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## STATIONS OF THE CROSS AT HOME ADULT GUIDE

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A “station” is a stopping place along a route or path where a specific task or activity happens. The Stations of the Cross are places where you can stop and remember the things that happened to Jesus just before and when he died on the cross. At each station, you will have the chance to hear words from the Bible and complete an activity. Then, at the completion of each station spend time talking with Jesus and write down anything you’d like to reflect on at the bottom of each page of this guide to help you remember the stations that you participated in.



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## STATIONS OF THE CROSS AT HOME

### ITEMS TO GATHER

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Collect the following items to prepare to walk through the stations of the cross at home:

1. Something that would grow in a garden (leaf, flower, piece of grass)
2. 3 coins
3. Small scrap of fabric/cloth
4. Something with a thorn or that is sharp (plant with thorns, push-pin, needle)
5. Scrap of paper and something to write with (one for each person)
6. Something heavy (a weight, a brick, a chair)
7. Hammer, nail (one for each person), scrap of wood
8. Something sour to taste (vinegar, lemon juice)
9. Something "erasable" (pencil and paper; dry erase board and marker; shaving cream and tray; sand and tray)
10. Candle and lighter/matches
11. A stone or rock

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## Station 1 • Jesus prays in the garden

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Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane. He said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him.



He began to be sad and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sad. I feel close to death. Stay here. Keep watch with me." He went a little farther. Then he fell with his face to the ground. He prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering away from me. But let what you want be done, not what I want." Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray. Then you won't fall into sin when you are tempted. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." (Matthew 26:36-41)

**Reflect:** This shows Jesus in his fullest humanity - feeling scared, sad, and alone. He has poured his whole being into the work of bringing God's message of love to the world. And now his message — and indeed his very life — are being threatened by the powers that be. Jesus wishes more than anything that he could be spared the fate that awaits him, but remarkably he closes his prayer with "Not my will but yours be done."

**Experience:** Sit in a quiet place and prepare your heart for what is to come through this experience. Hold the item that represents a garden (grass, leaf, etc.) Spend some time in silence and think about the times you have felt abandoned by family or friends, or even when God felt far off. Jesus understands.

Draw a picture or write some words about your experience at this station here:

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## Station 2 • Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested

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One of the 12 disciples went to the chief priests. His name was Judas Iscariot. He asked, "What will you give me if I hand Jesus over to you?" So they counted out 30 silver coins for him. From then on, Judas watched for the right time to hand Jesus over to them. (Matthew 26:14-16)

Then later in the garden... Just as Jesus was speaking, Judas appeared. He was one of the 12 disciples. A crowd was with him. They were carrying swords and clubs. The chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders had sent them. Judas, who was going to hand Jesus over, had arranged a signal with them. "The one I kiss is the man," he said. "Arrest him and have the guards lead him away." So Judas went to Jesus at once. Judas said, "Rabbi!" And he kissed Jesus. The men grabbed Jesus and arrested him. (Mark 14: 43-46)



Reflect: Jesus is literally "sold out" by one of his closest friends. It's hard to fathom what might have motivated Judas' actions. Some Bible scholars think that one possible way to interpret Judas' actions is that he wanted to force Jesus' hand to get Him to assert his divine power and take the throne. In that regard we might consider that Judas never imagined how badly his plan would backfire. At times we are like Judas, putting our hope in an earthly form of success, and losing sight of the upside-down world of the Kingdom of God where the last shall be first and the dead are raised to eternal life.

Experience: Hold the three coins as a symbol of the payment that Judas received for betraying Jesus. Consider what earthly things you have placed your trust in that might be keeping you from seeing the bigger picture of God's Kingdom.

Draw a picture or write some words about your experience at this station here:

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### Station 3 • Jesus is stripped and mocked

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They began laughing at him and beating him. They blindfolded him. They said, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" They also said many other things to make fun of him. (Luke 22:63-65)

The governor's soldiers took Jesus into the palace, which was called the Praetorium. All the rest of the soldiers gathered around him. They took off his clothes and put a purple robe on him. After they had made fun of him, they took off the robe. They put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him away to nail him to a cross. (Matthew 27:27-28, 31)

Reflect: The soldiers intentionally gathered a crowd to witness Jesus' humiliation. They mocked him and stripped him publicly to intensify his embarrassment. It's hard to imagine anything more degrading. Jesus experiences the ultimate vulnerability of the defenseless. No shield or security protects him. We pause to contemplate the stripping of Jesus and reflect on how Jesus has held nothing back. As the crowd stares and mocks him, Jesus' eyes turn to heaven.



Experience: Tear the piece of cloth as a remembrance of Jesus' humiliation. Take a moment in silence to consider what Jesus endured in the face of his tormentors.

Draw a picture or write some words about your experience at this station here:

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## Station 4 • Jesus is beaten and crowned with thorns

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Then Pilate took Jesus and had him whipped. The soldiers twisted thorns together to make a crown. They put it on Jesus' head. Then they put a purple robe on him. They went up to him again and again. They kept saying, "We honor you, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face. (John 19:1-3)

Reflect: Jesus stands in the most human of places. He has already experienced solidarity with so many on this earth by being beaten and tortured. Imagine the feeling of the thorns digging into his skull and the wounds on his back searing in pain. And yet in spite of this torture, Jesus did not protest or attempt to defend himself.

Experience: Feel the sharp point of the pin, needle, or thorn you found and imagine the suffering Jesus went through. Pray in silence as you consider his pain.

Draw a picture or write some words about your experience at this station here:

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## Station 5 • Jesus is denied by Peter

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Peter was sitting out in the courtyard. A female servant came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But in front of all of them, Peter said he was not. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Then he went out to the gate leading into the courtyard. There another servant saw him. She said to the people, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." Again, he said he was not. With a curse he said, "I don't know the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter. "You must be one of them," they said. "The way you talk gives you away." Then Peter began to curse and said to them, "I don't know the man!" Right away a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said. "The rooster will crow," Jesus had told him. "Before it does, you will say three times that you don't know me." Peter went outside. He broke down and cried. (Matthew 26: 69-75)



Reflect: At the same time that Jesus was being questioned by Pilate and then mocked and beaten in front of the whole crowd, here was Peter denying he even knew who Jesus was. We can sympathize with Peter can't we? Haven't we all had experiences where we took the easier road rather than walking the path of discipleship as a friend of Jesus?

Experience: Take a slip of paper and write down a time that you haven't been a friend to someone else or to Jesus (keep it with you for now).

Draw a picture or write some words about your experience at this station here:

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*Station 6 • Jesus takes up his cross and is helped by Simon*

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As the soldiers led Jesus away, they took hold of Simon. Simon was from Cyrene. He was on his way in from the country. They put a wooden cross on his shoulders. Then they made him carry it behind Jesus. (Luke 23:26)

Reflect: Jesus is too weak from the beating and loss of blood to be able to carry the cross himself. Jesus experiences the same struggle we have to let others help us. As we contemplate his struggle, we see his weariness and suffering. We imagine how he might have looked at Simon, with humility and gratitude.

Experience: Carefully try to pick up the weight of the “heavy object” (weight, brick, chair). Imagine walking up the side of a large rocky hill with this on your shoulders. Pray in silence as you think about what you would have done if you had been in the crowd that day.



Draw a picture or write some words about your experience at this station here:

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## Station 7 • Jesus is crucified

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The soldiers brought them to the place called the Skull. There they nailed Jesus to the cross. He hung between the two criminals. One was on his right and one was on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing." The soldiers divided up his clothes by casting lots. (Luke 23: 33-34)

Reflect: Take a moment to understand what was happening to Jesus as he was crucified. Although the Romans did not invent crucifixion they perfected it as a form of torture and punishment that was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering. It was customary for the condemned man to carry his own cross from the flogging post to the site of crucifixion outside the city walls. Because the weight of the whole cross was over 300 pounds, usually only the crossbar was carried (weighing 75 to 125 pounds), while the upright portion was permanently fixed at the place of crucifixion. After the beating or flogging, the victim's blood loss would be significant and most likely the victim would be in a weakened state with low blood pressure.



Upon arrival to at the site of execution, the victim was thrown to the ground on his back with his arms outstretched along the crossbar, a position that would tear open the flogging wounds, contaminating them with dirt and rocks. Each time the victim would take a breath his back would rub against the rough wood keeping the wounds open. Blood loss from the back would continue throughout the ordeal. With arms outstretched but not taut, the wrists would be nailed to the crossbar. Archaeological evidence shows that the nails that were used were approximately 5 to 7 inches in length. The nail was driven through the bones of the wrists rather than the palms. The palms could not hold the weight of the body. The nails would produce fractures in the wrists and was located very close to the large median nerve. Any movement of the arms would activate the nerve and produce excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms. Next the feet were fixed to the front of the vertical post. To accomplish this, flexion of the knees would have been prominent, and the bent legs would most likely be rotated laterally.

To prolong the crucifixion process, sometimes a horizontal bar would be placed on the post to serve as a crude seat, allowing the victim a place to potentially rest. The major effect of crucifixion, beyond excruciating pain, was a marked interference with normal respiration. As the victim hangs, the muscles for respiration tend to stay in an inhalation state. In order to exhale, the victim would have to pull up on the nails in his wrists and push up on the nail in his feet – activating the large nerves in the arms and legs - causing searing pain. Also, the open wounds on the back would rub against the rough wood of the vertical post and continue to bleed. In

turn, the breathing would become shallow and the carbon dioxide would build up in the victim's body. The extra carbon dioxide would cause muscle spasms and cramps. Each respiration would become increasingly difficult and eventually lead to asphyxia or suffocation. The weight of the body would cause dislocations of the shoulders and elbows causing incredible pain.

To quicken the process of crucifixion, the soldiers would sometimes break the victim's legs. This would make it impossible for the legs to bear weight. Since no one was supposed to survive crucifixion, a soldier would take an infantry spear and pierce the victim's heart from the side, going under the rib cage, puncturing the lungs in the process.

Experience: Take the slip of paper with how you hurt a friend or Jesus on it (from the 5th station) and nail it to the piece of wood. As you hammer, listen to the sounds of the hammer and consider what Jesus' death on the cross was really like.

Draw a picture or write some words about your experience at this station here:

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## Station 8 • Jesus is given sour wine to drink

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At three o'clock in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" This means "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" (Psalm 22:1)



Some of those standing nearby heard Jesus cry out. They said, "Listen! He's calling for Elijah. Someone ran and filled a sponge with wine vinegar. He put it on a stick. He offered it to Jesus to drink. "Leave him alone," he said. "Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down. (Mark. 15:36)

Reflect: On the cross Jesus is quoting Psalm 22. Take a moment to read the words and reflect on them in light of what Jesus is suffering in his final moments.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, and not human; scorned by others, and despised by the people.

All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;

"Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver—let him rescue the one in whom he delights!"

Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother's breast.

On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

Many bulls encircle me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;

my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast;

my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws;

you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me.

My hands and feet have shriveled; I can count all my bones.

They stare and gloat over me; they divide my clothes among themselves,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.

But you, O LORD, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid!

Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog!

Save me from the mouth of the lion! From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.  
I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:  
You who fear the LORD, praise him!  
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!  
For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted;  
he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him.  
From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.  
The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD.  
May your hearts live forever!  
All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;  
and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.  
For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.  
To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.  
Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord,  
and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.  
- Psalm 22

Experience: Taste the sour item you collected (vinegar, lemon, etc.) that symbolizes the vinegar that they gave to Jesus right before he died. Thank Jesus for remaining faithful even in the midst of his final moments.

Draw a picture or write some words about your experience at this station here:

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## Station 9 • Jesus forgives

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Two other men were also led out with Jesus to be killed. Both of them had broken the law. The soldiers brought them to the place called the Skull. There they nailed Jesus to the cross. He



hung between the two criminals. One of the criminals hanging there made fun of Jesus. He said, "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself! Save us!" But the other criminal scolded him. "Don't you have any respect for God?" he said.

"Remember, you are under the same sentence of death. We are being punished fairly. We are getting just what our actions call for. But this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "What I'm about to tell you is true. Today you will be with me in paradise. (Luke 23:32-34, 39-43)

Reflect: Even in the midst of unimaginable suffering Jesus still responds with forgiveness and love. Can you imagine being that merciful and compassionate if you were in his place? We also consider that the gift of God's grace offered by Jesus is intended to be shared. How might we extend forgiveness to someone who has hurt us?

Experience: Write down on the "erasable item" (pencil and paper, dry erase board, shaving cream, sand) someone that you need to forgive. Ask Jesus to help you forgive that person in your heart. "Erase" the name from the item as a symbol of your forgiveness.

Draw a picture or write some words about your experience at this station here:

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## Station 10 • Jesus dies on the cross

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With a loud cry, Jesus took his last breath. The temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. A Roman commander was standing there in front of Jesus. He saw how Jesus died. Then he said, "This man was surely the Son of God!" (Mark 15:37-39)



Reflect: Between two criminals, a mocking title above his head, with only Mary and John and Mary Magdalene to support him, Jesus surrenders his last breath: "Into your hands I commend my spirit." We stand here at the foot of the cross, side by side with all of humanity, and experience the moment when the one who gives life passes from life to death.

Experience: Light the candle. Sit in prayer as long as you'd like. Then blow out the candle and remember the moment when Jesus took his last breath on earth.

Draw a picture or write some words about your experience at this station here:

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## Station 11 • Jesus is laid in the tomb

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As evening approached, a rich man came from the town of Arimathea. His name was Joseph. He had become a follower of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. He placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb. Then he went away. (Matthew 27: 57-60)



Reflect: Jesus' body is taken down from the cross. We imagine Mary's grief as she holds her son's body. No one should have to bury their own child. As they take the body of Jesus to its resting place we reflect on how the Son of God is being buried in a borrowed and unmarked grave. The stone over the tomb is the final sign of the seeming permanence of death. And yet we have hope, because we know this is not how the story ends...

Experience: Hold the rock/ stone to symbolize the large stone that was placed over the opening of the tomb and imagine how the people must have felt when Jesus died. Say a prayer to thank God that we know that Jesus' story and the story of our faith doesn't end here! Consider how you will commemorate the Good News of Jesus' resurrection this Easter.

Draw a picture or write some words about your experience at this station here: