

# Passion stations

## Prayer stations based on elements of the story

### Introduction

We offer a series of stations to take participants on a journey through Lent. The stations reflect the stages of Jesus' journey to the cross, and ultimately to his resurrection. They offer us an opportunity to spend time thinking about each of these stages in relation to our own lives.

- The stations draw inspiration from some of the symbols that are associated with Jesus' journey to the cross and the resurrection. Instructions are included here for what you need to do for each station so that the reflections and actions that follow can be printed and given to your participants. They can be downloaded from the [WEB](#).

### Set up

#### 1 Station | Silver coins

**You will need:** a handful of silver (10 pence, 50 pence) coins.

Place a pile of silver coins on a table for people to pick up and hold.

#### 2 Station | Rooster

**You will need:** cut lengths of cord or string around 15cm long; audio clip of a rooster crowing (optional). Play the audio clip every 30 seconds or so. In the worship space, place the threads of cord or string on a table for people to touch.

#### 3 Station | Purple robe

**You will need:** a length of rough, purple cloth – perhaps with pieces already ripped out.

Place the cloth on a table, ensuring that it is easy for people to rip.

#### 4 Station | Thorns

**You will need:** a vase of roses with the flower heads cut off and the rose petals kept.

Scatter the petals around the worship space and leave the leaves and stems containing thorns in a vase on a table.

#### 5 Station | Wood

**You will need:** craft/lolly sticks; approx 15cm lengths of string, thread or ribbon. Set out the sticks and string. Make one cross with two sticks and weave the string across the intersection to hold the cross together. Place this sample cross on a table along with sticks and string for people to make their own cross.

#### 6 Station | Nails

**You will need:** a wooden cross made from two rough pieces of wood tied together with thick string or rope; a hammer and nails. Set out the hammer and nails alongside the cross. You should consider all health and safety issues and we suggest that a responsible adult supervises this station.

#### 7 Station | Sponge

**You will need:** a large bottle of vinegar and some cups or glasses; a jug of water. Set out the water, vinegar and glasses on a table.

#### 8 Station | Stone

**You will need:** a large stone and some chalk. Set out the stone and chalk. Or, if the environment allows, draw out a stone pavement on the floor.

#### 9 Station | White cloth

**You will need:** a large sheet of white cloth, with small squares cut from the same fabric. Set out the cloth and offcuts near to the area of the stone.

### Using the stations

- You might set out tables around your worshipping space, displaying the image alongside the response items, with cards showing the reflection and response activities. Or you might find items for each station to set out so that people can touch and feel each of the instruments of the Passion as they make their way along the journey.
- Or if it is difficult to move around your space, you might use the images as a

PowerPoint™ display, inviting people to listen to the reflections.

- The stations can work together as a complete service, or you may wish to hold two different services using the first seven stations during Lent or Holy Week and the final two stations during the Easter season – the resources are flexible and can be adapted according to your needs.

The station information is set out in separate frames so that they can be printed and placed at a station with the items suggested below.

### Conclusion

After this series of stations, you might like to share a time of collective worship. If you're using the prayers in two separate sections, the Lent stations should end in a quiet, reflective and calm way, perhaps using the following prayer (provide copies for all participants).

Jesus our life,  
we've walked with you on this agonising journey to the cross.  
Keep us prayerful in these days as the world carries on its daily work.  
Remind us that these days are holy and special,  
and that the cross is carried daily by so many.  
Help us to walk with them too.  
**Amen.**

If you use the Easter stations, it can be good to end with a bigger celebration (perhaps even with an Easter waterside breakfast – see John 21.10-14!). Again, a communal prayer can help to draw the worship to a close.

**Risen Lord!**

We're called to live in the brilliance of Easter, thank you!

Thank you for the wonder of new life, for an end to sin and despair, and for the chance to truly live.

Help us as we try to be Easter people to be shining examples of hope and peace.  
**Alleluia! Amen.**

# 01 First station | Silver coins

LENT STATIONS

Open the Word Luke 22.1-6

## Reflect

Tradition tells us that Judas was paid 30 silver coins to betray the Lord. You can't put a price on a life, but even this seems an insulting amount of money to put the Son of God to death. Of course, it wasn't long before Judas regretted his actions. After his moment of madness and greed, Judas realised that he'd made a huge mistake and took his own life in regret.

Thirty silver coins...what value would that have for us? How often does our material need or greed dominate us and stop us from thinking clearly about things that are really

important? We're not going to face the same sort of dilemma as Judas, but even so, perhaps we sometimes get our values mixed up. The journey to the cross invites us to think again.

## Respond

Think about what is really valuable to you. What is precious? What's really important? Hold a coin as you think – and pray that you will recognise the things that have real worth.



# 02 Second station | Rooster

LENT STATIONS

Open the Word Matthew 26.69-75

## Reflect

Peter thought he was such a faithful follower of Jesus. Just hours previously, he'd expressed his undying love for the Lord and promised that he'd always stick with him. And yet now, when Jesus needed him – really needed him, he denied all knowledge. Some friend he was...

It can be difficult to keep faith – especially when things are tough. But the piercing crow of the rooster shocked Peter into realising his mistake. Instead of being there for his friend, he'd let him down. His tears of regret show that he was

overtaken with fear, scared about what was happening to the Lord. But they made him see, too, that loyalty and courage are important gifts. Peter realised that he was nothing without his faith in Jesus.

## Respond

Think about your own faith in God. Perhaps there are things that cause you to have doubts or questions at times? Pray for your faith to be strong. As you pray, tie a knot in a piece of cord. Then keep the cord with you – put it your pocket, or bag (or sock!) – to remind you of God's presence.



# 03 Third station | Purple robe

LENT STATIONS

Open the Word Matthew 27.27-28

## Reflect

As Jesus is stripped of his clothes and forced to wear a purple robe, he is stripped of his dignity and value too. The soldiers' actions show a complete lack of respect for Jesus – he's treated with total contempt.

Treated like a criminal, Jesus stands before us as one who represents the victimised and the outcast. So many people today are subjected to similar behaviour – treated as less than human because of their race, background, beliefs or social status. Stripped of their dignity, they share in the unjust

treatment of Jesus, hurt through the words and actions of an intolerant attitude.

## Respond

Think about those who are treated without respect and dignity. Perhaps there are people in your own community who are stripped of their worth and value through the judgements and actions of others? Rip a small piece of purple cloth and keep it with you in a safe place. Use it to remind you of the suffering Jesus experienced, so that you can remember to treat others fairly and equally.



# 04 Fourth station | Thorns

LENT STATIONS

Open the Word **Matthew 27.29-30**

**Reflect**

The violence shown to Jesus was physical and verbal. Now crowned with thorns, the soldiers mock Jesus, spitting at him and poking fun at him. It's a frightening display of abuse and bullying.

Here, we think of all those who are badly treated. As Jesus endures these humiliating events, he takes with him all those who are victims, all who face rejection and hurt.

We think, too, of the power of our own words and actions, how easy it is to build up or destroy, to praise or to criticise, to

embrace or to revolt. We pray for the wisdom to do the right thing.

**Respond**

Think about those who suffer hardship and who are treated badly – those who experience the agony of the thorn without the beauty of the rose. As you pray for them, hold a petal. Ask God to help you to celebrate the beauty and dignity of each person.



# 05 Fifth station | Wood

LENT STATIONS

Open the Word **Mark 15.20-21**

**Reflect**

The cross is a strange symbol in many ways. We'll hang crosses in our homes, schools and churches; we'll wear the cross round our neck. And yet this is an instrument of torture – a sign of real horror and inhumanity. Some people would think it an odd choice for a symbol of faith.

It's important, though, to remember that Jesus loves us so much that he was willing to suffer for us. In taking up his cross, Jesus accepts all the worries and troubles and problems of the world and carries them for us. He takes up

our own burdens, too, carrying us with him and supporting us at each step of life's journey.

The cross is a strange symbol. But it's the empty cross of Easter, the cross of Resurrection, that makes this symbol real.

**Respond**

Pray for any worries or concerns you have – let Jesus carry these thoughts for you. Make a cross to take with you as a reminder of the Lord's guiding presence.



# 06 Sixth station | Nails

LENT STATIONS

Open the Word **Luke 23.33-35**

**Reflect**

It's amazing to think that, even at this moment of incredible torture, as he was nailed to the cross, Jesus still reached out to others in compassion and care. He called on the Father to forgive those who put him to death, and he'd later seek to share forgiveness with the repentant criminal who hung alongside him. Jesus continued to spread the message of peace, even as he died.

We're perhaps not always so ready to forgive. We might struggle at times to forgive others, or to seek forgiveness

ourselves. Sometimes we can hold on to grudges and disputes, even though we know they cause us sadness and pain. The nails of the cross remind us of the hurt we can cause ourselves and others by being unforgiving.

**Respond**

Think about who you need to forgive, or what you need to seek forgiveness for. As you think and pray, ask God to bring you peace. As a sign of your prayer, carefully hammer a nail into the cross.



# 07 Seventh station | Sponge

Open the Word Mark 15.35-37

LENT STATIONS

## Reflect

As he came closer to death, Jesus cried out in pain and agony. His final 'drink' of a sponge soaked in vinegar seems to be a final insult. And yet Jesus did not thirst for anything so simple as a drink. He thirsted for a world of justice and peace, a world where people recognised the love of God more than anything else. Instead, he tasted the bitterness of vinegar – and with it the sour taste of rejection and betrayal and hate.

As he took his final breath, a sense of darkness and gloom

covered the earth. It was a darkness of life without God, a life where all hope seemed to have gone.

## Respond

Think about the things that make you feel sad or concerned, the things that you'd like to change in the world. As you taste some vinegar, ask God that you will not be bitter and despairing, but positive and hopeful. Take a sip of water to wash away the bitterness.



# 08 Eighth station | Stone

Open the Word Luke 24.1-3

EASTER STATIONS

## Reflect

What a mixture of emotions these days had been. The women had rejoiced as Jesus entered Jerusalem; they'd sat mesmerised as Jesus shared the Passover meal and as he washed the disciples' feet. They had wept in horror as they saw their Lord carry his cross to Calvary. And now, with heaviness in their hearts, they came to anoint his body, convinced, surely, that all was over.

An empty tomb...now what should they think? Could it possibly be true? All the promises that Jesus made?

## Respond

Easter! The Lord is alive! The women discovered that the tomb was empty and that the Lord had risen from the dead. It's hard to imagine what they were feeling or what emotions were running through their hearts. But what does the Easter message mean for you? Try to capture the mood of that first Easter morning. Think about the real meaning and significance of Easter for you and use the chalk to write a prayer, message or reflection on the stone. As you do this, pray that you'll be filled with the joy and wonder of the Resurrection.



# 09 Ninth station | White cloth

Open the Word John 20.3-9

EASTER STATIONS

## Reflect

Following the women, Peter and Jesus' friends discover for themselves that the Lord is risen. Even before they encounter the Lord, the signs are there: the stone is rolled back; the body is gone; the burial cloths are left behind. So it's true. Jesus has defeated even death itself. Just as he promised, he's risen from the dead.

For Peter, those doubts and questions and that horrible moment of denial a couple of days earlier disappear in a moment. How could he have been so stupid? In his heart

of hearts, he knew that Jesus would be there for him. Life is going to be different now, totally different. They can hardly begin to understand the impact that this will have on them and generations to come. But one thing is sure: nothing will ever be the same again.

## Respond

Think about how you'll live as an Easter person. What difference can the Lord's Resurrection make to you and to your treatment of others? We're invited to live in the new life of Easter each day – the hope of Easter can help us through our difficult moments, and keep us positive and energised in our happier times. Pray that you'll be a good witness to Jesus.