

# STATIONS OF THE CROSS

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## **Preparation:**

*Be sure to educate beforehand to allay fears that such a service might not be Reformed. And to tell people to wear comfortable walking shoes.*

*Designate where each station will be so that you can travel a bit between each station, yet not so much that those with less physical stamina will have trouble keeping up. Consider what place is tomb-like and designate that as the final station. Then work backwards. Where is the place with the cross as a focal point? This would be good for Station Ten or Thirteen. (In fact, you could remain at the cross for Stations 10-13.) Plot your course in careful consideration of space and the physical needs of your community.*

*Assign readers.*

*You may wish to find public domain art work for each station as a focal point.*

*There are suggestions posted here for each station, which you can click on and then assemble to print larger copies for display on heavy photo paper. You could also commission art from your community for each station, thus enabling more contemporary and multi-cultural art than public domain web searches allow.*

*Consider the music. If people are singing the hymns, you will need to print them.*

*Get someone lead music and the procession from one station to another. You may want to print the words to the suggested hymns, have someone or a choir sing them from behind as you travel from one station to the next, or a combination of the above. The music occurs while walking, continuing until everyone is gathered at the next station, with the song leader moving to stand beneath the next station's focal point along with the reader for that station who will join her/him.*



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*After gathering in a common community gathering place, make the following announcements, call to worship, and then travel to the first station:*

Early on in the Christian movement, Jesus' followers remembered Jesus' execution and the places where various parts occurred, recounting the details. By the Middle Ages, pilgrimages to Jerusalem for Holy Week were like the Muslim Haj—a once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage. When people couldn't go to Jerusalem to walk the *via Dolorosa* with Christ, the ritual of the stations of the cross was born so that people could journey with Christ spiritually in their own parish devotion.

We're going to participate in the ancient tradition of remembering Christ's death by doing an ecumenical version. But I have to forewarn you: this worship is not a comfortable journey. For some, the stations of the cross can be an intense spiritual journey where our souls are laid bare before God. For others, we just want it to end because it's too overwhelming so we check out at various places. However you respond wherever you respond is ok. You're not spiritually defective regardless of how this strikes you. So knowing that no one here will judge, just enter into the experience open to the Lord's presence. You may want to return to the stations later to spend more time in contemplation before the Lord.

**CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Come, let us walk with Christ along the way of his cross.

**Where you go, we will follow, Lord.**

**MUSIC**

*Or*

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

Go to Dark Gethsemane (vs. 1)

*2129 STF*

*97PH*

**FIRST STATION: JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE**

Matthew 26:36-41



Cranach, *The Garden of Gethsemane*, 1518

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider** *Where are we asleep when God-with-us is sorrowful unto death?*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

One: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Through your faithfulness, you have redeemed the world.**

**MUSIC** *as travel to next station* Stay with Me

8 Taizé

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**SECOND STATION: JESUS IS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED**

Mark 14: 43-46

While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests, the scribes,

and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely." He came and immediately went over to him and said, "Rabbi." And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him.



Albrecht Dürer,  
*The Betrayal of Christ, 1508*

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider:** *Where in our own lives do we betray the Lord with our kisses?*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

**One:** Through your faithfulness, O Christ, you have redeemed the world.

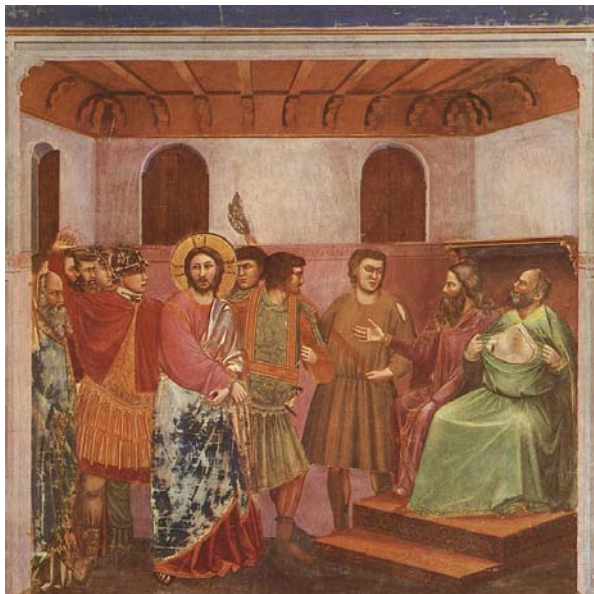
**All:** **We adore you. We bless you.**

**MUSIC**            Go to Dark Gethsemane (vs. 2)

*97 PH*

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**THIRD STATION: JESUS IS CONDEMNED BY THE RELIGIOUS COUNCIL** Luke 22: 66-71



Giotto (1267-1337), *Christ Before Caiphas*

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth."

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider:** *How have we participated in religious groups that condemn God-with us?*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

**One:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** **Through your faithfulness, you have redeemed the world.**

**MUSIC**                            Ah, Holy Jesus (vs. 1)

*93 PH*

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**FOURTH STATION: JESUS IS DENIED BY PETER**

Matthew 26:69-75

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away." At that he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." He went out and began to weep bitterly.



Woodcut for Die Bibel in Bildern, 1860

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider:** *In what ways do I deny Christ?*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

**One:** Through your faithfulness, O Christ, you have redeemed the world.

**All:** We adore you. We bless you.

**MUSIC**

Ah, Holy Jesus (vs. 2)

93 PH

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**FIFTH STATION: JESUS IS JUDGED BY PONTIUS PILATE**

Mark 15: 1-5, 15



One of the Limoges enamel stations of the cross, Church of Notre-Dame-des-Champs, Avranches, Manche, Normandie, France.

The Sanhedrin police bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.... Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas... [and] handed [Jesus] over to be crucified.

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider:** *Where has our desire to appease others hurt Christ's body?*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

**One:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** **Through your faithfulness, you have redeemed the world.**

MUSIC

He Never Said a Mumbalin Word (vs. 1)

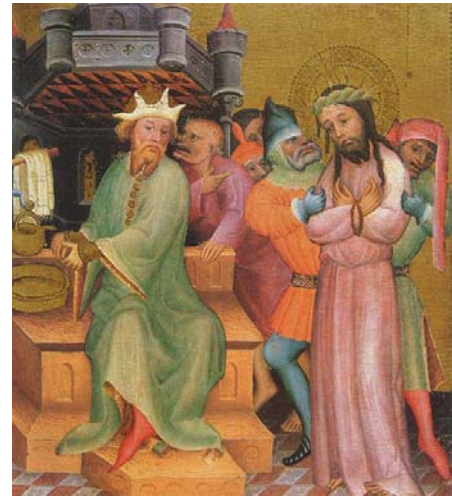
95 PH

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**SIXTH STATION: JESUS IS SCOURGED AND MOCKED**

John 19:1-3

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly.



Meister Bertram, Passionsaltar, Szene: Christus vor Pilatus, 1390

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider:** *How do we participate in groups that beat up the Christ in others?*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

**One:** Through your faithfulness, O Christ, you have redeemed the world.

**All:** **We adore you. We bless you.**

MUSIC

O Sacred Head Now Wounded (vs. 1)

98 PH

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**SEVENTH STATION: JESUS CONDEMNED BY CROWD TO BEAR CROSS** John 19: 6, 15-17



Woodcut for *Die Bibel in Bildern*, 1860

When the chief priests and the guards saw [Jesus] they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." . . . They cried out, "Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus . . . out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider** *where in the world crowds still call for crucifixions of innocents.*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

One: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Through your faithfulness, you have redeemed the world.**

**MUSIC**

Stay with Me

8 Taizé

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**EIGHTH STATION: JESUS IS HELPED BY SIMON OF CYRENE**

Mark 15:21

The Roman police pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.



James Tissot, *Simon the Cyrenian Compelled to Carry the Cross with Jesus*, c. 1890.

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider** *the times you were forced into carrying Christ's cross. Or consider: where have we forced others to carry the cross of Christ?*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

One: Through your faithfulness, O Christ, you have redeemed the world.

**All: We adore you. We bless you.**

**MUSIC**

Jesus Remember Me

599 PH

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**NINTH STATION: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM** Luke 23: 27-31



Church of the Anunciation in Zarnowiec, Poland, *Jesus meets the daughters of Jerusalem*

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.' At that time, people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?"

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider:** *Jesus says his death occurs in a green time. What might life look like when the time is dry, then?*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

**One:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** **Through your faithfulness, you have redeemed the world.**

**MUSIC**

If Thou But Trust in God to Guide Thee (vs. 1)

282 PH

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**TENTH STATION: JESUS IS CRUCIFIED**

Luke 23:33-34

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."



Il Pordenone, *Golgotha*, Cathedral of Cremona, c. 1520.

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider:** *While we were in the act of crucifying and mocking him, Christ begged for our forgiveness.*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

**One:** Through your faithfulness, O Christ, you have redeemed the world.

**All:** **We adore you. We bless you.**

**MUSIC**

[Forgive Them, O My Father](#) (vs. 1, 3)

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**ELEVENTH STATION: JESUS PROMISES HIS KINGDOM**

Luke 23: 39-43

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."



Nicolai Nikolajewitsch Ge,  
*Christ and the Thief*, 1893

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider:** *How do we want Jesus to remember us from his sovereign throne?*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

One: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Through your faithfulness, you have redeemed the world.**

**MUSIC**

Jesus Remember Me

599 PH

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**TWELFTH STATION: JESUS SPEAKS TO MOTHER AND BELOVED DISCIPLE** John 19: 25-27



Theophanes the Cretan, *Crucifixion*, c. 1550

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**Consider** *the kind of family Christ wants us to be.*

**ASCRPTION OF PRAISE**

One: Through your faithfulness, O Christ, you have redeemed the world.



**All: We adore you. We bless you.**

**MUSIC**

Live in Charity

49 Taizé

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**THIRTEENTH STATION: *JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS***

Luke 23: 44-46

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.



Peter Paul Rubens,  
*The Three Crosses*, c. 1625

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**DESCRIPTION OF PRAISE**

One: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All: Through your faithfulness, you have redeemed the world.**

**SILENT TRAVEL**

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**FOURTEENTH STATION: *JESUS IS PLACED IN THE TOMB***

Matthew 27: 57-60



Rembrandt, *Descent from the Cross*, 1634

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it [in] clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed.

**SILENT REFLECTION**

**PRAYER**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
who stretched out your arms of love on the hard  
wood of the cross  
that everyone might come within the reach of  
your saving embrace:  
So clothe us in your Spirit  
that we, reaching forth our hands in love,  
may bring those who live in tombs of darkness

to knowledge and love of your blessed freedom  
won for us through Jesus Christ  
to whom be all honor and glory and dominion now and forevermore.  
for the honor of your name.  
**Amen.**

**MUSIC BY SMALL CHOIR**

O Sacred Head Now Wounded (vs. 2-3)

*98 PH*

**CHARGE**

Matthew 26:41, Joel 2:14

Watch and pray. Who knows but that God may yet relent and leave a blessing  
behind?

**DEPARTURE IN SILENCE**

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*PH The Presbyterian Hymnal*

*STF Sing the Faith*

*Taizé Songs & Prayers from Taizé*