



Remembering the Cross

Stations of the Cross for Children

INTRODUCTION

The Cross Is a Place of Love

Have you seen the 14 crosses with pictures on the walls of your church? We put crosses in all our churches, even though dying on the cross was a hard, sad time for Jesus. We don't remember the cross because of sadness and hard times. We remember the cross because of love: Jesus loves God and God's people. The cross wasn't the end of the story. The love of Jesus was the end of the story. The love of Jesus is always the ending of every hard, sad story. Jesus is with us: God's love is with us. Let's remember the love of Jesus as we walk the way of the cross.

Jesus, let my heart know the love you have for me.



THE FIRST STATION

Jesus Is Condemned to Death

Why do we have laws? Laws are supposed to be fair for all people. Presidents, police officers, and all of us are supposed to obey laws. Pilate was the governor of the place where Jesus lived. The laws said Pilate had to make fair judgments. Instead he made an unfair judgment. Pontius Pilate gave the order for Jesus to die a terrible death on the cross. Jesus did nothing to deserve this judgment, but Jesus never let unfair people or unfair judgments change him. He never stopped loving God and God's people. Whether life is fair or unfair, we can walk with Jesus. We can love God and God's people, too.

Jesus, help me walk with you every day.



THE SECOND STATION

Jesus Takes Up His Cross

A cross is two pieces of wood joined together, but the cross of Jesus is more than just two pieces of wood. His cross is the place where all things come together: God and God's people. Unfair humans and the kindness of God for everyone. Weak human bodies and the strong love of God. Life and death. Jesus took up the cross knowing that by loving God and God's people all the way through this hard, sad death, he would change the world forever. God wants each of us to love God and others, without fear. Because Jesus took up the cross, each of us can love like Jesus did.

Jesus, may your cross be for me a sign of love.



THE THIRD STATION

Jesus Falls the First Time

Sometimes we forget that Jesus was a human being just like us. Just like our mom or dad: just like our brothers or sisters: just like you and me. When he had no food he got hungry. When he worked all day, he got tired. When he stumbled, he fell. The wooden cross was hard and heavy to carry. Jesus fell down and then he chose to get up. He chose to carry the hard, heavy cross because he knew that not even a cross could come between God and him. He knew the love of God would pick him up when he stumbled and fell.

*Jesus, when I have hard days,
help me to know God's love.*



THE FOURTH STATION

Jesus Meets His Mother

Mary was the mother of Jesus. She held him in her arms on the day he was born. She watched him grow. She worried when she did not know where he was. She listened to his teaching, even though she was the mother and he was her son. She told others, "Listen to Jesus. Do whatever he tells you." Mary was there on his sad, hard day. She did not run away. She loved him on the hardest day of his life. God's love is like that. No matter how hard life gets, God loves you. God is with you. God will never leave you.

*Jesus, help me listen to you as Mary listened.
Help me to do what you want every day.*



THE FIFTH STATION

Simon Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

When do you need help from your family? From your friends? Everyone needs help sometimes. The friends of Jesus helped him his whole life long. Some friends gave Jesus food. Some friends found a place for him to sleep. Some friends brought other friends to know him. On the day that Jesus died, a new friend came to his help: Simon. The cross was too heavy for Jesus to carry all by himself, but the soldiers wouldn't let him stop. They made Simon help Jesus. As we walk with Jesus, let us thank God for people who help us. Let us ask God how we can help others.

*Jesus, thank you for making helpers.
Thank you for asking me to help, too.*



THE SIXTH STATION

Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

One story tells us that another friend who helped Jesus was a woman named Veronica. Jesus was sad and hurting. His face was sweaty and bloody. Veronica took a cloth to wipe his face. The story says that the cloth had the face of Jesus on it. The name Veronica means “a picture that is true.” Jesus himself is a true picture! Jesus is really God. Jesus is really human. That means, when we look at Jesus—we see what God is really like. We see that God is kind and loves us. We also see what God wants for us: to be like Jesus and to love others.

*Jesus, help me keep my eyes on you.
Teach me to know God and to know myself.*



THE SEVENTH STATION

Jesus Fall a Second Time

Have you ever fallen down while you were playing? It hurts to fall down. It takes us by surprise and we might even get bumps and bruises. No one likes to fall down and get hurt. On this day, Jesus fell down, too. He was hurt when he fell—just as any of us would hurt. Jesus shared every bit of human life, not just the happy parts. When we are happy, we know that Jesus knows what that feels like. We can give thanks for the happy times. But when we are hurt and sad, we can know that Jesus knows what that feels like, too. We can ask Jesus to help us through the hard, sad times.

*Jesus, thank you for your love,
both in good times and in hard times.*



THE EIGHTH STATION

Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Jesus made many friends. He stayed at peoples' homes. He taught many people. He healed those who were sick. Even now Jesus did not walk alone. The women of Jerusalem who had loved to listen to Jesus teach were there. They cried when they saw that Jesus was hurting. Even though the enemies of Jesus were all around, the women did not run away. Jesus loved them to the very end of his life. He wanted peace for these women and for their children, too. Jesus knew that his death on the cross would bring peace for all the people in the world, and all the children in the world.

Jesus, give us peace for every child in every place.



THE NINTH STATION

Jesus Falls a Third Time

Sometimes movies make it look like a hero is always big and strong and can get up no matter what! But in real life, heroes can get hurt. Heroes can fall down and need help. Jesus was that kind of hero. He could fall. He could be hurt. But he chose never to stop loving God or God's people. The cross he carried could make him fall down, but it could not make him give up on loving to the very end of his life. That's also the kind of hero Jesus asks us to be: the kind that never stops doing good for others.

*Jesus, show me how to help others
even when it is hard to do so.*



THE TENTH STATION

Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

To understand Jesus' suffering, his friends remembered the words God's people had said for hundreds of years. Some words praised God with joy: "Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise God from the earth!" Some words told about sad times for God's people: "We sat and wept." Some words seemed, above all, to be about what was happening to Jesus: "They divide up even my clothing." These were scary words, but the friends of Jesus remembered how the words ended: "I will live for the Lord. Those who come after me will serve God, too." They prayed that these words would come true—and God heard their prayer.

*Jesus, at the scariest times help us to know
that we will live with God forever.*



THE ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

Pontius Pilate gave orders for Jesus to die on the cross. The soldiers did something cruel to Jesus. A cross has wood nailed together, and the soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross. His arms were stretched out on the wood. But Jesus has his arms stretched out in a different way, too. Jesus stretched out his arms to reach all the people God loves: all the people in the world. Nothing can stop the love of Jesus. Nothing can stop the love of God. Every day, each of us can reach out our arms, too. Just like Jesus, we can learn to love people all around us.

Jesus, show me how to open my arms in love.



THE TWELFTH STATION
Jesus Dies on the Cross

Pontius Pilate could have stopped the death of Jesus, but he didn't. The soldiers could have stopped the death of Jesus, but they didn't. God could have stopped the death of Jesus, but even God didn't. Jesus knew he had to die. But he did not stop loving even now. Instead he asked God to forgive all those who had hurt him. He asked his mother and best friend to take care of each other. He said to God, "It is done, Father." And only then did Jesus die. He showed us how to live and how to love, his whole life long.

Jesus, thank you for your life. Thank you for your love.



THE THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross

Jesus was not alone when he died. His mother was with him. Simon who carried the cross was with him. The disciple whom Jesus loved was with him. The women who had cared for Jesus during his life were with him. Those who would help bury Jesus were there, too. These brave women and men who loved Jesus were with him when he died. They gently took his body into their loving arms. They gave thanks to God for his life. They prayed for his rest in death. We, too, are with Jesus as we hear this story, and we, too, can give thanks as we pray.

*Thank you, Jesus, for loving God and for loving us,
even unto death.*



THE FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb

Do you wonder why we share eggs on Easter morning? Eggs are a symbol of life that is hidden away. When Jesus died, his friends brought his body to a tomb and placed him there to be safe. But the tomb held a secret that no one knew. Even though Jesus had died, life was hidden away inside him. God wanted new life for Jesus: life that could never end. The cross was the place where Jesus died, but the tomb was the place where life was hidden away. On Easter day the friends of Jesus would find out the secret: God's own life is in Jesus. The life of God in Jesus lasts forever! And the life of God in Jesus is for all the people of the world.

*Jesus, thank you for making the cross
the way to life that never ends.*