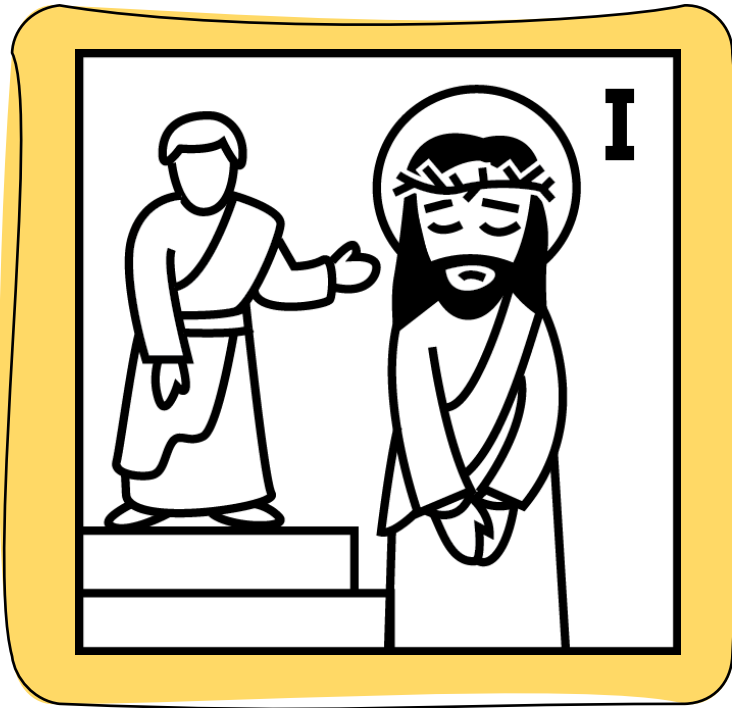


Stations of the Cross

Jesus is condemned to death.



Isaiah 53 v 12

He willingly gave his life and was treated like a criminal. But he carried away the sins of many people and asked forgiveness for those who sinned.

Jesus was brought before Pilate to be sentenced. Jesus knew he had done nothing wrong, but he did not argue. Jesus knew that this was part of God's plan.

How does it make you feel when people are not treated fairly?

Why do you think it was important that Jesus was not guilty?

Mark 15 v 1–15

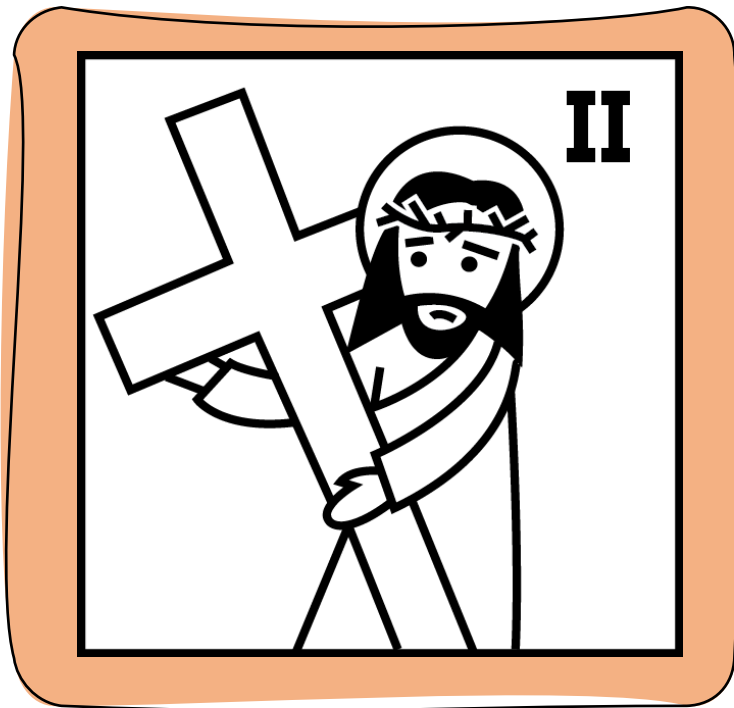
Very early in the morning, the leading priests, the elders, the teachers of the law, and all the Jewish council decided what to do with Jesus. They tied him, led him away, and turned him over to Pilate, the governor. Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Those are your words." The leading priests accused Jesus of many things. So Pilate asked Jesus another question, "You can see that they are accusing you of many things. Aren't you going to answer?" But Jesus still said nothing, so Pilate was very surprised.

Every year at the time of the Passover the governor would free one prisoner whom the people chose. At that time, there was a man named Barabbas in prison who was a rebel and had committed murder during a riot. The crowd came to Pilate and began to ask him to free a prisoner as he always did. So Pilate asked them, "Do you want me to free the king of the Jews?" Pilate knew that the leading priests had turned Jesus in to him because they were jealous. But the leading priests had persuaded the people to ask Pilate to free Barabbas, not Jesus. Then Pilate asked the crowd again, "So what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?"

They shouted, "Crucify him!" Pilate asked, "Why? What wrong has he done?" But they shouted even louder, "Crucify him!" Pilate wanted to please the crowd, so he freed Barabbas for them. After having Jesus beaten with whips, he handed Jesus over to the soldiers to be crucified.

Stations of the Cross

Jesus takes up the cross.



John 19 v 5–6, 15–17

So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

When the leading priests and the guards saw Jesus, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

They shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Do you want me to crucify your king?" The leading priests answered, "The only king we have is Caesar." So Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

The soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, Jesus went out to a place called The Place of the Skull, which in the Hebrew language is called Golgotha.

Jesus had to carry his own wooden cross up a steep hill to the site of the crucifixion. It would have been extremely difficult and tiring.

How do you think Jesus felt when he had to carry his cross up the hill?

What do you find hardest about being a follower of Jesus?

Matthew 16 v 24

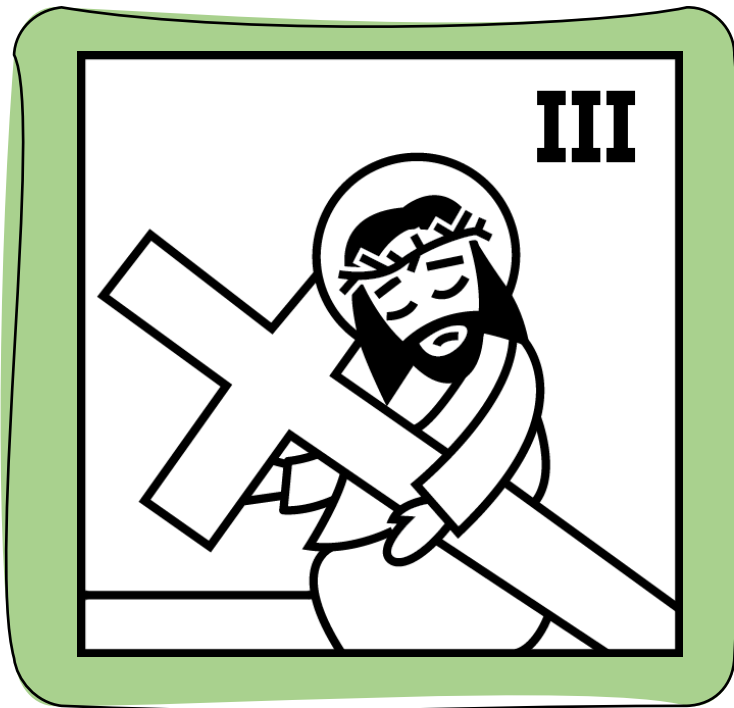
(New Living Translation)

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.

These words from Matthew were spoken by Jesus before the events of Easter. His disciples did not know that Jesus was going to be crucified but they would have understood the image that Jesus was using. Jesus was saying that following him would not always be easy.

Stations of the Cross

Jesus falls the first time.



The journey to the cross was not easy, Jesus was carrying a heavy load and it would have been hot and exhausting work.

Pause here and use the verses and questions below to think about times when you have fallen short of God's standards.

Romans 3 v 23–26

Everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's glorious standard, and all need to be made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They need to be made free from sin through Jesus Christ. God sent him to die in our place to take away our sins. We receive forgiveness through faith in the blood of Jesus' death. This showed that God always does what is right and fair, as in the past when he was patient and did not punish people for their sins. And God gave Jesus to show today that he does what is right. God did this so he could judge rightly and so he could make right any person who has faith in Jesus.

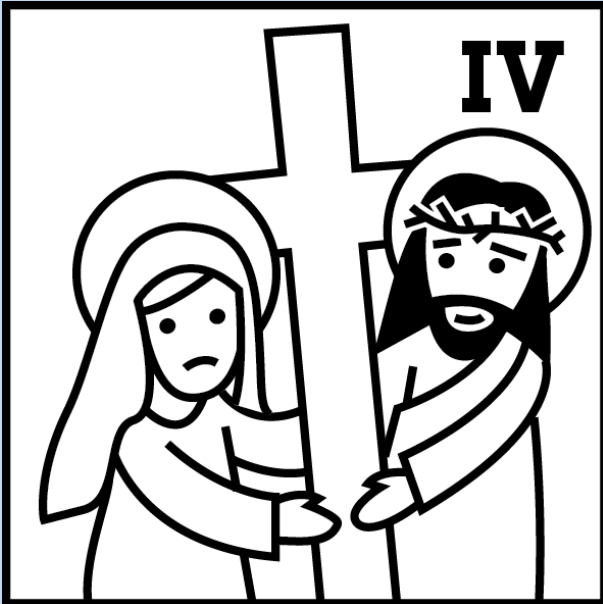
Is there any area in your life where you are falling short of God's standards?

Dear God,
I know that I do not always live in a way that pleases you. I am sorry for the times when I have made bad choices in my words and actions. Thank you for your love and forgiveness.

Amen

Stations of the Cross

Jesus meets his mother.



The Bible teaches us that Mary the mother of Jesus was present at the crucifixion. These verses from early in the book of Luke appear after the visit of the shepherds and Jesus' visits to the temple as a baby and child. Mary knew that her child had been sent with a special purpose and had been thinking of and preparing for this moment since Jesus' birth but it must still have been hard for her.

What do you think it would have been like for Mary knowing that Jesus was the son of God, sent to be the Messiah?

John 19 v 26–27

When Jesus saw his mother and the follower he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son." Then he said to the follower, "Here is your mother." From that time on, the follower took her to live in his home.

Luke 2 v 19

But Mary treasured these things and continued to think about them.

Luke 2 v 34–35

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, "God has chosen this child to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God that many people will not accept so that the thoughts of many will be made known. And the things that will happen will make your heart sad, too."

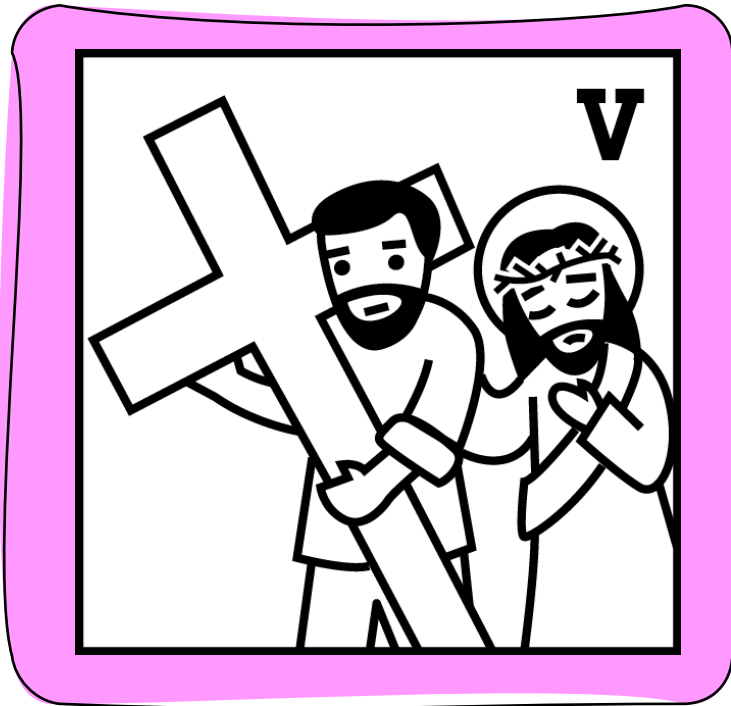
Luke 2 v 51

Jesus went with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them. But his mother kept in her mind all that had happened.

Who are the people in our own life who mother and father us?

Stations of the Cross

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus.



Mark 15 v 21

A man named Simon from Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was coming from the fields to the city. The soldiers forced Simon to carry the cross for Jesus.

Galatians 6 v 2

By helping each other with your troubles, you truly obey the law of Christ.

How do you think Jesus felt when somebody else carried the cross for him?

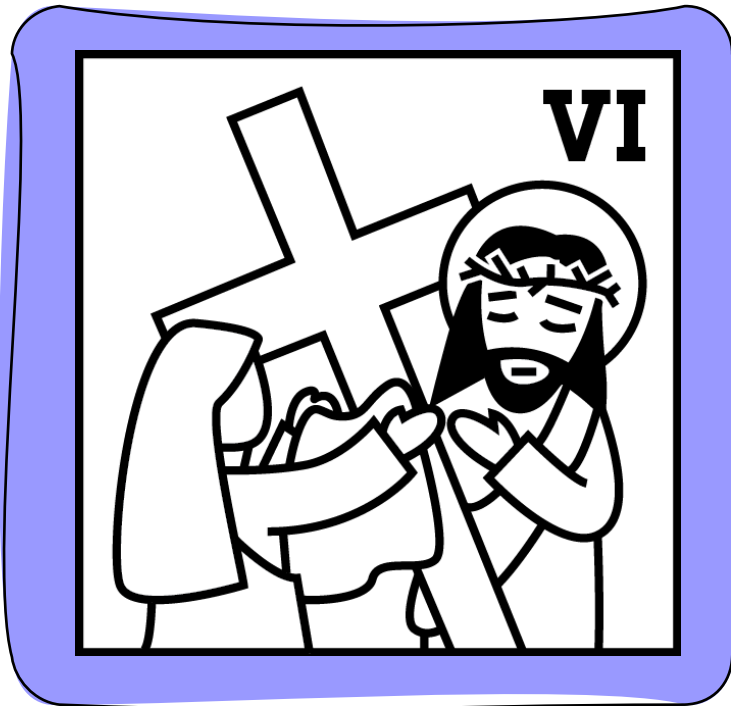
How can we help to carry the burdens of those around us?

In Galatians 6 verse 2 Paul writes to the church in Galatia encouraging them to help one another and to carry the troubles and burdens of those around them.

Jesus could not carry the burden of his cross alone, that is why the soldiers forced somebody else to carry the cross for him. Who might we be able to help with the things that are weighing them down or challenging them today? Who could we offer to pray for and support?

Stations of the Cross

Veronica wipes Jesus' face.



A traditional story about Jesus' journey to the cross is that a woman called Veronica offered a cloth or veil to wipe Jesus' face. The story says that the picture of Jesus' face remained on the cloth.

While we cannot read about this story in the Bible we can think about the lessons it teaches us.

Matthew 25 v 34–40

"Then the King will say to the people on his right, 'Come, my Father has given you his blessing. Receive the kingdom God has prepared for you since the world was made. I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'

"Then the good people will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you alone and away from home and invite you into our house? When did we see you without clothes and give you something to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and care for you?' "Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.'

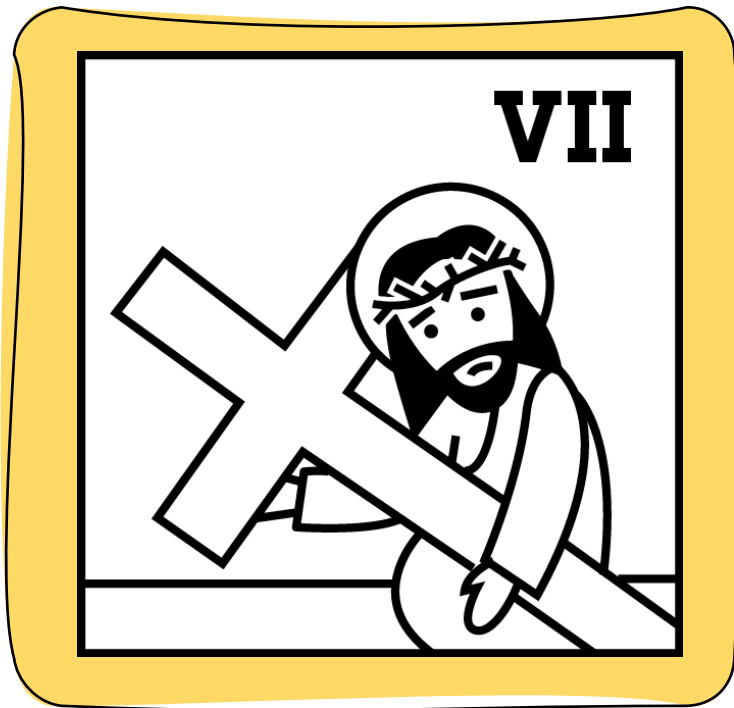
In the story Veronica showed compassion and care for Jesus in his time of need.

In this parable from Matthew 25 we learn that when we show care and compassion for others we are also showing care and compassion to God.

Who might God be asking you to reach out to with care and compassion today?

Stations of the Cross

Jesus falls the second time



The journey to the cross was not easy, crowds jeered and mocked Jesus on his way.

Pause here and use the verses and questions below to think about how it feels to be in difficult and painful circumstances.

How does it make you feel when people say mean or hurtful things to you?

How should we respond when others treat us unfairly?

Psalm 38

I trust you, Lord.
You will answer, my Lord and God.
I said, "Don't let them laugh at me
or brag when I am defeated."
I am about to die,
and I cannot forget my pain.
I confess my guilt;
I am troubled by my sin.
My enemies are strong and healthy,
and many hate me for no reason.
They repay me with evil for the good I did.
They lie about me because I try to do
good.

Lord, don't leave me;
my God, don't go away.
Quickly come and help me,
my Lord and Saviour.

Dear God,
Thank you that you are always
with me, that I can always call on
you for help.

When others treat me meanly or
say hurtful things help me to be
forgiving and to remember the
true things that you say about me
instead.

Amen

Stations of the Cross

Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem



Luke 23 v 27–31

A large crowd of people was following Jesus, including some women who were sad and crying for him. But Jesus turned and said to them, "Women of Jerusalem, don't cry for me. Cry for yourselves and for your children. The time is coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the women who cannot have children and who have no babies to nurse.' Then people will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' And they will say to the hills, 'Cover us!' If they act like this now when life is good, what will happen when bad times come?"

Jesus knew that difficult and challenging times were ahead, that there would be times of sadness and weeping. The Bible promises us that God sees our tears and hears our prayers.

Psalm 56 v 8

You have recorded my troubles.
You have kept a list of my tears.
Aren't they in your records?

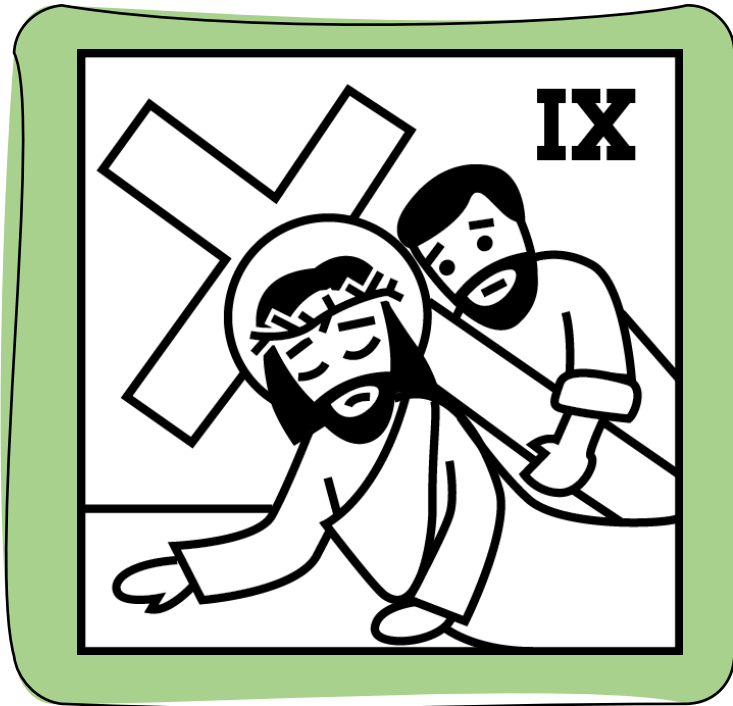
What is the most challenging time you have faced?

Who do you go to for help during difficult or challenging times?

What are the things in the world which make you want to cry today?

Stations of the Cross

Jesus falls the third time



The journey to the cross was not easy, but Jesus knew the path he was on was part of God's plan.

Pause here and use the verses and questions below to think about the path that God has for you.

What plans does God have for your future?

If you are not sure why not pray and ask Him?

Psalm 37 v 23–24

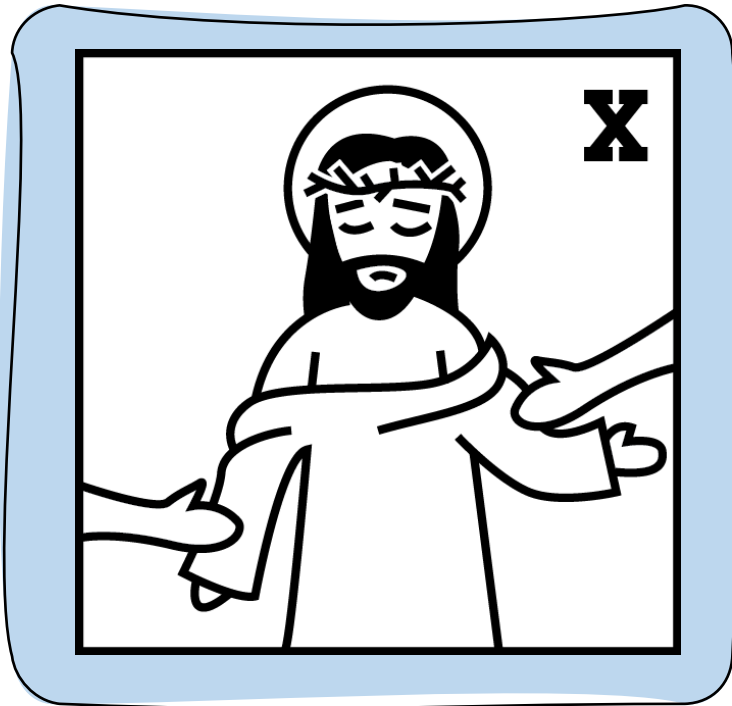
When people's steps follow the Lord,
God is pleased with their ways.
If they stumble, they will not fall,
because the Lord holds their hand.

Dear God,
Thank you that you have good plans for me and my future. Help me to follow you and live in a way that pleases you.

Amen

Stations of the Cross

Jesus is stripped of his garments



John 19 v 23–24

After the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, with each soldier getting one part. They also took his long shirt, which was all one piece of cloth, woven from top to bottom. So the soldiers said to each other, "We should not tear this into parts. Let's throw lots to see who will get it." This happened so that this Scripture would come true:

"They divided my clothes among them,
and they threw lots for my clothing."

Psalm 22:18

So the soldiers did this.

This is not the only point in the Easter story when we see the tearing of fabric.

When Jesus died the curtain in the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.

The curtain in the temple prevented anybody except the High Priest from entering the Holy of Holies, a special place where sacrifices were offered to God. When it tore it was a sign that a new way was now open. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was enough for all, everybody can now draw close to God.

Matthew 27 v 51

Then the curtain in the Temple was torn into two pieces, from the top to the bottom.

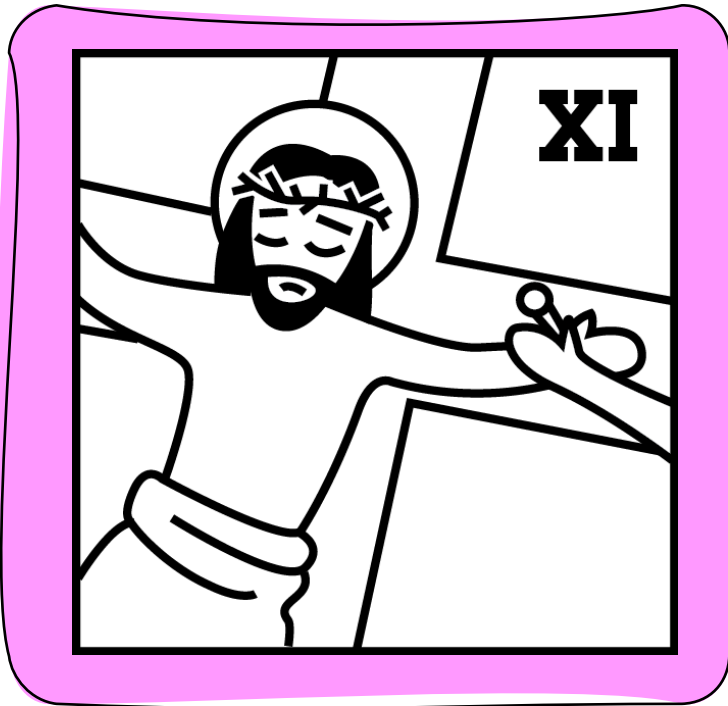
Why do you think that Old Testament scriptures speak about things that happened to Jesus?

How can we draw close to God?

What are some of the things that can stop you drawing close to God?

Stations of the Cross

Jesus is nailed to the cross



Luke 23 v 33–43

When they came to a place called the Skull, the soldiers crucified Jesus and the criminals—one on his right and the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, because they don't know what they are doing."

The soldiers threw lots to decide who would get his clothes. The people stood there watching. And the leaders made fun of Jesus, saying, "He saved others. Let him save himself if he is God's Chosen One, the Christ."

The soldiers also made fun of him, coming to Jesus and offering him some vinegar. They said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!" At the top of the cross these words were written: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

One of the criminals on a cross began to shout insults at Jesus: "Aren't you the Christ? Then save yourself and us."

But the other criminal stopped him and said, "You should fear God! You are getting the same punishment he is. We are punished justly, getting what we deserve for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus said to him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

John 3 v 16

"God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life.

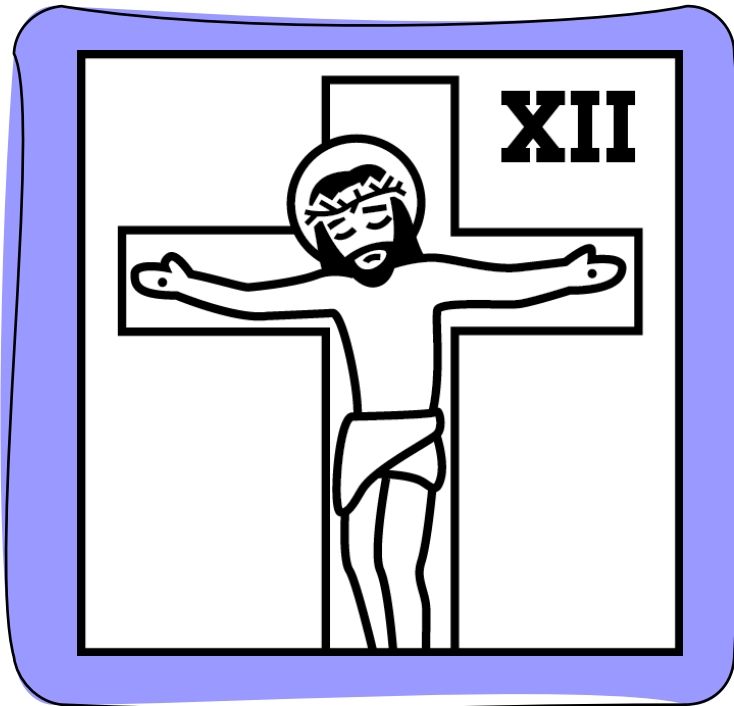
Jesus died on the cross not just for the Jewish people, but for everybody. Even the criminal on the cross beside him was invited to receive salvation and forgiveness because he believed in Jesus.

How do you think the criminal beside Jesus said he would see Him in heaven?

Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross for you?

Stations of the Cross

Jesus died on the cross



John 19 v 28–37

After this, Jesus knew that everything had been done. So that the Scripture would come true, he said, "I am thirsty." There was a jar full of vinegar there, so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a branch of a hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' mouth. When Jesus tasted the vinegar, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and died.

This day was Preparation Day, and the next day was a special Sabbath day. Since the religious leaders did not want the bodies to stay on the cross on the Sabbath day, they asked Pilate to order that the legs of the men be broken and the bodies be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man on the cross beside Jesus. Then they broke the legs of the man on the other cross beside Jesus. But when the soldiers came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers stuck his spear into Jesus' side, and at once blood and water came out. (The one who saw this happen is the one who told us this, and whatever he says is true. And he knows that he tells the truth, and he tells it so that you might believe.) These things happened to make the Scripture come true: "Not one of his bones will be broken." And another Scripture says, "They will look at the one they stabbed."

Zechariah 13 v 1

"At that time a fountain will be open for David's descendants and for the people of Jerusalem to cleanse them of their sin and uncleanness."

Revelation 21 v 6

The One on the throne said to me, "It is finished. I am the Alpha and the Omega, [a] the Beginning and the End. I will give free water from the spring of the water of life to anyone who is thirsty."

When Jesus died the soldiers stabbed him in the side and blood and water flowed out. Throughout the Bible blood and water are powerful symbols. These verses from Zechariah and Revelation can help us understand why Jesus died on the cross. To cleanse us from our sins and to offer us new life!

Psalms 36 v 9

You are the giver of life.
Your light lets us enjoy life.

Stations of the Cross

Jesus is taken down from the cross



John 19 v 38–40

Later, Joseph from Arimathea asked Pilate if he could take the body of Jesus. (Joseph was a secret follower of Jesus, because he was afraid of some of the leaders.) Pilate gave his permission, so Joseph came and took Jesus' body away.

Nicodemus, who earlier had come to Jesus at night, went with Joseph. He brought about seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes. These two men took Jesus' body and wrapped it with the spices in pieces of linen cloth, which is how they bury the dead.

Matthew 2 v 10–11

When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. They came to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. They opened their gifts and gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

When Jesus died he was placed into a borrowed tomb and anointed with expensive myrrh. These verses from Matthew remind us of when Jesus was visited by the wise men as a child, the gift of myrrh was a sign of what God had planned for Jesus' future.

What gifts do you have to offer and share with God?

What is the most precious and costly thing you can give to God?

Six days before Passover we see Mary anointing Jesus with expensive perfume at Bethany. She brought the most costly gift she could and poured it out to show her love for Jesus. What can we bring as our gift to Jesus today?

Stations of the Cross

Jesus is laid in the tomb



Mark 15 v 46–47

Joseph bought some linen cloth, took the body down from the cross, and wrapped it in the linen. He put the body in a tomb that was cut out of a wall of rock. Then he rolled a very large stone to block the entrance of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw the place where Jesus was laid.

Jesus had told his friends and followers that he was going to die and come back to life but they did not understand what he meant.

How do you think Jesus' friends and families felt when they placed him into the tomb?

Mark 9 v 30–32

Then Jesus and his followers left that place and went through Galilee. He didn't want anyone to know where he was, because he was teaching his followers. He said to them, "The Son of Man will be handed over to people, and they will kill him. After three days, he will rise from the dead." But the followers did not understand what Jesus meant, and they were afraid to ask him.

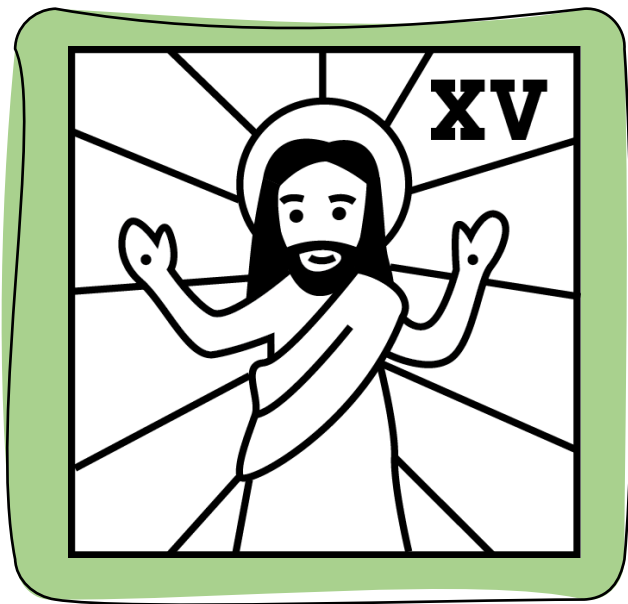
Colossians 2 v 12

When you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and you were raised up with him through your faith in God's power that was shown when he raised Christ from the dead.

This verse from Colossians reminds us that it was God who raised Jesus from the dead. We are invited to die to our old selfish ways of living and choose to live for God.

Stations of the Cross

Jesus is alive!



The story of Jesus did not end with his death and burial, three days later Jesus came back to life! He was seen walking around on the earth by many different people!

God's plan for the earth didn't end with Jesus, we are all invited to be part of God's big story, sharing his love with those around us and living in relationship with Him.

Who can you share the story of Jesus with today?

John 20 v 1–22

Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb while it was still dark. When she saw that the large stone had been moved away from the tomb, she ran to Simon Peter and the follower whom Jesus loved. Mary said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him."

So Peter and the other follower started for the tomb. They were both running, but the other follower ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down and looked in and saw the strips of linen cloth lying there, but he did not go in. Then following him, Simon Peter arrived and went into the tomb and saw the strips of linen lying there. He also saw the cloth that had been around Jesus' head, which was folded up and laid in a different place from the strips of linen. Then the other follower, who had reached the tomb first, also went in. He saw and believed. (They did not yet understand from the Scriptures that Jesus must rise from the dead.)

Then the followers went back home. But Mary stood outside the tomb, crying. As she was crying, she bent down and looked inside the tomb. She saw two angels dressed in white, sitting where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and one at the feet. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

She answered, "They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have put him." When Mary said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know it was Jesus. Jesus asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Whom are you looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said to him, "Did you take him away, sir? Tell me where you put him, and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

Mary turned toward Jesus and said in the Hebrew language, "Rabboni." (This means "Teacher.") Jesus said to her, "Don't hold on to me, because I have not yet gone up to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going back to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went and said to the followers, "I saw the Lord!" And she told them what Jesus had said to her.