

# Journey to the Cross



**Stations of the Cross for Children**

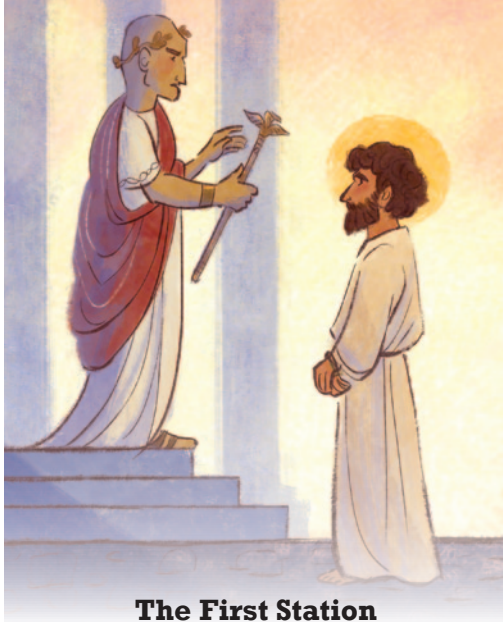


## **Introduction:**

### **Taking the Long Way Home**

It is always fun to find a shortcut on the way home from school or the park. Yet, sometimes there is no shortcut and we have to take the long way home.

God's chosen people could not reach the Promised Land without making the long walk through the desert. Jesus chose the long way of the cross because he wanted to lead people to a new life. The friends of Jesus understand that the short and easy way can be a dead end. We walk with Jesus, even when the road is long, because the long way leads us back home to God.

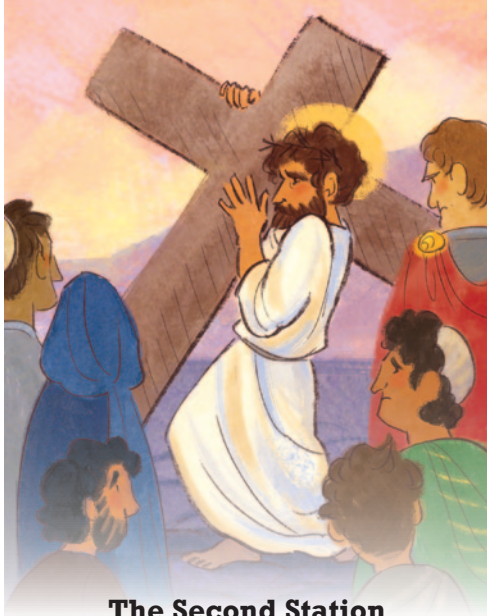


### **The First Station**

## **Jesus is Condemned to Death**

No one likes to be punished, but punishment is part of growing up. When we misbehave, a teacher might make us stay after school or a parent might send us to our room. Jesus received a very hard punishment when he was condemned to death on the cross. He did not do anything wrong, but he accepted his punishment because he loves us. The Lord became a prisoner so we could be freed; he accepted blame so we would be forgiven; he faced death so we can live.

*Jesus, may your punishment free us from sin.*



## **The Second Station**

### **Jesus Takes up His Cross**

Athletes train for sports by lifting weights so they can win. Jesus was a weight lifter for God, but his goal was far more important than winning a game. By taking up the cross, the Lord lifted the heavy load of our weakness and sin. We know what it is like to be weighed down with worry or fear or guilt. This is what Jesus felt like when he carried the cross. By lifting the weight of our weakness, Jesus lifted us up and made us all stronger.

*Jesus, lift up our hearts to you when we feel low.*

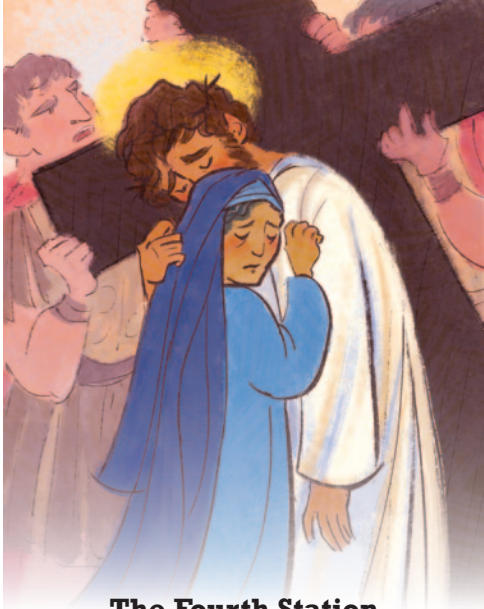


### **The Third Station**

## **Jesus Falls for the First Time**

Children fall many times when they are learning to walk, but they get right back up because their legs are young and strong. Jesus falls when he walks the road to Calvary, but it is harder for him to get up because his legs are weak from suffering. It takes many tries to learn how to walk and it takes practice to follow the way of the cross. Children of God are invited to walk with Jesus and learn how to carry their crosses well. They will surely fall, but they will also rise up with Jesus in glory.

*Jesus, teach us to rise up with you when we fall.*

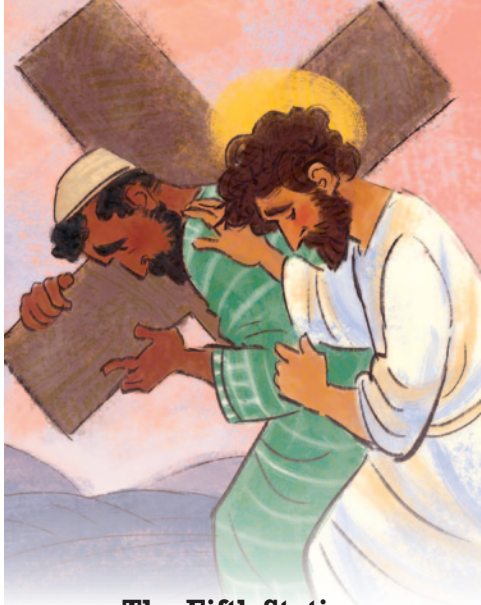


### **The Fourth Station**

## **Jesus Meets His Mother**

Mothers hate goodbyes, but life with children is full of partings. It is hard when mothers have to say goodbye to their kids on the first day of school. The Blessed Mother said the hardest goodbye of all when her son was about to die on the cross. There was sadness in this meeting, but also hope. Even in her sorrow, the Mother of God embraced her son with love and encouraged him with faith. Even when mothers cry, they meet and comfort us with the amazing love of God.

*Jesus, help us to meet God's children with love.*



### **The Fifth Station**

## **Simon Helps Jesus Carry the Cross**

Children love to be picked up and carried when they are small. As children grow older, though, they begin to walk on their own. It feels good to walk by ourselves, but sometimes we need help. Jesus felt this way when he carried the cross, so Simon helped the Lord. God asks us to help others when they carry crosses of sadness or trouble. We can pick them up with a kind word or cheer them up with a helping hand. We can show them that they are not alone.

*Jesus, show us how to help others who are in trouble.*





### **The Sixth Station**

## **Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**

When children stay home from school with a fever, mothers often wipe their foreheads with a cloth. When they go to the hospital, nurses wrap their cuts with bandages. These women are like Veronica when she wipes the face of Jesus with love and gentleness. Veronica is amazed when she pulls the cloth away because she sees the image of Christ's face imprinted on the towel. When we help others, we also make an impression on them that never fades. We leave God's mark on them forever, a lasting memory of love.

*Jesus, may we leave your mark of love on the world.*





## **The Seventh Station**

### **Jesus Fall for the Second Time**

It is difficult to fall when we are alone, but it can be even harder to fall in front of others. Sometimes we fall in the cafeteria or on the playground. When we get up, other students may be laughing or pointing at us and we feel embarrassed. Jesus felt ashamed when he fell the second time and saw the soldiers pointing and laughing. Yet, the Lord won the glory of God and the friendship of countless faithful people by loving us enough to suffer and die for us.

*Jesus, make us proud to walk in your footsteps.*



### **The Eighth Station**

## **Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem**

The women of Jerusalem shed tears for Jesus, but he asked them to cry for children instead. Jesus wants to be close to children and protect them from harm because childhood is a time for joy and wonder. The Lord came to show adults how to teach children, but he also wants children to teach adults about the ways of God. Jesus understood the power of a child to show adults how to live: “Unless you become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

*Jesus, help us to lead others to your kingdom.*

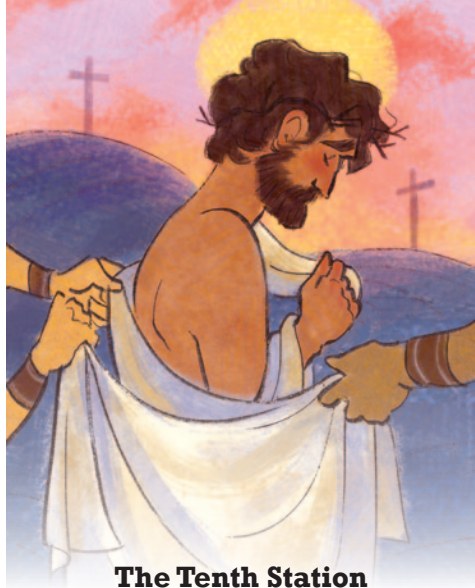


### **The Ninth Station**

## **Jesus Fall for the Third Time**

During the season of autumn, we see the golden leaves letting go of their branches and falling slowly to the ground. Jesus taught us that we are also precious like gold, but that we should learn to let go and fall to the ground like autumn leaves. When spring arrives the barren branches produce fresh green leaves. Jesus falls in the autumn of his life, but in the spring he is born again to a wonderful new life. When we die with Jesus, we also rise up more alive and more beautiful than ever.

*Jesus, help us let go so that we may hold your life.*



### **The Tenth Station**

## **Jesus is Stripped of His Garments**

Clothes are important to us when we are young. We choose our outfits carefully because we feel embarrassed if we look funny or don't fit in with our friends. The soldiers who crucified Jesus stripped off his clothes to cause him shame, but the Lord was clothed in God's light and dressed in glory. When we follow Jesus we promise to put on the clothing of Christ, the pure white garments of love. These clothes can never be taken away from us. They make us members of God's family and one with the saints.

*Jesus, dress us up with the beautiful love of God.*

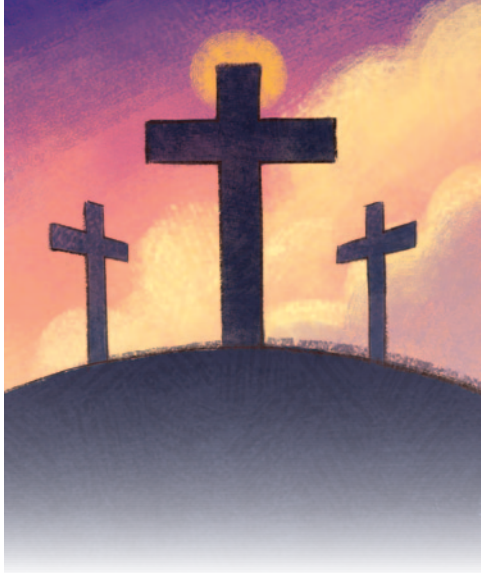


## **The Eleventh Station**

### **Jesus is Nailed to the Cross**

Sometimes we get hurt by accident when we step on a nail while playing in the yard. At other times it is no accident when we feel hurt. When classmates make fun of us or friends say mean things, we feel the pain like nails in our feet. The death of Jesus was no accident, but he accepted his pain because he loves us. We too can be brave like Jesus. We can offer our pain as a way of growing in faith and love. Those who suffer with Jesus become a united family that reaches out to help others.

*Jesus, we suffer with you so we can heal others.*



## **The Twelfth Station**

### **Jesus Dies on the Cross**

Video gamers enjoy the benefit of having many lives. Soon after dying, the player magically reappears on the screen. Players can also save a game in case they lose a life. Real life has no save games or extra lives. The death of Jesus on the cross was real. Yet, our Lord had one advantage that video gamers do not enjoy—the blessing of new life in God that never ends. Jesus dies, but he will rise again on the third day. By losing his life, Jesus gives us the greatest save game of all, life forever with God.

*Jesus, give us new life with you that never ends.*



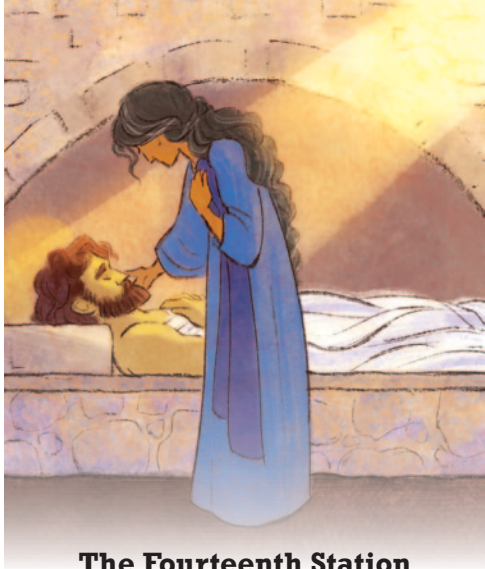
### **The Thirteenth Station**

## **Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross**

It is not easy to take things down. We feel sad when we take down a Christmas tree or put away Easter decorations. Taking things down is a reminder of the passing seasons and how the best gifts in life leave us for a while and then come back. We must take down our holiday decorations, but we know they will return to bring us joy. In the same way, we feel sad as Jesus is taken down from the cross, but faith reminds us that he will rise again and bring us new life.

*Jesus, take away our sadness and fill us with joy.*





## **The Fourteenth Station**

### **Jesus is Laid in the Tomb**

When we are young, it is not unusual to sleep with a nightlight or ask our parents to leave the bedroom door open. When Jesus was buried, however, there was no nightlight or crack in the door. The stone rolled over his tomb left him in total darkness. Yet, the Lord had his own light that no stone could shut out and no darkness could defeat. Jesus is the light of the world. It is when the darkness seems strongest that the light of Christ shines brightest to comfort and guide us.

*Jesus, help us to shine your light for the world.*