

Help Us to Love (Stations of the Cross)

Jesus committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When he was abused, he did not return abuse. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.
(1 Peter 2:22-23)

Preparation: *You will need enough space for everyone to move freely around the room. Place 14 candles around the room to signify the 14 Stations. As the group reaches each station, light the candle there. At the end of the service, when all candles are lit, participants form a circle around the room. Select readers.*

Opening Prayer

+Loving God,
as we speak our words for the journey,
let us open our hearts to receive
the generous gift of love that Christ offers us.
Despite our weaknesses,
despite our sins,
despite our failings,
Jesus cherishes each of us.
When we truly receive him,
we are cleansed.
Jesus is our loving example.
As we walk the Stations of the Cross,
teach us to keep our hearts ever open to
your blessing.
Help us to love.
We ask this through your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Scripture: Acts 8:32-33

Leader: The First Station:
Jesus is condemned by Pontius Pilate
Reader 1: Though you did nothing wrong,
you have been condemned to die.
Yet you do not complain.
You do not condemn those
who condemn you.
You are still filled with love.
All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even in the face of hatred.
Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Second Station:
Jesus takes up the cross
Reader 2: You are made to carry
your heavy cross.
Yet you make no objection or protest
about the burden placed upon you.
The cross cuts into your flesh.
Yet, you are still filled with love.
All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even in the face of physical pain.
Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Third Station:
Jesus falls for the first time
Reader 1: The weight of the cross
taxes your body.
You fall under its heavy weight.
Yet, you are still filled with love,
All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even when we fall.
Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Fourth Station:

Jesus meets his mother

Reader 2: You meet your grieving mother.

She weeps to see your suffering.

You comfort her despite your pain.

You are filled with love.

All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even when we see pain reflected
in the eyes of our loved ones.

Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Fifth Station:

Simon of Cyrene carries the cross

Reader 1: Simon helps you.

He bears the weight of the heavy cross
for a while.

You did not ask for his help,
but you are grateful to him just the same.

You are filled with love.

All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even when we need help
from those around us.

Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Sixth Station:

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Reader 2: The strain of bearing the cross
makes you sweat.

Veronica's gift is to wipe your face
and cool your brow.

You are filled with love.

All: Help us, Jesus, to always love when
we accept gifts from others.

Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Seventh Station:

Jesus falls the second time

Reader 1: The weight of the cross
becomes almost too much to bear.

You fall a second time.

You get but a few moments' respite
from the heavy burden.

Yet you are filled with love.

All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even when we think it is too hard
to get up after we have fallen.

Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Eighth Station:

Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Reader 2: The women of Jerusalem weep
for you, yet you pray for them and tell them
not to weep for you but for their children.

You are filled with love.

All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even when we need to support others.

Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Ninth Station:

Jesus falls the third time

Reader 1: The crushing weight of the cross
causes you to fall a third time.

It is even more difficult to rise now.

The cross continues to cut into your flesh.

Yet you are filled with love.

All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even when we believe
that we cannot get up again.

Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Tenth Station:

Jesus is stripped of his garments

Reader 2: Your captors strip you
and cast lots for your clothing.

Yet you are filled with love.

All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even if others try to take away our dignity.

Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Eleventh Station:

Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Reader 1: The soldiers brutally nail
your wrists and feet to the cross.

The searing pain is agonizing.

They have no regard for your suffering.

They laugh at you.

Yet, you are still filled with love.

All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even in the face of persecution.

Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Twelfth Station: Jesus dies

Reader 2: You die on the cross.

Yet you do not blame those
who have crucified you.

You are still filled with love.

All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even in the face of death.

Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Thirteenth Station:

The body of Jesus is removed from the cross

Reader 1: Your sacred body is removed
from the cross

as your mother and others look on.

Those who killed you

do not know what they have done.

You still love.

All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even when we feel that we have lost
our battles.

Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Leader: The Fourteenth Station:

Jesus is laid in the tomb

Reader 2: Your body is prepared
and then laid to rest in a tomb.

A large stone is rolled in front

of the entrance to keep your body safe.

All: Help us, Jesus, to always love,
even when it seems like the end is at hand.

Let us follow in the way of the Lord.

Closing Reflection:

Leader: We have walked the way
of the Lord

and are now surrounded by a circle
of his light.

Let us remember that just as this circle
is continuous,

with no beginning or end,

so, too, is the love of Christ.

Do not break the cycle of love.

These words for the journey
will bring us closer to God.

We will grow as we journey
in faith together. +