to present the materials to children during a children's liturgy time.

Additional Logistical Considerations: Helpful to have one or two people hand out materials and guide participants to the next station as they chant.

Interactive Stations of Holy Week

The Stations of Holy Week were inspired by John Paul II's Scriptural Way of the Cross. Some thought that the traditional way of the cross (on which the above Stations of the Cross are based) are too based in pious tradition, since many of the stations do not appear in any of the Gospel accounts. John Paul II offered up a set of stations based only on the events in Scripture. At Church of the Holy Family, we offer a set of Stations based on 10 of these events on Palm Sunday when many of our families who may not attend all of our Holy Week services are sure to come. At these stations, each participant walks through at their own pace, interacting with the stations as they do (I've included a handout of our set-up on pages 10 and 11 of this document).

| Station number | Traditional | Scriptural (see <i>The Scriptural Way of the Cross</i> by Megan McKenna) | Themes and images from the text | Object Options |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Station 1 | Jesus is condemned to death | Jesus in Gethsemane | Prayer, garden lament, tears/sweat like blood | Symbols of prayer, garden materials or symbols, written words of Jesus, cup |
| Station 2 | Jesus takes up the cross | Jesus is betrayed and arrested | Kiss, coins, Sword, healing, arrest | Heavy chain, sword |
| Station 3 | Jesus falls for the first time | Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin | | |
| Station 4 | Jesus meets his mother | Jesus is denied by Peter | Fire, coal, rooster crow, betrayal | Charcoal, rooster |
| Station 5 | Simon of Cyrene carries the cross | Jesus is judged by Pilate | Judgment, washing hands of it, condemnation | Gavel, basin with water, scroll with written judgement |
| Station 6 | Veronica wipes the face of Jesus | Jesus is scourged and "crowned" | | Crown of thorns, strips of leather |
| Station 7 | Jesus falls the second time | Jesus takes up his cross | | Crosses of multiple shapes and sizes |
| Station 8 | Jesus meets the daughters of Jerusalem | Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene | | |
| Station 9 | Jesus falls the third time | Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem | Mourning, funeral procession, mockery. | Ash, burlap |

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|-------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Station 10 | Jesus is stripped of his garments | Jesus is crucified | Cross, nails (Gospel writers spend very little time on this particular detail). | Large railroad tie nail |
| Station 11 | Jesus is nailed to the cross | Jesus makes a promise to the good thief | Forgiveness, paradise, turning around, repentance, reconciliation | |
| Station 12 | Jesus dies on the cross | Jesus entrusts Mary and John to one another | | |
| Station 13 | Jesus body is removed and held by Mary | Jesus dies on the cross | Darkness, cry of dereliction | |
| Station 14 | Jesus is laid in the tomb | Jesus is laid in the tomb | Silence | Stripes of gauze, perfume or anointing oil (Smell) |

Set up each station in a quiet room and include: An image printed on cardstock and laminated (classical or contemporary), Description or text from scripture, laminated, and an object that can be handled and manipulated (attention given to touch and sound).

Additional logistical considerations

- Quiet place with enough space
- Guidelines for adults—especially reminding them to let children explore in their own time and way (let the children touch and interact). Remind adults not to carry on conversations in the space.
- Create a prayerful environment by closing the door and putting a sign on it, stationing someone in the room, and playing Taize chants quietly in the background. You could also have a door person.
- If I don't have students or adults in the space at any point, I leave the room and invite people in individually—"Have you walked our Stations of Holy Week yet today?"
- Station someone in the room for the duration of the offering and ask them to re-prepare the materials after each group comes through. I enjoy doing this because it gives me a chance to observe.

Stations of the Resurrection

Each year, it seems like we run out of steam after Easter 1. In order to provide a rich and intentional space for continued communal reflection on the events following Jesus' death and resurrection and to ask what it says about our lives in light of the baptismal covenant, we will provide (for the first time this year) the Stations of the Resurrection, a discipline of prayer which can be found, among other places, in the *Saint Augustine Prayerbook*. Our set up for this is quite different than the two above (and is described in the workshop). The set-up is meant to undergird the physicality of the resurrection and the disciples experience and encounters with Jesus in the days following it.

| Station # | Passage reference | Hymn Stanza (to the tune of <i>puer nobis</i>) from <i>the Saint Augustine Prayerbook</i> | Tactile connections and key words |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| | | The light of radiant dawn streams out, And praise fills heaven all about Earth echoes the exultant shout, And groaning hell is put to rout | Heaven, shout, light |
| The First Station—Earthquake | Matthew 28:2-4 | The Risen Christ in Glory Bright Has banished death's eternal night, And having harrowed hell with might Brings forth the sleeping saints to light | Earthquake, Angel, stone, guards, heaven |
| The Second Station—At the Tomb | Mark 16:1-8 | Entombed within the stone of late, Securely sealed, where soldiers wait, Now shining in triumphant state, Christ rises victor from death's gate. | Spices, stone, man in white, silence, Do not be afraid |
| The Third Station—Peter and Beloved Disciple go to the Tomb | John 20:2-10 | The light dawns now, the shadows clear, And yet their hearts are held in fear. The empty tomb before them lies, And still they mourn their Lord so dear. | Linen wrappings, cloth at Jesus' head |
| The Fourth Station—Mary Magdalene Encounters the Risen Lord | John 20:11-18 I have seen the Lord | Hells chains are loosed and demons fled; Captivity is captive led; The angel crowned with light has said, That Christ is risen from the dead. | Weeping, angels, gardener |
| The Fifth Station—On the Road to Emmaus | Luke 24:13-25 | Along the road the stranger came Who asked and listen'd to them mourn, And hope and calm were soon reborn, The Scripture's witness he did claim. | They do not see (blind?), Scripture |

| | | | |
|--|------------------|--|---|
| The Sixth Station—In the Breaking of the Bread | Luke 24:28-32 | O Risen Lord, be with us still And open thou our blinded eyes. Break thou the bread, our hearts to fill That joy throughout the world may rise. | Table, bread, blessed, eyes opened/see, hearts |
| The Seventh Station—The Upper Room | John 20:19-23 | That night the Lord among them stood, Who bore our sins upon the Rood, “peace be with you,” he spoke the word; and so their hearts with joy were stirred. | Doors, locked, peace, |
| The Eighth Station—Thomas | John 20:24-29 | How great a love was yours to take Our human woes for humans’ sake, And pangs and cruel death to bear To ransom us from death’s despair. | Mark, nails, touch, see/believe |
| The Ninth Station—Jesus Appears by the Sea | John 21:1-14 | Eternal Christ, let praises ring, Salvation through your blood we sing By you the death of death was wrought And grace to human life was brought. | Sea, boat, fishing, net, see |
| The Tenth Station—Jesus and Peter | John 21:15-17 | To you the whole creation now Must in its ordered nature bow: All things on earth, in sky and sea, And to the farthest galaxy. | Love, feed, lambs/sheep |
| The Eleventh Station—Jesus commissions the disciples | Matthew 28:16-20 | And now th’ eleven stand once more, Upon the Mountain of the Lord. He sends them forth to bear his word, That through the world his grace be poured. | Mountain, saw, worshipped, baptizing, |
| The Twelfth Station—The Ascension | Acts 1:6-11 | Jesus, the king of gentleness, Do thou thyself our hearts possess That we may give thee all our days The tribute of our grateful praise. | Cloud, sight, men in white robes |
| The Thirteenth Station—The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Disciples Remain in Prayer | Acts 1:12-14 | Joy filled the blessed mother’s heart When she beheld her risen son And with th’ disciples she remained In prayer and fellowship divine. | Prayer, upstairs room |
| The Fourteenth Station—Pentecost | Acts 2:1-14 | O come, Creator Spirit, come And make within our souls your home. Come with your grace and heavenly aid To fill the hearts which you have made. | Heaven, wind, fire, languages |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | <p>So make our great Creator known, Teach us the' eternal Christ to own, While we with all the Saints above, Acknowledge you, the bond of love.</p> <p>O Lord of all, with us abide In this our joyful Eastertide; From every weapon death can wield Thine own redeemed forever shield.</p> <p>All praise be Thine, O risen Lord, From death to endless life restored; All praise to God the Father be And Holy Ghost eternally. Amen.</p> | |
|--|--|--|--|

Printout for Stations of the Cross (send home with participants)

Interactive Stations of the Cross

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to death on a cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of the resurrection; who lives and reigns now and forever. Amen.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

| Station | | Symbol |
|------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Station 1 | Jesus is condemned to death | Burlap bags |
| Station 2 | Jesus takes up his cross | Olive wood crosses |
| Station 3 | Jesus falls for the first time | |
| Station 4 | Jesus meets his afflicted mother | “Sword” |
| Station 5 | The cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene | |
| Station 6 | A woman wipes the face of Jesus | White cloth |
| Station 7 | Jesus falls a second time | |
| Station 8 | Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem | Vial of water |
| Station 9 | Jesus falls a third time | |
| Station 10 | Jesus is stripped of his garments | Vinegar on a sponge |
| Station 11 | Jesus is nailed to the cross | Nail |
| Station 12 | Jesus dies on the cross | Icon of the crucifixion |
| Station 13 | The body of Jesus is placed in the arms of his mother | Shape of the cross in fragrant oil |
| Station 14 | Jesus is laid in the tomb | Rock |

Interactive Stations of the Cross

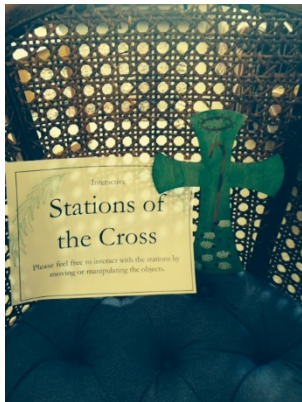
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Set up Instructions for Holy Week Stations

- Re-adjust stations after each wave of people (use this visual as a guide)
- Assure parents that children can touch the items
- Unwrap peg people (once they are all wrapped up and placed in the tomb)
- Refill oil or colorful cardstock when it is full



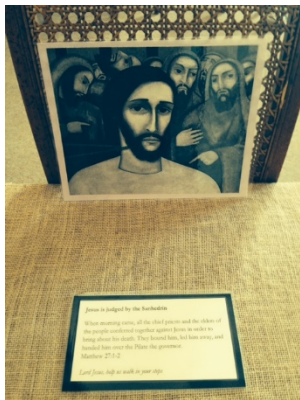
Entrance



Jesus Prays in the Garden
Garden and silk flowers



Jesus is arrested and betrayed
30 Gold coins in a basket,
Chain



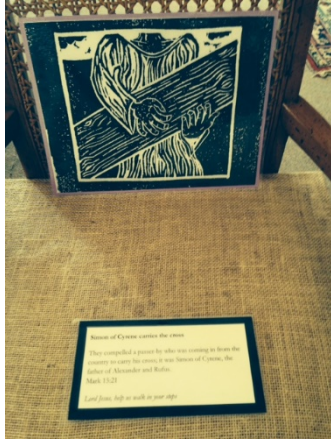
Jesus is judged by the
Sanhedrin



Jesus is Scourged and mocked
Purple cloth, Crown of thorns



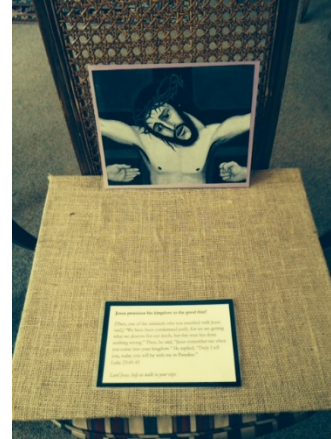
Jesus carries his cross
Ornamental cross



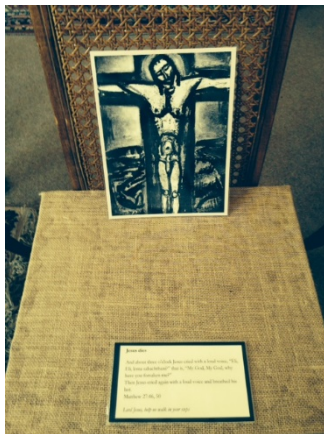
Simon of Cyrene carries Jesus' cross



Jesus is nailed to the cross
Nails, ornamental cross



Jesus promises his kingdom to the good thief



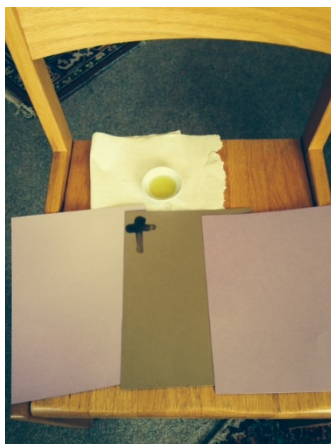
Jesus dies
crucifixion icon



Jesus is buried
Peg people, Strips of cloth, rocks



tomb, rocks
Place a wrapped up peg person at the entrance of the tomb



dish of oil, paper towel
cardstock
Participants make the sign of the cross in oil on one of the papers