

Stations of the Cross at home for young families

This material has been taken from Wintershall Stations of the Cross workshops for schools, and adapted for use by young families at home. It is suitable for pre-school and primary aged children upwards, and uses a variety of pictures, sensory objects and actions to engage with the story of Jesus' last journey to the Cross. It can be completed in one day, or used as a reflection per day during Lent and Easter.

PREPARATION

Read through the material

Download the pdf on your tablet or phone. You could print them out but this is not essential.

At each of the 14 'stations' or stopping points, there is:

- A **picture** to look at and wonder about together – you will find the 'Wintershall' pictures here, but there are many other images on the internet about this story. For example [here](#)
- A link to the **story** in the **bible**, and a short reflection
- An **object** or action to complete
- A short **prayer** or thought

Gather the objects needed for each station

Place these in a basket, box or bag ready to find. You will need:

One 'tear' shape drawing, or sequin per person	Rosary beads	Colouring Pens and paper
A clean tissue or handkerchief	A sticking plaster	A piece of rope or string
A nail/or pin	A 'clove' or other 'spice' jar	A bandage or strip of white cloth
A scrap/ piece of cloth (e.g. an old piece of clothing)	A large stone, pebble or rock (or card circle)	A small stick, pebble, gravel (something you might fall over on)



Create a special space

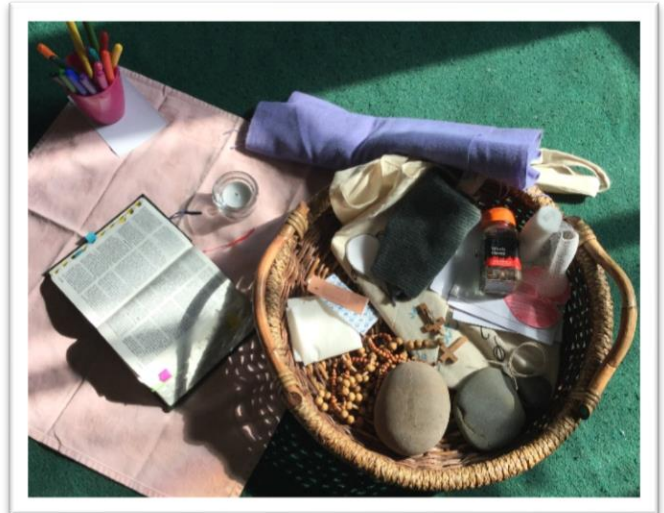
Decide where and when you are going to do The Way of the Cross, sitting comfortably together – inside, or outside if it's fine weather.

Gather some materials to create a special space in your home. Place an open Bible on a cloth (or scarf), with a candle, or an electric candle, or a small table lamp. **The little display** could be set up in the centre of your circle, on a table if you are sitting around one, or on the ground if you are in a circle on cushions.

You may prefer to 'walk' the stations round your home, or outside if you have a garden space, choosing where to stop. Between each 'station' you could walk round in a circle singing a song.

ON THE DAY

- Set up the central display: cloth/bible/light (or pictures of these)
- Have the box, basket or **bag of 'objects'** for each Station ready
- You know your family and who is confident about **reading**. Take it in turns, if that works best.
- Have the **pdf and pictures** ready to show, on your tablet, phone, or laptop, or printed out.
- Remember, as 'leader' allow time to **wonder about each picture**. This is the time to talk and to question. There is never just one 'answer' or response!
- If you are going to sing, have the music ready to play



WORDS OF INTRODUCTION – to be read by the 'leader'

- Ever since the first Easter, people have wanted to make special journeys to the Holy Land where Jesus was born and lived his life, and they especially wanted to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in Jerusalem, as he made his way to the Cross. But most people couldn't make that long and difficult journey all the way to Jerusalem! So, they made paintings and carvings in stone and wood, and set up a 'Way of the Cross', in their Church buildings, and in special places, at home in their own countries.
- Today, we are going to make this same journey, a Way of the Cross, with Jesus and one another, here in our home! Journeys are full of surprises! We can discover new things about places, people and times. We will have 'Stations' or 'stopping points' to help us follow Jesus on his way to the Cross. We will use pictures, objects, actions, and words from the bible stories.
- We will be looking at pictures from a place called Wintershall. It is a big 'farm' in Surrey, where the Stations of the Cross have been made by many different artists and are placed in the fields and lanes leading up a big hill. It's very beautiful there. But here at home we can 'walk' through these stations too, sitting in our home or garden (if you have one), or walking round the room or outside space if we want to. We could sing while we do that.
- We are going to gather lots of different objects which will help us tell the story.
- Some parts of the Way of the Cross may disturb or confuse us, but that's OK – we are together, looking after each other, listening and watching with Jesus. And we will come away from this journey seeing things a little differently.
- You may have heard this story about how Jesus died many times before. But come to it afresh today, and hear it as if for the first time. Let this time together speak to us, and change us a little bit. Let the words travel across time and space from the time of Jesus. Let Jesus and his Word in the Bible be present with us now, telling us about our times in the 21st Century and our lives together here in our home and family.
- Let's be open, and allow our love for each other and for God to grow even deeper and stronger.

SO, IF YOU ARE READY.....LET'S BEGIN!

Station 1

I wonder
what
this
station
is?

Pass the image
around, or show
it to everyone



I wonder.....

I wonder what is
happening?

I wonder what
Jesus is
thinking?

I wonder where
his hands are?

The Bible - Jesus is arrested

Invite someone to read. Taken from the Gospel of St John (chapters 18 – 19) or Matthew (chapters 26-27)

Police and soldiers with clubs and swords come to the garden where he is praying. Jesus is arrested and taken prisoner. His friends are frightened and run away. The soldiers take him to three different places where the authorities accuse him of many bad things he has not said or done. Jesus speaks the truth to them, saying who he is and why he has come. Then he is silent, facing his accusers. The soldiers make fun of him; they hit him, spit at him, and shout at him, and push a crown of thorns onto his head.

The object

Ask a child or adult to find the PIECE OF STRING in the bag or basket.
Pass it round, having a good look at it. This reminds us of the rope that tied Jesus's hands together as the soldiers led him away.



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, I sometimes get defensive when I know I have done something wrong. But you had done nothing wrong. You spoke the truth, and then you were silent. You stand beside all those people who feel alone and defenceless when others don't listen and judge them unfairly. Help me to tell the truth, and to be honest and brave.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 2

I wonder what this station is?

Pass the image around, or show it to everyone



I wonder.....

I wonder
what is
happening?

I wonder how
heavy the
cross was?

The Bible - Jesus is given his cross

Invite someone to read

The cross is laid across Jesus's back for him to carry. It is so big and heavy. It is very hard for Jesus to carry, and he is exhausted. But He does not cry out or complain.

The object

Ask a child or adult to find the small stone or pebble. Pass it round, having a good look at it. Feel how hard it is.

Activity: Leader now invites one child (or if everyone has a stone, everyone) to mark out a CROSS on one side of the stone using a sharpie or black felt pen or marker.

I wonder what this stone reminds us of We will now carry this stone with us as we follow Jesus on the Way of the Cross



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, sometimes I have to do hard or difficult things at school or at home. Sometimes difficult things happen in my life which make me angry or sad – they feel very 'heavy' to carry.

Please help me to carry the difficult things I have to do or accept in my life.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 3

I wonder what this station is?

Pass the image around, or show it to everyone



I wonder.....

I wonder what is happening?

I wonder what Jesus can see?

The Bible - Jesus falls for the first time

Invite someone to read

Jesus is already badly hurt, and he falls for the first time under the weight of the heavy cross. It is so painful for Jesus as he falls. He struggles, and gets up, and he moves slowly forward along the way

The object or action

Together, think about what it is like to fall over, in the playground or at work. When did you last fall over? How did it feel? Was anyone there to help you? If in your garden, or outside, look around and see what you might fall on. You could pick this up and add it to your basket.

When we have something really difficult to do, and can't do it, we can feel like giving up. We can't go on! But because God is always with us, then nothing can defeat us.



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, you are with us in times of suffering and help us when we feel weak. Thank you that nothing in the whole world can separate us from your love.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 4

I wonder
what
this
station
is?

Pass the image
around



I wonder.....

I wonder who is
in the picture?

I wonder how
they felt?

The Bible - Jesus meets his mother

In our traditional stations of the cross, Jesus meets his mother on the way. This story of a meeting on the way of the cross is not in the Bible. But it is recorded that Mary was standing at the foot of the cross when Jesus dies.

Invite someone to read

Jesus sees his mother standing at the side of the road, full of sadness as she watches him suffer so much. Mary has loved Jesus from the moment she knew he was going to be born. Out of her great love, Mary is there to comfort and encourage Jesus – she will not abandon him, she will not leave him. Jesus takes courage through his dear mother continuing to be there for him.

The object

Think about your own parent or carer. How do they react when you are hurt?

(NB: Leader, you will know the circumstances of those gathered - if there are painful or broken relationships in the family, or you yourself have not had a good relationship with your mother or father, adapt the 'lead' words to reflect this.)

Ask a child or adult to find the rosary beads. Pass them round, having a good look at them..... These are special beads, to tell the story of Jesus through the eyes of his mother Mary – and Jesus says Mary is our heavenly mother too. Whatever our experience of being a child or a parent, Mary is there for us too, to wipe away our tears in times of difficulty and challenge.



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, thank you for all the good and loving parents in the world. We pray for all children who do not have happy safe homes, and ask your Mother Mary to pray for all of us.

Invite everyone to say together the special prayer asking for Mary's help: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 5

I wonder
what
this
station
is?

Pass the image
around, or show
it to everyone



I wonder.....

I wonder what you
can see?

I wonder how the
cross is being held
up?

I wonder how
heavy this cross is?

The Bible – Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross

The story is a reflection on the *Gospel of St Mark, 15:21*

Invite someone to read

Simon of Cyrene is a visitor coming in from the country to Jerusalem. He hasn't come to help Jesus, but is curious to see what is going on in this noisy crowd. Suddenly Simon is grabbed by the soldiers, and made to carry Jesus's cross – they could see Jesus wasn't going to make it if he had to carry it alone.

The action

How can we help others, like Simon helps Jesus? Who needs our help? How about in our family this week as we spend more time together than usual? As we say a prayer at this station, let's hold hands, to remind us of the power and strength we have in our hands to help others



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, help us to see who is in pain and to offer our help whenever we can.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 6

I wonder what this station is?



I wonder.....

I wonder whose face this is?

I wonder how it came to be on this cloth?

The Bible – Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Invite someone to read

This story about Veronica is *not* in the bible, but it is in our tradition that Veronica was perhaps a disciple of Jesus, a woman in the crowd, and today she waits for him at the side of the road as he makes his way carrying his cross to Golgotha, the place where he will die. She steps out to wipe away the sweat and dirt from his face and eyes. She risks getting into big trouble from the soldiers and other people in the crowd shouting at Jesus. Her kindness and courage overcome her fear.

The object

Ask a child or adult to find the tissue or handkerchief. Pass it round, having a good look at it. This could remind us of Veronica's kindness and bravery. I wonder how we can show kindness to one another?



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, help us as a family to be aware, and to be brave and show kindness whenever we can.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 7

I wonder what this station is?



I Wonder.....

I wonder what is happening?

I wonder what Jesus can see?

The Bible - Jesus falls for the second time

Invite someone to read the story in our tradition

Jesus falling down under the weight of the cross is not recorded in the Bible – but in our tradition, we include the story that he fell down three times. This gives us three opportunities to think about his suffering as he carries the cross.

Jesus falls again – he is so tired, and weakened by his wounds from being beaten by the soldiers. He struggles up again and continues on the way.

The object

Ask a child or adult to find the plaster. What does this remind you of?

This is a little 'symbol' or reminder that with Jesus's help, whatever happens in our lives, we have the strength to carry on, and in the end to be healed. Pass it round, have a good look at it.



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, help us to trust in you as you guide us on our way. You stand beside us and guard us, when we stumble and fall. May we have your strength to persevere and carry on when things get tough, knowing that nothing can separate us from your love.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 8

I wonder what this station is?



I wonder.....

I wonder what is happening?

I wonder how these women feel?

The Bible - Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

From the Gospel of St Luke, 23:28

Invite someone to read

Many people are against Jesus. They see him as a troublemaker. But many people follow him, and a great number of these are on the way of the cross, following Jesus on his last journey towards death. The women of Jerusalem meet him now – they are in tears, crying for Jesus.

The object

Ask a child or adult to find the tear drop card, or pieces of card on which to draw tear drops. Take a few minutes to draw your tear drops. When you have finished, have a good look at it. I wonder when you last cried? I wonder what tears remind us of?



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, when we see someone in our family or a friend who is going through a hard time, we feel sad. Help us to be faithful, loving and kind, ready to listen and comfort – we pray for a world where no-one will feel alone.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World

Station 9

I wonder what this station is?



I wonder.....

I wonder what is happening?

I wonder what Jesus can see?

The Bible - Jesus falls for the third time

Invite someone to read

Remember, Jesus falling down under the weight of the cross is not recorded in the Bible – but in our tradition, we include the story that he fell down three times. This is the third time. Earlier in the Gospel, Jesus says ‘Come to me, all you who are tired and have heavy loads to carry in your hearts, and I will give you rest.

The action

I invite you to kneel down now, and bowing forward, stretch out your arms in front, placing your head gently on the ground between them. Feel how heavy your head is as you listen to the prayer.



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, I sometimes get defensive when I know I have done something wrong. But you had done nothing wrong. You spoke the truth, and then you were silent. You stand beside all those people who feel alone and defenceless when others don't listen and judge them unfairly. Help me to tell the truth, and to be honest and brave.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 10

I wonder
what
this
station
is?



I Wonder.....

I wonder what is
happening?

I wonder what
the soldiers are
taking from
Jesus?

The Bible – Jesus' clothes are taken away

Based around the stories in all four gospels, it was the practice to strip those who were to be executed. The Gospels describe the soldiers dividing the clothes of Jesus amongst themselves, and throwing dice for the fine woven undershirt because they don't want to tear it.

Invite someone to read

To be without clothes, naked, in front of everyone is embarrassing. When the guards take Jesus's clothes, he probably feels very alone, helpless and humiliated. But deep down he knows in his heart, that whatever happens, his Father in heaven loves him and loves everyone who ever lived, everyone now, and everyone who is to come. Jesus's suffering and death is not the end – it is part of the story, towards a new beginning for everyone.

The object

Ask a child or adult to find the scrap of cloth/old piece of clothing. This is a symbol to remind us how the soldiers took everything from Jesus, leaving him naked. His prayer for everyone was 'Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing'.

Pass it round, having a good look at it.



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, you tell us not to be frightened, because you go in front of us, always. Thank you for showing us how to be courageous and strong. Thank you for showing us how to forgive, and how powerful it is to forgive one another. Help us to forgive all the little and the big things that people have done that hurt us, in our minds and our hearts. We know there is nothing we can't forgive, because your strength is at work in us!

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 11

I wonder
what this
station
is?



I Wonder.....

I wonder what is
happening?

I wonder who the
three people are?

The Bible - Jesus is nailed to the cross

Invite someone to read

The soldiers hammer the nails through Jesus's hands and feet. They lift up the cross and put it in place. They nail a sign to the top 'This is the King of the Jews'. Jesus is in a lot of pain.

The object

Ask a child or adult to find the nail. This is a *tiny* nail – a symbol of the large nails used to nail Jesus to the cross. Pass it round, having a good look at it. This reminds us of I wonder....

Do you know someone who is sad or in a lot of pain today?

Think of a time when you have been in pain. Who or what helped you?



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, please comfort everyone who is anxious and in pain today. Hold their hands, and give them courage. Let your light come in and push away the darkness, bringing them some peace.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 12

I wonder
what
this
station
is?



I wonder.....

I wonder what
has happened?

Jesus has died

The Bible - Jesus dies

Invite someone to read

From the cross, Jesus asks his beloved friend John to look after his mother Mary, and Mary to see John as her son. For three hours, there is darkness over the whole land. In the last moments, Jesus cries out from the cross to his Father God in heaven: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" and "It is finished," and with these words, he gives up his very last breath and dies. The light from the sun is gone, the sky is black, and the ground starts to shake. A soldier sees it all, and says 'Surely, this man is innocent'. When the crowd see that Jesus is dead, they go home extremely sad. Jesus's friends, including all the women who follow him, are standing watching from a distance.

The object

Take a piece of card and draw a heart on it. Have a good look at it.
This reminds us of

I wonder why we have a heart as a symbol at this station?



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, thank you for your great love for everyone. May the world around us be full of your love, in the little kind things we do and say that can make a big difference.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 13

I wonder
what
this
station
is?



I wonder.....

I wonder what is
happening?

I wonder who
the people are?

The Bible – Jesus' body is taken from the cross

From Luke 23:50-54. *Invite someone to read*

You can find lots of pictures of this moment of sadness, when the body of Jesus is taken down from the cross – particularly pictures, where Jesus is laid in the arms of his mother Mary. We call this image 'pieta'.

A man named Joseph, from Arimathea, goes to Pilate and asks for the body of Jesus. (Joseph is a good man, and he has been expecting the Messiah. He recognises Jesus as coming from God. He did not agree with those who wanted to kill Jesus as a troublemaker.) Joseph has permission to take down Jesus's body from the cross. He wants to make sure the body is prepared properly. Joseph will bury Jesus in his own tomb.

The object

Ask a child or adult to find the jar of cloves. Open the lid, take a few out, smell them.

In those days, when Jesus died, special smelling spices and herbs were used to rub onto the dead body, as a sign of care and tenderness, giving dignity to the body, and making it ready for burial.

Pass the cloves round, having a good look at them, smelling them. This reminds us of I wonder....



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, we pray for everyone who is looking after sick people, giving them all the dignity and respect, they deserve. For anyone who is dying, lead them to the joy of your kingdom in heaven.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 14

I wonder what this station is?



I Wonder.....

I wonder what is happening?

I wonder what Jesus' friends are thinking?

The Bible – Jesus' body is laid in the tomb

Invite someone to read

It's late on Friday afternoon, and Jesus's body is wrapped carefully in a long linen cloth, and is placed in a new, unused tomb, like a cave, cut out of rock on the side of a hill in a garden. His friends roll an enormous stone over the entrance to the tomb. They then leave quickly to go and prepare for the Saturday Sabbath, and grieve together. Some women from Galilee are watching – they go home to prepare spices and plan to return after the Sabbath. When the body of Jesus goes into the tomb of sadness that first Good Friday, it becomes the place where the really good news will be told after three days! I wonder what will happen next?

The object

Ask a child or adult to find the white bandage or strip of white cloth. Pass it round, and take it in turns to wrap the bandage round a finger... and to remember the friends of Jesus caring for his body, and wrapping it carefully to place it in the tomb. This reminds us of I wonder....



Prayer or thought

Dear Jesus, help us to remember that even during the most difficult and sad times, with you there is always hope. You died on the cross of love, loving everyone, and making a life of love after death possible for us all. In difficult, sad, deadly situations, you bring new life. And finally, when people die, we know that life is changed not ended – at the end of our lives, the sadness of death moves away and we enter an everlasting home in heaven.

Response for everyone to repeat after the leader:

Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection – you set us free. Save us, Saviour of the World.

Station 15

I wonder what happens next?



The Bible - **Jesus has risen from the dead!** You may like to leave this station until Easter Sunday morning. *Invite someone to read, adapted from the Gospel of Luke*

It's very early on Sunday morning, and it is still dark. The women have gone to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They find the great stone at the entrance has been rolled away! They are very surprised and a bit worried and wondering what to do. Suddenly, two angels in dazzling clothes are standing beside them. The women are frightened and bow their faces to the ground. The bright angels say, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead. He is not here, but has risen! Just as he told you he would. And they run off to tell the rest of the apostles: Jesus is no longer dead, he is alive!

The object

Close your eyes for a moment, and think of a time when you have felt at your most happy, your most joyful. I wonder how it feels to remember that moment? Now, do you remember the stone that you drew a cross on at the start of our journey? Find that stone now, and feel its weight. How does it feel to you?

You can now decorate the other side of your stone. Draw a picture or pattern using bright colours – something that reminds you of this feeling of happiness.



Prayer or thought

Dear Lord, for the helping hands, for the listening ears, for the gentle touch, for the kind words, for goodness in the world, thank you! Bless our hands that lift and carry, wash and soothe. Give us your healing touch. May we be gentle as we live together and help one another. May your victory over death on the cross give us hope and strength. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. AMEN

Final Reflection

I **Wonder** what you enjoyed most about our Way of the Cross at home?

I **Wonder** if you can remember what parts of the story we have collected in our basket/bag?

Have a look at your stone again. The cross on one side of your stone is sad, but Easter on the other side is pure celebration. Can you split your stone in half? Can you separate the sadness from the joy?

Jesus died on the cross but we know this is not the end of the story. After three days He rose from the dead and He promises to be with us always. It is a wonderful mystery. The Easter story is really Good News – it is full of joy!



This resource, for use in homes, has been adapted from Wintershall Education Lent workshops for schools and prepared by:

Lucy Hall, Education Officer, Wintershall CIO

Caroline Dollard, Marriage and Family Life Adviser, Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales

Text inspired by Word Among Us reflections, adaptations by Jane Whittington, Diocese of Guildford, and the Wintershall Education working group.

With thanks to Mrs Hutley and the Wintershall family, Photographer Jo Pomeroy, and all the children and families who have walked the Wintershall Stations of the Cross with us over the years.

If you have enjoyed using this resource, we would love to know about it!

Please share any images of your own family Stations of the Cross Twitter Facebook Instagram or email to education@wintershall-education.com