

## **Journey to the Cross (while social distancing)**

**An Activity for Holy Week at Home** – for families, teens, children, etc. (can be adapted for most age groups)

**Game Idea** - (for teens and children) - Journey to the Cross Scavenger hunt to find items (props) around the home needed for the reflection. The person who finds and collects the most items is the winner. The scavenger hunt could also be done with a virtual group via Zoom or other online platform.

### **Scavenger Hunt Items:**

Bible (there are many bible apps, you may also find a link to the bible on the USCCB website). The Catholic church uses, most commonly, the New American Bible translation.

Station 1 – Men's sandals

Station 2 – Scented oils or burning scented candle

Station 3 – coins

Station 4 – bread and olive oil

Station 5 – cup/chalice and grape juice

Station 6 – rope

Station 7 – purple cloth and crown of thorns

Station 8 – large cross/crucifix and large nails

Station 9 – candles and lighter

Station 10 – large rock

Station 11 – white cloth

\*\*Optional - iPad, phone or laptop for playing music selection – music can be found on iTunes, Spotify, etc. or on YouTube.

- *You Were on the Cross* (Matt Maher)
- *I Remember* (Mac Powell – Third Day)
- *Were You There* (Vigil Project feat. Andrea Thomas)

**Family Involvement/Participation** - assign readers for each Station and each scripture verse(s).

## Journey to the Cross

### Opening

*Today is a time to slow down, much of our busyness has been eliminated, but yet we are still faced with distractions and temptations. Today, we will set aside those distractions as we enter in to this moment and focus on Jesus. Let the words of each reflection sink in.*

*This Journey to the Cross is not about an agenda or meeting anyone's expectations. It's simply a time and a place for you to draw close to Jesus.*

### Station 1

**God in the Flesh:** prop - sandals

John 1:14

*Tonight you're invited on a journey through the last days and hours of Jesus' life.*

*In front of you is a pair of **sandals**, the kind that any ordinary man would wear. Think about what it means that Jesus once stood in sandals like these, just like any of us might. The mighty God who created the world stepped into an ordinary human body.*

*As you begin this journey, focus on what it means for the eternal God to become a man. Take time to meditate on the mystery, majesty, and humility of Jesus, the Son of God. Now, step into His sandals, begin the journey, walk in His footsteps.*

### Station 2

**Mary Anoints Jesus:** prop - scented oils or burning scented candle

John 12:1-8

*Mary poured out expensive perfumed oil onto Jesus' feet as an act of worship. (pass around oils) Smell its fragrance. The fragrance may not be strong at first, but you can smell it for hours. It's long-lasting. Mary's act of worship was pure .... passionate ...real ... expensive...extravagant. And it touched the heart of Jesus. Jesus knew he was headed to the cross, and Mary's act of worship was a blessing to him. How can you pour out your love to Jesus, extravagantly, in a way that will spread the beautiful fragrance of Jesus where you are? Let the fragrance of this oil remind you that we are called to live every moment of our lives in fragrant worship of Jesus.*

### Station 3

**Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus:** – prop – coins

Matthew 26:14-16

*Judas was one of Jesus' closest friends, one of the twelve disciples who had been with him for three years. He agreed to betray Jesus for just thirty silver coins. (Hold the coins in your hands). How could Judas betray Jesus, his friend, for money? How do you think Judas felt when he looked at the coins in his hand and realized what he had traded for them? Is your own heart tempted to betray Jesus over material things? Take this time to talk with him about it. (Pause for a moment of prayer)*

#### **Station 4**

**The Last Supper: prop** - bread & olive oil

John 13:21-26

*Jesus was celebrating the Passover feast with his disciples. Yet, in the midst of celebrating, there was great sorrow and pain. (Tear off a piece of **bread**, dip it into the **oil**, and eat it as Jesus did.) Think of the heartbreak Jesus must have felt at the betrayal of one of his own disciples, his follower, and his friend. He knew now the end was drawing near and that his disciples would soon face confusion, fear, and doubt.*

*Contemplate the betrayal, his sorrow and his compassion and great mercy.*

(Pass around bread, held in a napkin, for everyone to take a small piece)

*We, too, sometimes betray our friends. We, too, betray our faith and our Church. We, too, betray Jesus when we sin.*

*Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*

#### **Station 5**

**Gethsemane: prop** – cup/chalice, grape juice

Matthew 26:36-46

*This scene reveals the sorrow in Jesus' heart that night. He prayed to his Father that he would not have to go to the cross if there were any other way. Yet he prayed the hardest prayer any of us can pray: "Yet not as I will, but as you will."*

*When Jesus said, "May this cup be taken from me," he was referring to the difficult thing his Father was asking him to bear. Yet he chose to drink the cup, even though it was painful. Pour a cup of grape juice and drink it. As you do, remember that Jesus chose to bear the agony of the cross—to drink the cup—to save you. Is there a cup that the Father is asking you to drink—something about which you need to pray the prayer of Gethsemane: "Yet not as I will, but as you will."*

#### **Station 6**

**Jesus' Arrest: prop** - rope

John 18:1-5; 12-13

*Even though Jesus could have given the word and overpowered all the guards, he let himself be bound and led away. Pick up the **rope** and hold it in your hands. Remember that Jesus was bound with a rope like this one. He chose to submit to the difficult way of the cross with every step that he took.*

(demonstrate wrapping it around your wrists for a few seconds)

## **Station 7**

**Jesus' Trial: prop - purple fabric & crown of thorns**

Matthew 26:57-60, 27:27-31

*Imagine yourself in Peter's shoes. You are looking out over the courtyard where Jesus is being tried and mocked. You know that he is being unjustly accused. As you stand here, you see men telling lies about him. You watch him being beaten and mocked. Here is the man you have followed for three years, the man you had put all your hope in, being sentenced to death. In your heart you have believed he is God, the promised Messiah of the Jewish people. Your whole world is crashing around you, and worst of all, you have denied that you even know him.*

*Look at the **cloak** and the **crown of thorns** used by angry soldiers to wound and humiliate Jesus. What do you want to tell Jesus right now?*

(Pass around the purple cloak / cloth, then the crown of thorns)

## **Station 8**

**The Crucifixion: prop - large cross or crucifix and large nails**

Matthew 27:33-36

*(Dim the lights)*

*Here is Jesus, dying a brutal death on a cross, an instrument of torture.*

*Imagine yourself there at this horrific scene. What is going through your mind? What are you feeling?...*

*The sin of all human beings led Jesus to the cross, not just the Roman soldiers who arrested and beat him.*

*Our sins nailed Him to the cross.*

*Yet it was His love that held him there. He bore the pain and suffering of the cross so we could be forgiven and be set free from our slavery to sin.*

(Pass around large nails/hold nails in your hands)

## **Station 9**

**Jesus' Death: prop - candles around cross/crucifix**

Matthew 27:45-50

(Extinguish candles)

*When Jesus died that day, so many who were there must have felt that their hopes had died as well. Darkness came over all the land, and darkness overcame those who watched as Jesus breathed His last breath.*

*Remember the darkness that the whole world—and even heaven itself—must have felt that day. Remember that there are many people who still live in darkness...sin... and hopelessness... Will you bring them His light?*

Optional Play Song: *You Were on the Cross / I Remember / Were You There*

## Station 10

### Jesus' Burial – prop – large rock

Matthew 27:57-61

*The rock you see here is a fraction of the size of the rock that sealed Jesus' tomb. Imagine the heaviness of it. Touch this rock. Feel its weight. (Give them a chance to feel the rock) Can you sense the heavy weight the disciples and those who loved Jesus must have felt as Jesus' tomb was sealed? In their eyes, death had won. This was a stone that no one could move. It was final. Jesus was gone and buried.*

**\*\*\*You may want to stop here if leading on Good Friday\*\*\*. (Move on to Closing Reflection below)**

## Station 11

### Jesus' Resurrection: prop - white cloth

Matthew 28:1-10

*Imagine the cold, heavy, anxious fear and sorrow that these women must have felt as they journeyed to the tomb that day. Imagine the emptiness they must have felt when they arrived at the empty tomb, the stone rolled away, the empty grave clothes in the place where Jesus' body was supposed to be. Imagine the shock and the overwhelming joy they felt as they met the risen Jesus in the garden. Their Lord was alive! Imagine how these women were transformed in that one moment. How do you think the risen Jesus wants to transform you?*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Closing

*Think about the Journey you have just taken through the final days of Jesus to the cross and beyond. His was no accidental journey. Every step Jesus took was purposeful, deliberate, by plan. Every moment of pain, betrayal, and agony was borne by him out of love for you. You were—and still are—a part of his journey.*

*What will you do with Jesus? You can, in your heart, choose to hold on to your sin, bear the guilt yourself, and take it with you as you leave today. Or you can leave clinging to the extravagant love and forgiveness of the one who died for you. It's your choice. You choose by asking his forgiveness and receiving it. You have experienced some of the emotions that Jesus, the Son of God, experienced for you. You can leave here the same as you were coming in. Or you can leave having chosen to pursue Jesus Christ, the God who pursued you all the way to the cross. It's your choice. You choose by telling him that your life is his. You experienced the agony of surrender and obedience that Jesus Christ experienced. You can leave here still holding on to parts of your life, the parts you don't want to surrender. Or you can leave choosing to surrender everything to him. It's your choice. You choose by praying the prayer of Gethsemane: "Yet not as I will, but as you will." What is Jesus saying to you tonight? Journal and/or discuss as a family.*