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Holy Childhood Association, Toronto, Canada*

The Stations of the Cross

Opening Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Today we will follow you and pray with you as we go to the stations you visited on your final journey of love. You loved us so much that you gave up your life for us. Help us to give our love to others. We know that if we are kind to those around us, then we are being kind to you. Today, we take with us our cross to remind us of children in need around the world. Let us never forget them.

DRAMA

The Praying of the Stations of the Cross lends itself to dramatic interpretation. Young children love to act. Children can "perform" each station by creating a live montage of each station with or without props. Have students create the scene and then "freeze" in place while the prayers are being recited by older students. This works well in a school situation in front of the whole school population, perhaps in cooperation with older classes. It is also appropriate in a Parish Church environment, and can bring new reverence to parishioners.

COLORING/ACTIVITIES

There are several Catholic/Christian publishing companies that have crafts, activities and colouring pages that are perfect for enhancing the Stations for young children. A quick Google search will reveal the possibilities. Some activities are freely available, and many can be purchased generally for a small price.

Stations of the Cross Activities for Children

To the teacher/catechist:

These activities are intended to provide an enriched liturgical experience for both children and youth. Instead of simply reciting the prayers and then moving on to another topic, take the time to allow the children/youth to explore the deeper context and meaning behind this important event in the life of our Church.

THE CROSS

Provide students with a cardboard/paper cross. If possible, they can cut them out as a craft activity. Ask them to draw or paste on it the common symbols we associate with the events leading up to and including the Passion of Our Lord. Depending on the level of your students, you may wish to brainstorm these symbols with them or simply have them available for reference. We have provided some samples below to get the children started. Once the crosses are completed, the children can bring them to use on their Stations of the Cross journey.

Here are a few examples:

- The bread and wine of the last supper
- The kiss of Judas the betrayer
- The rooster that crowed three times
- Jesus falls
- St Veronica wipes Jesus' face
- Simon carries the cross
- Calvary hill
- The tomb and the rock covering it
- The crown of thorns

The 1st Station - Jesus Is Condemned To Death

Leader:

Jesus was accused of many crimes he didn't commit.
He didn't defend himself.

He knew he needed to die for our sins.

Today, millions of children are condemned to death by malnutrition and starvation.

Lord, help us to see you, condemned once again in these children - our brothers and sisters.

Group:

Dear Jesus, we have so much while many have so little.

Remind us to use our gifts so that all children in need may know the gifts of food, shelter, and clothing.

We want this season of Lent to be a time when we sacrifice a little of what we have to make life better for others.



The 2nd Station - Jesus Takes Up His Cross

Leader:

The cross was big and heavy.
It was hard for Jesus to carry it.
Jesus carried the heavy cross without complaining once.
Jesus told us that to follow him we must take up our cross.

Group:

Dear Jesus, like you, we carry our crosses to remind us of your suffering.
Teach us to think of our friends and classmates as our brothers and sisters who need us to care for them.
Help us to help others without expecting anything in return.
If you could carry your cross then for sure we can carry ours.



Station 2 - Jesus carries His cross - © 2016 TheCatholicKid.com

Closing Prayer:

God our Father, we will never forget our love for Jesus.
Forgive us when we ignore Him by not helping those in need.
Help us to see Jesus alive in our brothers and sisters in need
both here and in the missions.
In Jesus' name,
Amen.

The 14th Station - Jesus is Buried

Leader:

Even when things look very difficult and sad, there is always hope that God can bring new life.
It seems so final as Jesus is laid to rest in the tomb.
We don't want the rock placed in front.
We feel like crying.
Yet every day, children cry out for our help, our prayers.
We cannot let that rock stop us from following Jesus and his way of love for all.

Group:

Dear Jesus, we will never forget you.
Help us to follow your path and care for our brothers and sisters here and far away.



The 3rd Station - Jesus Falls For the First Time

Leader:

Jesus was already badly wounded when he fell the first time.
It must have hurt very much.
Jesus got up and kept on going.
Jesus falls when children suffer - children who wait for us to help them up.

Group:

Dear Jesus, help me to see the children around me who need a friend, who need help with schoolwork, who want to play with others but are always left out.
Make me strong so that I can always be a friend for them.



The 4th Station - Jesus Meets his Mother

Leader:

Jesus knew that his mother was sad to see him suffering so much.

But he was so happy she came to him.

Mary loved Jesus very much.

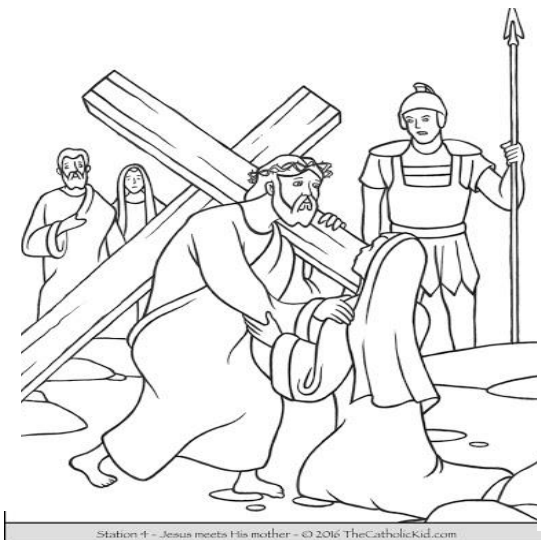
Many children today, especially refugees, have no mother or father.

Group:

Dear Mary, teach us to love our mother and father, our sisters and brothers.

Let us never forget how much they care for us.

Today, we carry our crosses to remind us of all the children around the world who do not have a family to care for them. How can we show them that they are not alone?



Station 4 - Jesus meets His mother - © 2016 TheCatholicKid.com

The 13th Station - Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

Leader:

Joseph of Arimathea gave Jesus his own burial cave because Jesus didn't have a place to be buried.

Joseph was another one of Jesus' friends who took a risk to help him.

Jesus has been lovingly taken down but the Cross still stands as a special sign of our faith.

Group:

Dear Jesus we thank you for this cross.

It will always represent our love for you.

Help us teach other children in our Holy Childhood family about you.



Station 13 - The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross - © 2016 TheCatholicKid.com

The 12th Station - Jesus Dies on the Cross

Leader:

When Jesus died, the sky got dark and the ground started to shake.

This made some people very scared.

They saw that Jesus was innocent and that they had made a big mistake.

Jesus dies for us.

He loves us so much that he comes as a child, lives with us and later dies.

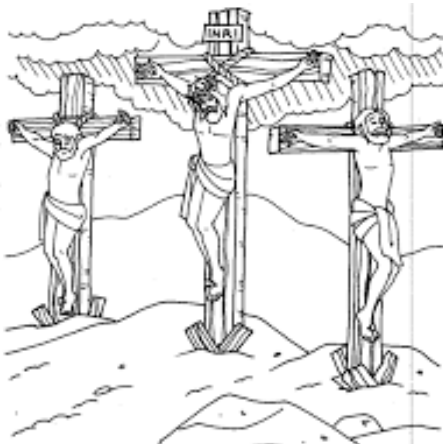
Right now, think for a few minutes about the Cross as the sign of Jesus' love for us.

Now, silently in your own heart, tell Jesus about your love for Him and thank Him for showing His great love for you.

Group:

Jesus loved us so much that He died on the cross for us. Every time I look at the cross I remember his great love. Let us raise our crosses and pause for a minute to think about Jesus.

Now, in your own words (silently) tell Jesus how much you love him.



The 5th Station - Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

Leader:

Simon didn't come to help Jesus but to see what was going on.

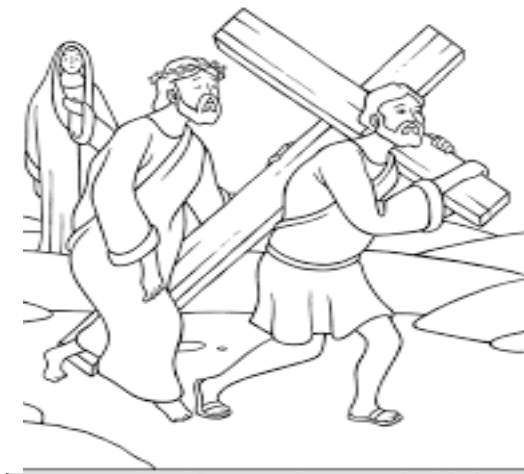
Then he was ordered by the soldiers to carry the cross, because Jesus was having such a hard time.

When Jesus was so tired that he could go no further, Simon lifted up the cross and helped Jesus on His way.

Group:

Dear Jesus, you let Simon help you carry your cross, to teach us that we all need help at times.

Let us always be thankful for those who help us when we are sad and need help.



Station 5 - Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his cross - © 2006 TheCatholicKid.com

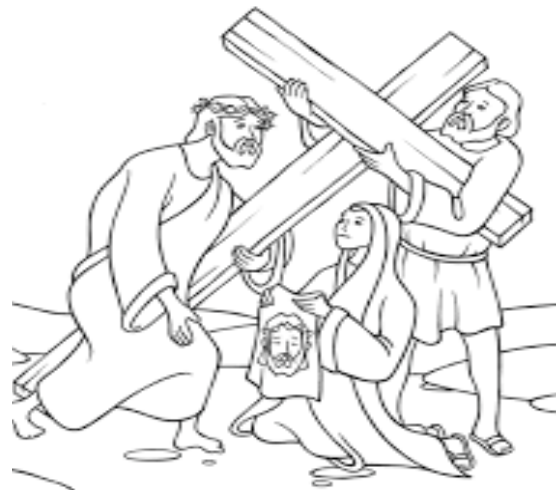
The 6th Station - Veronica wipes the Face of Jesus

Leader:

Veronica loved Jesus very much.
When she stepped out to wipe his face, she risked getting in big trouble from the soldiers.
Her love and kindness overcame her fear.
When Jesus was in pain, Veronica reached out to wipe his face.
Her reward was the grace of His presence with her forever.

Group:

Dear Jesus, help me to be like Veronica.
When I see someone fall help me to help them get back up.
Helping others is like helping you.



Station 6 - Veronica wipes the Face of Jesus - © 2016 TheCatholicKid.com

The 11th Station - Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Leader:

The soldiers drove nails through Jesus' hands and feet.
They lifted up the cross and put it in place.
Jesus was in a lot of pain.
As Jesus is nailed to the cross, think of all the children who suffer because they believe in Jesus but can't worship Him openly in their country.

Group:

Dear Jesus, thank you for giving us the gift of faith.
Thank you for the freedom we have in our country to pray without fear.
Help us to never be ashamed to be called your sons and daughters and to show our faith to the world.



Station 11 - Jesus is nailed to the cross - © 2016 TheCatholicKid.com

The 10th Station - Jesus is Stripped of His Clothes

Leader:

To be without clothes in front of everyone is a humiliating thing.

Jesus wasn't ashamed because he knew his Father in heaven loved him and everyone who was there.

Everything human is taken away from Jesus, even His clothes.

Today, there are many children who have nothing - no clothes, no school, and no hope.

Group:

Dear Jesus, when I look in my closet at home, I feel sad because I have so much when my poorer brothers and sisters have so little.

Help me to appreciate all that I have, and to give away to the poor the things I do not need.



The 7th Station - Jesus falls the Second Time

Leader:

Jesus fell again because he was so weak and tired from all his wounds.

He still didn't give up.

He got back up and continued on.

God our Father, we are reminded of Jesus falling when we see children who are not physically able to care for themselves.

Group:

Dear Jesus, even though we are different in many ways from each other, we all want to be loved.

Teach us to see you in all children and to be ready to help those who are sick and need assistance.



The 8th Station - Jesus Meets Some Women

Leader:

A lot of people were against Jesus, but a lot of people followed him.
They were his faithful friends.
Jesus stops to tell the women not to worry about Him, but rather about their children and the future of their society.

Group

Dear Jesus, you taught the women to care about their children.
Help us to always care for the children of the world who live in conditions of poverty and war.



The 9th Station - Jesus Falls the Third Time

Leader: It's unbelievable that Jesus fell again and the soldiers didn't help him.
They only yelled louder for him to get up and continue on.
Jesus didn't get mad at them; he forgave them.
Jesus falls again.
How many children fall again in places in the missions suffering with violence and war.

Group

Dear Jesus, we pray for our holy childhood brothers and sisters both near and far who without our help have no one to care for them.

