

INTRODUCTION

Dear Child,

This Stations of the Cross booklet was written just for you. But maybe you're not sure how to use it. You may not even know what the Stations of the Cross are. Let me describe them.

The path that Jesus followed from the courtroom of Pontius Pilate to the place where he died, is in Jerusalem. There this path is known as the "Via Dolorosa," or the Sorrowful Way. Certain spots where Jesus stopped along this route are marked, and these are called Stations.

Over the centuries, many people traveled to Jerusalem to retrace and recall Jesus' steps to Calvary, especially during Lent. But Jerusalem was too far for most people. So, in the Middle Ages, they began making this "journey" in churches, using painted or carved images of the fourteen stops Jesus made. (Look around your parish church; you'll probably see the Stations there.) At each Station, people would think about what happened to Jesus and they would pray about it.

The first Stations of the Cross booklet was published long ago in 1505. Today there are many such booklets to help people think and pray about the "Sorrowful Way," but most of these booklets are for adults. This one is for you. You can use it at home (because it has drawings of each Station), in class, and, of course, in your parish church.

It tells you what happened to Jesus at each of his stops, and it offers you a message to think and pray about. Most of all, this booklet will help you discover Jesus' love for you and it will give you ways to follow Jesus, here and now, in your own life.

May you stay close to Jesus always.

Jesus Is Condemned

Pilate the Judge said, "Look, here's your king." But the people yelled, "Get rid of him. Kill him!" "Should I kill your king?" Pilate asked them. "Yes," they yelled back, "kill him!" So, Pilate allowed Jesus to be led away by the soldiers (John 19:16).

Recite the following with your right hand over your heart.

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have begged Pilate to set you free. We would have yelled, "Let him go; he's a good man."

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

Time to Think and Pray

Would I really have been brave enough to speak up for Jesus? What if Pilate had arrested me, too?

Here and now, do I have the courage to speak up for someone who is being treated unfairly?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.

Jesus Carries His Cross

The soldiers led Jesus away as Pilate had ordered. They put a crown of thorns on his head; they beat him, and then made fun of him. Then they laid a heavy cross on his shoulders and ordered him to carry it to a place called Calvary. His whole body ached, and he was so tired he could hardly walk (Matthew 27:31–32).

Recite the following with your left hand on your shoulder.

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have carried that heavy cross for you. We would have told those soldiers, “Get back; leave him alone! Can’t you see he’s in pain?”

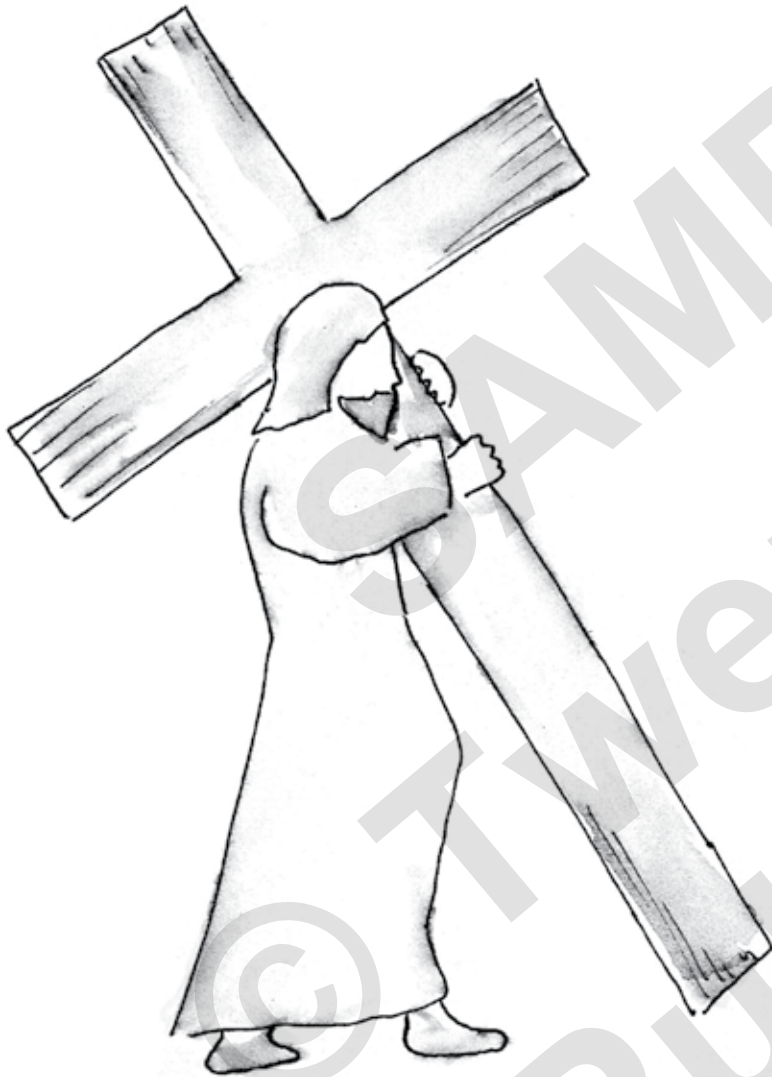
But we weren’t there. We are only here now, remembering.

Time to Think and Pray

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 Would I have dared talk back to a group of sword-carrying soldiers? What if one of them had pointed his sword at me?

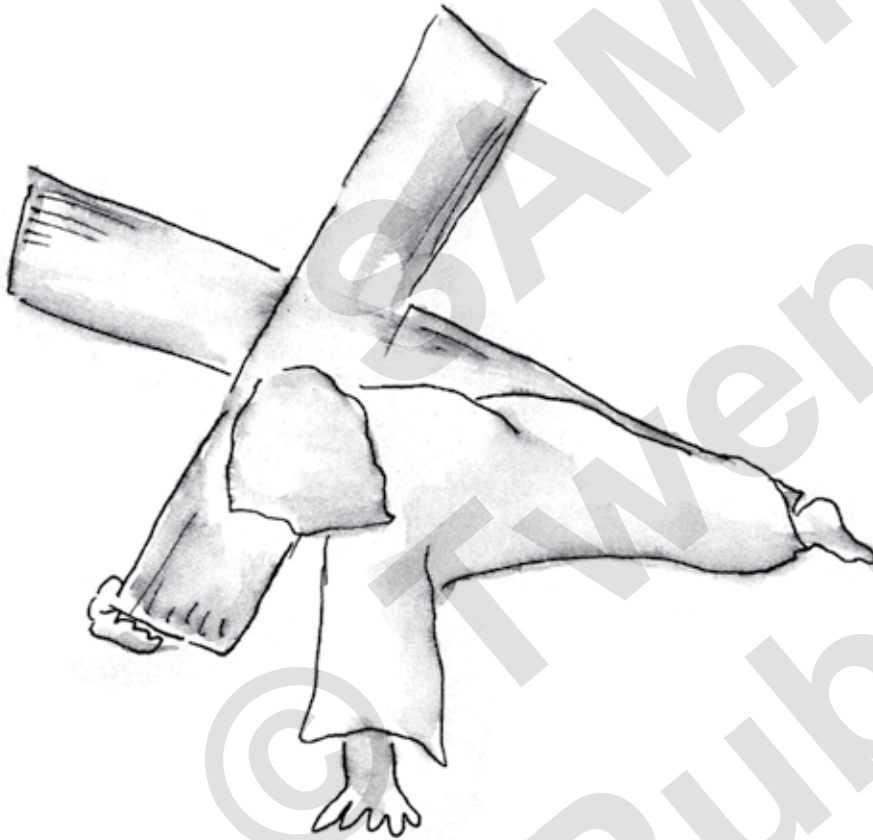
Here and now, what do I do when someone is wrongly blamed for something he or she didn’t do?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.



Jesus Falls Under the Cross

Jesus was so weak that he could not stand the weight of the cross. He fell to the ground. Perhaps as he lay there, weak and in pain, he remembered the words of Job: "I have rubbed my face in the dust and it is red with tears....My breath grows weak and I can feel that the grave is waiting for me" (16:16; 17:1). But the soldiers had no compassion. They pulled Jesus up and pushed him forward.



Recite the following with one knee on the floor.

If we had been there, Jesus, we would have made sure you didn't fall. We would have walked beside you and given you strong arms to lean on.

But we weren't there. We are only here now, remembering.

..... Time to Think and Pray

Would I have wanted to touch Jesus and get blood and dirt on my clothes? What if someone had seen me like that?

Here and now, what do I do when my friends laugh at me for helping someone?

Jesus, teach me how to follow you.