

The Stations of the Cross for Teens

The First Station: Jesus is Condemned to death

There you stand before the crowd after being beaten. You never deny yourself, yet humbly accept the punishment given to you by those who had witnessed your miracles. It's easy to look at this scene now and think, 'How could they have accused you and condemned you to death? All you did was love every person you met.' Yet they are not alone in their condemnation of you.

Pause

How often do I ignore you at school in the person no one wants to talk to? How often do my words condemn you in the way that I speak about others? It was not only the Jews and Pontius Pilate who condemned you, but I stand next to them shouting just as loud, 'Crucify Him!'

Pause

Jesus, forgive me for the ways in which I condemn and pierce others with my words and actions. Help me to love like you and to learn from your example.

The Second Station: Jesus carries the Cross

By now you have endured a sleepless night, betrayal by your friends, and a beating that is too horrible to fully imagine. You've been whipped, stripped, and spit on by countless faces, some of whom last week treated you as royalty as you entered the city. And now, they hand you a cross to carry. The weight of it is far more than any number of pounds we can figure. For in carrying the cross, you carry the weight of our sins.

Pause

How often do I forget that you have carried the load for me? How often do I try to carry things on my own, not allowing you to help me? It was not only the sins of the world that you carried; it was my sin, my selfishness, my pride, my anger. Each added more weight to the load. And it was not only my sin you carried but also my burdens, my worries, my fears, my sadness, my insecurities. Each you carried step by step up towards Golgotha, the place of the Skull.

Pause

Jesus, help me not to forget the load that you carried for me. Give me the strength and the courage to let go of those things that separate me from you.

The Third Station: Jesus Falls for the First time

As you walk through the narrow streets, every movement, every jolt burns and reopens your wounds. The pain along with the weight of the cross becomes too much and you fall. In boxing, when a fighter falls and is too beaten to continue, the fight is stopped by the referee. Yet, there is no one there to stop the battle that you fight for us. Even though you know what still lies ahead, you do not stop and somehow find the strength to continue.

Pause

How many times have I fallen in my walk? Too many to count, I'm sure. So many times when I fall I don't feel like getting back up and trying again. There are too many temptations that I am faced with that feel too fun and easy to do because so many around me are doing them.

Pause

Jesus, help me to remember your courage and perseverance when you fell. Give me the courage to get back up when I fall. Help me remember that it is worth it to live as you lived.

The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

Amid all the shouts and jeers from the crowd that move like a wave in your mind as you struggle to remain conscious, one voice stands out. At first it is so faint that you wonder if it is real, but then as your eyes meet and you see her face you are not surprised that she is there for you. She has always been there for you. Her 'Yes' to the Father has been a light in the darkness. And now, here in your darkest hour, she is there.

Pause

There are so many times when I feel alone in my struggles. It seems that no one understands what I am going through, especially my parents; but I realize they must. How many times have I hidden things from my parents out of fear of what they would say, or what trouble I would be in when all they want is to love me?

Pause

Jesus, help me to remember that I am never alone in my struggles. Help me to see my parents as you saw yours. Help me know their love for me and when things are hard between us, help me to remember the light of your Mother in my life.

The Fifth Station: Simon helps Jesus carry his Cross

The soldiers who had beaten you all day had what appears to be a moment of compassion. Yet instead, their selfish motives override their opportunity for charity. They only want to follow their orders to get you up to the place where you will be crucified. How beaten you look that they decide to grab Simon a Cyrenian out of the crowd to help you carry the cross. He follows behind you, walking in your steps, helping you move forward. You press on, knowing that the worst is yet to come.

Pause

How often do I pass up an opportunity to help someone in need? Do I let what others may think of me stop me from reaching out?

Pause

Jesus, open my ears to hear the ways that you call me to serve. Help me follow Simon's example of helping others. Help me to know what it means to be a true and faithful servant.

Pause

The Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

By now the thorns cut so deeply into your head that even seeing where you should step next is almost impossible. Up to this point all who approach you, other than your mother, either shout at you or spit in your face. As Veronica approaches, she walks differently than the others. As she reaches out her hands and wipes your face with her cloth, suddenly her face of compassion becomes clear. No words are necessary, both your eyes say it all. For in that moment, your dignity as a man is restored.

Pause

How many times have I forgotten that each person is made in your image and likeness and therefore deserves my respect? Do I make others objects of my pleasure and ignore their humanity? Veronica courageously stepped forward and dared to treat you differently than everyone else. Could I do the same?

Pause

Jesus, help me to see your presence in others. Give me the courage to follow Veronica's example of treating others with love even when no one else does.

The Seventh Station: Jesus falls the second time.

The soldiers are enraged at you for falling this time. They can't understand how Simon's help is not enough. In their anger they hit you again and again before they remember that you have to be alive to be crucified. The beating stops, but the shouts and taunts become louder and harsher. At this moment you can stop this! You are the Messiah and have the power to reveal yourself to everyone there. But you know that it would not fulfill all that is written about you. You know that you must be faithful to all of the Father's promises to His people. Remembering your love and your faithfulness you get up, and now with your wounds full of dirt and each step embedding it deeper, you keep going.

Pause

How many times have I failed to follow through on my promises? Or worse yet, how often have I lied even to people I care about? Do I remember your faithfulness even when I fail?

Pause

Jesus, help me to believe in your faithfulness and love for me. Give me the grace to follow through on my word to others. Help me to be a person of integrity.

The Eighth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.

Their wailing sounds like a funeral. They cry and weep as if you are already dead. While air still passes through your lungs and your heart still beats, to them, you are dead. They know you are on your way to be crucified and because of the beating you have endured you already look like you should not be breathing at all. Yet in this moment consumed by death, you speak words of life and say, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me.'

Pause

Do I listen to your words in my life? How often have the things I've watched or listened led me away from you? Have I allowed the gospel of Life to reign in my heart?

Pause

Jesus, help me to listen to your words of life. Show me ways that I can put you first.

The Ninth Station: Jesus falls for the third time.

Again you fall, this time from sheer exhaustion. Only your will presses you forward while your body refuses. How difficult it must be to be you, fully God and fully man. God knows that this has to be finished and that it is not yet complete. Man feels the excruciating pain and every bone in your body wants to stop right here and move no further. Somehow both join together and you muster the strength to get up. You vow to not fall again because now you can see the place they are leading you to. You know the end is close and so you press on.

Pause

How many times have I let my flesh win over my spirit? How often have I chosen to sin rather than to follow your way? Was it my sin that became too heavy that you fell this third time?

Pause

Jesus, help me to follow your ways. Help me remember your victory over my sin. Give me the grace to recognize when I sin and the desire to sin no more.

The Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments.

In some ways to get to this point is a relief because you know this is almost over. In other ways it is terrifying because you know the worst pain possible for man to endure is still waiting for you. By now your bloodied cuts have dried into your garments, because of this they act as a layer of skin for you since so little of your own remains. As the soldiers strip you bear it is not the nakedness that is painful but rather the vicious tearing of your skin. The cuts that had closed, now reopen and once again a river of blood runs all over your body. You are stripped of your dignity as a man, for even animals are given a swifter, less painful death.

Pause

How often have I judged others by the way they look or what they are wearing? Do I find my own self-worth and self-identity by the clothes I wear or the way I look?

Pause

Jesus, help me to look past the outside of others. Help me not to judge them by how they look or what they wear. Help me to find my self worth and identity in you.

The Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the cross.

Lying down on wood is not foreign to you. The first place you were laid when you came into this world was a wooden manger. There you were laid in love and now it is out of love that you lay here on this wooden cross. The soldiers pull your right arm out beside you and then horrific pain flows through your entire body. The nail pierces not only your hand but also your whole body. The soldier pounds it in, only stopping to wipe your blood off his own face. Again the nail is driven into your other hand and the pain jolts your entire body. Pain shoots up your legs as they nail your feet.

Pause

In reflection, I am angered by the soldiers. I can't understand why they are doing this to you and yet what is hardest to realize is that not only am I in the crowd watching all of this, but I'm also one of them nailing you to the cross. How many times has my sin become a strike of the nail into your body? How often do I turn away from your mercy?

Pause

Jesus, I'm sorry for nailing you to the cross with my own sin. Help me to seek your forgiveness and mercy for the times that I sin.

The Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the Cross.

Above your head is the inscription, 'King of the Jews'. As you use every last ounce of life left in you to lift your body so that you can speak, you do not look the part. Yet, every word out of your mouth is one of love, truly from another kingdom. The faces of all humanity must flash before your eyes as one by one you recount whom you are doing this for. And finally you say, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit...it is finished.' You breathe your last and it looks as though this is the end.

Long Pause

Jesus, help me never forget your love for me. Help me to know that you died for me. Fill me with comfort in knowing that I never suffer anything you don't understand.

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken down from the Cross.

The first arms that held you in this world are also the last. Your mother was told a sword would pierce her heart the day she presented you as an infant to the Father. Now as she holds your body that is mangled beyond recognition she sees not only the man she now holds, but also the child she held and her heart is pierced. Your comfort to her will come but in this moment she has only the Father to be with her in her sorrow and pain. All hope seems gone.

Pause

How many times have I lost hope in you? How often have I doubted your ability to be God in my life over all things?

Pause

Jesus, help me to trust in you. Help me to place all of my hope in you and give me peace in knowing that you are Lord over all things.

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is placed in the tomb.

You are laid to rest by Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, Mary your mother and a few other women. As your body is anointed, Mary Magdalene remembers your eyes penetrating her heart. Tears stream down her face along with the others there as they too remember your love. They wrap your body in clean linens and lay it in a new tomb. The stone is rolled over the entrance and now it surely is the end. Up to this point, death is final. While those you have lived with, laughed with and cried with are in their heightened sorrow believing all is over, you are conquering sin and death.

Pause

How many times has death felt like the end? When I've lost a loved one it can be so hard to remember your victory. How often do I miss the opportunities to say, "I love you" to those special people in my life? Do my family and friends know how I feel about them?

Pause

Jesus, help me always remember that death is not the end. Give me the strength to say the words, 'I love you' to those people in my life that I do love. Help me to love every person not just in words but also with my actions.

Jesus, I love you, I need you, and I trust you.
Amen.