

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Scavenger hunt and
geocaching adventure.



Your guidebook to walking
Jesus' final steps with him.

What we're doing . . .

Throughout many, many generations, Christians have spent time during Holy Week looking at Stations of the Cross. It sounds fancy, but what they did was go around to different stations looking at pictures of what Jesus did during Holy Week.



Why we're doing it . . .

Reason #1: Spending time thinking about what Jesus has done for us reminds us how deep God's love is. It gives us a chance to think about the difference it makes in our lives and take time to thank God for that gift.

Reason #2: It'll be fun and faith-filled!

How it works . . .

This will be a bit different than traditional Stations of the Cross. Instead of *looking* at pictures, we'll be *taking* pictures.

The first thing to do is color the Flat Jesus included in your bless box. Take him on this adventure.

Then, there you have two options:

OPTION 1: Scavenger Hunt:

1. Go around your home to find what's listed for each station.
2. Once you've found it, take a picture of Jesus with it using a camera, smartphone, or tablet.
3. Read the devotion that goes with that station.
4. Go on to the next station and repeat steps 1-3.
5. If you'd like to share, you can send your pictures to pastormike@hosannalutheranchurch.org.

OPTION 2: Geocaching:

1. Use GPS coordinates to find locations around Liberty (within an 2-mile radius of each other).
2. Once there, take a picture of Jesus in that place.
3. Read the devotion that goes with that it.
4. Go on to the next station and repeat steps 1-3.

The locations are listed at www.hosannatogether.org/stations so that they are easy to find with your phone GPS.

If you want to add the element of discovery, scan the QR code at the bottom of the page with the camera on a smartphone. It will enter the coordinates in your phone for the next station. Drive there before turning to the next page.



READY TO GET STARTED???

If you are doing the **Scavenger Hunt** around your home, **turn the page and get started!**

If you're doing the **Geocache**, scan the **QR code below** or look online for the first address.



To use this code . . .

- 1) Open the camera app on your smartphone.
- 2) Point the camera at the QR code.
- 3) Tap the popup asking if you want to open the location in your map app.
- 4) When the map comes up, hit directions and start
- 5) Follow the path to the destination.

STATION 1: SORROW

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

Scavenger Hunt: Take a picture of Jesus in a garden.

Geocache: Take a picture of Jesus in Arthur's Hill Park.

READ THIS SCRIPTURE:

- **Spark Story Bible:** Jesus is Betrayed, pages 468-473
- **Action Bible:** The Lord's Supper, pages 623-626
- **Full Bible:** Matthew 26:36-41.

REFLECTION FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

Many Americans can remember exactly where they were on the morning of September 11, 2001. Huddled around television sets and radios, they watched and listened to the news of terrorist planes flying into the World Trade Center's Twin Towers. And then, as the impact of just how many lives had been lost began to register, a great sorrow gripped the nation and the world.

During a National Day of Prayer just three days later, Billy Graham addressed the sorrow of the nation with these profound words: "The lesson of this event is not only about the mystery of iniquity and evil, but it's also a lesson about our need for one another...A tragedy like this could have torn our country apart, but instead it has united us."

At this first station, in the Garden of Gethsemane, we encounter Jesus in his moment of deepest sorrow and pain. But notice he is not alone. The scriptures say "Jesus went *with* the disciples..." (Matthew 26:36). He then took his most trusted friends – Peter, James, and John – with him as he began the painful journey that would ultimately lead to new life. Although we tend to give them a bad rap for falling asleep three times, it's worth noting that, at least they were present with Jesus in these moments in the garden.

While most of us will not make history-altering decisions in our lifetimes, we all have moments of deep sorrow when we need to be surrounded by the love of our friends, especially those in the

community of faith. As you begin this journey to the cross with Jesus, remember you are not alone. Remember also “at night we may cry, but when morning comes we will celebrate” (Psalm 30:5, CEV).

REFLECTION FOR CHILDREN:

Jesus spent the night before he died with his friends at the Last Supper. He was very sad because he knew that one of his friends, Judas Iscariot, would tell lies about him, and then turn him over to be arrested. After dinner, Jesus took his three closest friends – Peter, James, and John – with him to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. But Peter, James, and John couldn’t even stay awake with Jesus while he prayed.

DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN:

- Was there a time when you cried because you were very sad about something?
- Who can you ask for comfort when you feel sad?

GOING DEEPER:

- When have you faced a crisis and needed to turn to others for support or prayer?
- How did it make you feel to have to rely on them?

PRAYER:

Gracious God, it makes us sad to know that you were sad. Give us comfort and strength when our lives are tough, too. Be near to all who are lonely, afraid, or feeling hopeless right now. Amen.

NEXT GEOCACHE CODE:



STATION 2: JUDGEMENT

Jesus is judged by Pilate

Scavenger Hunt: Take a picture of fingers pointing at Jesus.

Geocache: Take a picture of Jesus outside the old County Courthouse.

READ THIS SCRIPTURE:

- **Spark Story Bible:** Christ the King, pages 474-475
- **Action Bible:** On Trial, pages 627-630
- **Full Bible:** Mark 15:1-5, 15

REFLECTION FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

Chances are you have probably never heard of Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. That's because we know her by another name: Mother Teresa. By the age of eighteen, she answered God's call to move to India, and joined a religious order of nuns who had a commitment to helping the poorest of the poor in that country. Later this "Saint of the Gutter", as Teresa was sometimes known, founded her own religious order, the Missionaries of Charity, and dedicated the rest of her life to serving those whom society had judged as unworthy of love. Where others saw only the dregs of humanity, Mother Teresa saw children of God. Where others judged people based on their position in society, Mother Teresa judged them based on their position in the reign of God. In fact, she is quoted as saying, "If you judge people, you have no time to love them."

At this station, we find ourselves standing with Jesus in Pilate's judgement hall. He is tired and dirty from a sleepless night, humiliated by the spitting, and hurting from the slaps of those who wish to mock him. His clothes are ragged and torn. And he is hungry. "Then the chief priests accused him of many things" (Mark 15:3).

Most of us have probably encountered someone on a street corner, or a bus stop, or the train platform holding their hand out, asking for assistance of some kind. Many of the people we encounter in these situations look tired...and dirty...and hungry. And we began to judge. And in our judgment of them, we found we had no time to love them.

After the chief priests judged Jesus, Pilate handed him over to be crucified.

Sadly, this is also what happens when we judge others, rather than loving them. Our judgment condemns them to the death of hopelessness. What if instead of pointing fingers, we extended them with a handshake of solidarity for the person judged wrongly? Fingers pointed in judgment will never find time to love.

REFLECTION FOR CHILDREN:

Imagine what it must have felt like for Jesus on the night he was arrested. He was not given anything to eat, he was not allowed to sleep, and he had to walk from place to place all over Jerusalem. The soldiers spit on him, and called him names. And then the chief priests accused him of many untrue things. But Jesus did not hate them. Instead, he loved them the same way God loves us when we are unkind, and treat others with disrespect. Sometimes the things we do make Jesus very sad. But just like Jesus loved the people who had treated him wrongly, God loves us and always wants us to try better to follow God's ways.

DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN:

- Have you ever thought less of someone because they didn't have nice clothes or a beautiful house?
- How do you think it would feel to be that person?

GOING DEEPER:

- How might you focus more on loving others rather than judging them?
- What concrete actions could you take to love someone whom others think is unlovable?

PRAYER:

Gracious God, we both know the pain of being judged unfairly. Help us be better at pointing out the best in others, rather than the worst. When we see people hurt, help us reach out to them with love. Amen.

NEXT GEOCACHE CODE:



STATION 3: CROWNING

Jesus is hurt and crowned

Scavenger Hunt: Take a picture of Jesus among thorns (such as roses) or something else prickly.

Geocache: Take a picture of Jesus by the China Slaughter statue, among the thorny rose bushes.

READ THIS SCRIPTURE:

- **Spark Story Bible:** The Chief Priests, pages 460-461
- **Action Bible:** Death Sentence, pages 631-634
- **Full Bible:** John 19:1-3.

REFLECTION FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

There is a contemporary icon, *Madonna of the Holocaust*, which shows Mary, dressed in the clothes of an early 20th century Eastern European Jewish woman, holding Jesus on her lap. They are surrounded by barbed wire and the names of horrific places like Auschwitz, Birkenau, Dachau, and Bergen-Belsen. There is a large yellow Star of David sewn onto Mary's clothes, and a dove in Jesus' hands. The imagery used in this icon is a stark reminder that Jesus and Mary were both Jews, and had they been living in Hitler's world, would have been forced into a concentration camp because of their faith.

At this station, we see the agents of the state forcing Jesus to wear a crown of thorns and a purple robe to identify him as the "King of the Jews" (John 19:2). The phrase "the Jews" is sprinkled liberally throughout John's account of the Passion and, unfortunately, Christians have often used this as an excuse for anti-Semitism and mistreatment of our Jewish brothers and sisters. Many biblical scholars believe that a more accurate translation of the Greek word *Ioudaioi* would be "Judeans" (referring to a region), rather than "Jews" (referring to an entire religion). When it comes to religion and how we treat one another, words do matter!

Whether Jesus lived in 1st century Jerusalem or 20th century Germany, he will always be found with the marginalized, the oppressed, and the forgotten. Be mindful of all the lives that have been broken over the centuries because of religious prejudice and the careless misuse of language.

REFLECTION FOR CHILDREN:

After Pilate sentenced Jesus to die, the Roman soldiers made a crown out of thorns and placed it on Jesus' head. Then they knelt in front of him saying, "Hail, the King of the Jews!" But they didn't really mean what they were saying. Jesus was a Jew, and the Romans did not like Jewish people. So they used their words to make fun of Jesus.

DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN:

- How do you think Jesus wants you to treat people of different religions?
- What could you do to learn something about the Jewish religion?

GOING DEEPER:

- Is it strange to think of Jesus as a Jew, rather than a Christian?
- What implications might that have for your own relationships with people of other faiths?

PRAYER:

Gracious God, we thank you for making us diverse. Help us share your love with others in ways that build up, rather than tear down. Change our world to be less divisive and more gracious. Amen.

NEXT GEOCACHE CODE:



STATION 4: BEARING

Jesus carries the cross

Scavenger Hunt: Take a picture of Jesus with weights, exercise equipment, or something *really* heavy.

Geocache: Take a picture of Jesus by the metal cross at The Table Fellowship.

READ THIS SCRIPTURE:

- **Spark Story Bible:** The Day Jesus Died, page 476 *only*
- **Action Bible:** Crucified, page 635 *only*
- **Full Bible:** John 19:6, 15-17

REFLECTION FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

The permanent collection of Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) in Tacoma, Washington, houses a sculpture by Howard Dale titled The Burden. Crafted in bronze, the cross already has a weightiness about it as Jesus drags it behind him. But it is what is on the cross that makes it seem even heavier. Sculpted into the cross is two centuries worth of humanity, beginning with Adam and Eve at the bottom, and ending with modern-day firefighters at the top. In a very powerful way, it visually demonstrates the cosmic consequences of Jesus' decision to take up his cross, and carry it all the way to Calvary.

This station seems to be a very lonely one. John puts it this way: "...and carrying the cross by himself, Jesus went out..." (John 19:17). Christians have argued for centuries over whether or not Jesus had to die. We have debated about the meaning of his death. And we have disagreed about its consequences. But what we do agree on is that somehow his solitary decision to take up the cross changed the course of history, and had eternal consequences for all of humanity.

The Orthodox tradition has long held that Adam and Eve had been waiting for centuries in their graves for the coming of the One who would rescue them from sin and death. Perhaps as Jesus dragged his cross through the city streets that day, it began to rip apart the hardened earth where Adam and Eve lay waiting for resurrection. And perhaps Jesus' decision to carry his cross right into the face of death that day is what inspires people like the

firefighter in Dale's sculpture to walk into burning buildings to save others.

Jesus often is depicted carrying his cross resolutely, with precision, to the place of salvation. There is no hesitation. He is not looking back, because he knows that his lonely decision will save humanity, and inspire countless others to selfless acts of sacrifice.

REFLECTION FOR CHILDREN:

Jesus did not want to die. He wanted everyone to believe in God, and love each other. But many people would not listen to him. Because of that, the governor condemned Jesus to die on the cross. Jesus could have complained that people were turning against him. Instead, he picked up his cross to do what God was asking of him. Even though he didn't want to die, God was with Jesus all the way.

DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN:

- When have you been asked to do something for someone else that you thought was really difficult?
- What gave you the strength to do it?

GOING DEEPER:

- What do you think about Jesus' decision to carry the cross as having "cosmic consequences?"
- How does Jesus' decision to carry the cross inspire you to engage in acts of selfless love for others?

PRAYER:

Gracious God, I struggle to carry all the fears, frustrations, bitterness, and responsibility that I hold. I'm not strong enough to carry it alone, so please help me. Amen.

NEXT GEOCACHE CODE:



STATION 5: HELPING

Simon helps Jesus carry the cross

Scavenger Hunt: Take a picture of Jesus with a first aid kit.

Geocache: Take a picture of Jesus at Hillcrest Hope Thrift Store, which helps people facing homelessness.

READ THIS SCRIPTURE:

- **Spark Story Bible:** *Review The Day Jesus Died, page 476 only*
- **Action Bible:** *Review Crucified, page 635 only*
- **Full Bible:** Mark 15:21

REFLECTION FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

Parents are increasingly making volunteering a regular part of their routine, whether it's delivering meals to the homebound, planting vegetables in a community garden, or spending time with people at the local senior center. And when parents and children engage in these activities together, the results are overwhelming. One study looked at 47,000 children in 5th through 12th grades in public schools across the United States. The study results indicated that children who served just one hour or more a week were less likely to be involved in at-risk behaviors than those who are not active in volunteering.

At this station, we encounter Simon of Cyrene, the man whom the soldiers forced to help carry Jesus' heavy cross: "coming in from the country...was Simon...the father of Alexander and Rufus" (Mark 15:21). We don't know much about Alexander and Rufus. We don't know if they were children on the day of Jesus' journey to the cross, but imagine if they were. One tradition says they went on to become missionaries in the early Christian church.

Some have even suggested that the Rufus mentioned by Paul in his letter to Rome (Romans 16:13) is Rufus, the son of Simon the Cyrene. Whatever the case, what we do know is that Rufus and his brother, Alexander, saw their father give a helping hand that day to someone in need. And that someone in need just happened to be the Son of God.

We should never underestimate the power of our own example in the lives of children. Whether we have children of our own, nephews and nieces,

godchildren, or children of friends...they all look to us for examples of how to be kind and helpful to people most in need. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote that “the purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” Alexander and Rufus learned these traits from Simon. Imagine all the lives that have intersected with yours over the years because of your kindness.

REFLECTION FOR CHILDREN:

Jesus was very weak when the soldiers forced him to carry his own cross through the streets. As he walked toward the place where he would die, Jesus got very tired and couldn't carry his cross alone anymore. So the soldiers forced a man named Simon to help Jesus carry the cross the rest of the way. Simon's two sons, Alexander and Rufus, had to watch as their father helped Jesus.

DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN:

- How have the adults in your life given you examples of how you should care for others?
- What is one way that you could help someone today?

GOING DEEPER:

- How have you set an example of kindness for the children in your life?
- How would it change the way you helped people if every time you extended a helping hand to someone you imagined that they were Jesus?

PRAYER:

Gracious God, thank you for the people you send into our lives to help us, heal us, and make us whole. Lead us to be those people willing and able to step in to help others. Amen.

NEXT GEOCACHE CODE:



STATION 6: CRUCIFIXION

Jesus is crucified

Scavenger Hunt: Take a picture of a cross in your home (or two things crossing). **Geocache:** Take a picture of the crosses.

READ THIS SCRIPTURE:

- **Spark Story Bible:** The Day Jesus Died, page 478-479 *only*
- **Action Bible:** Crucified, page 636 *only*
- **Full Bible:** Luke 23:33-34.

REFLECTION FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

The image of the cross has become so commonplace that we tend to forget how truly revolutionary it is. In 1949 the communist regime in Poland began work on Nowa Huta, a new town just north of Kraków. In an effort to crush the Christian spirit of the Polish people, and to reinforce the atheism of the communist party, the government decreed that there would be no church building in Nowa Huta. It was the first Polish city to be intentionally designed without a church. But the people's faith could not be so easily destroyed. They erected a large cross in the middle of the field where they wanted their church to be built. Each time they would put the cross up, the communists would bulldoze it down.

In 1959, the young archbishop of Kraków, Karol Wojtyła, celebrated Christmas Eve Midnight Mass under the cross in the field. Hundreds of people came, standing in a freezing Polish winter night, to defy the government and worship the God who had come to set them free. After each Christmas Eve celebration, the government would again tear the cross down...and the people would again rebuild it. And Archbishop Wojtyła would return each Christmas Eve to celebrate Midnight Mass. Finally, in 1967, the communists issued a permit for a church to be built. One year before he was elected Bishop of Rome, taking the name John Paul II, Archbishop Wojtyła dedicated the new church in Nowa Huta. A central element in the design of the church is a massive steel sculpture of the crucified Christ, made by the steelworkers of the city.

What makes the crucifixion so revolutionary is the truth that God, in the person of Jesus, descended to humanity, took on all the sufferings of the world, and died for the salvation of all people so that we might ascend to the heights for which we were created. The vertical beam, plunged into the

dark earth, also reaches up to the highest heaven, spanning the gulf between God and humanity. And the horizontal beam reaches from the criminal on Jesus' right to the criminal on his left, spanning the distance between alienated brothers and sisters.

Once Karol Wojtyła became John Paul, he took this message of the cross he had learned during that time in Nowa Huta to the entire world. For him, the way of the cross was the way to peace. The mercy extended by Christ at Calvary was the mercy we should extend to all people. And he knew that suffering and oppression will not last forever, because all has been redeemed through the life and death of Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION FOR CHILDREN:

Jesus came to teach us about God's love. Jesus wanted us to listen to him and follow his way. Some people did not like what Jesus was teaching them, and so they decided to crucify him on the cross. But even on the cross, Jesus continued to teach us about God's love. Because Jesus was crucified, we can now share eternal life with God.

DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN:

- Some churches have a cross with Jesus on it, and some churches have an empty cross. Which one do you prefer to look at?
- What do you think about when you see Jesus on the cross? What do you think about when you see an empty cross?

GOING DEEPER:

- Could you imagine a time when you might use the image of the cross as a sign of protest against oppression?
- The Christmas carol *What Child Is This* contains these lines, "Nails, spear shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you." Is it odd for you to think of the cross and the manger together?

PRAYER:

Gracious God, help me remember every day that sacrifices you make for me. Help me know that nothing bad I face is forever, because you are with me. Amen.

NEXT GEOCACHE CODE:



STATION 7: PROMISE

Jesus promises his Kingdom

Scavenger Hunt: Take a picture of Jesus with a heart.

Geocache: Take a picture of Jesus with the heart sculpture.

READ THIS SCRIPTURE:

- **Spark Story Bible:** God's Love is Forever, page 408-409
- **Action Bible:** Crucified, page 637 to top of page 638 *only*
- **Full Bible:** Luke 23:39-43

REFLECTION FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

The Botanical Gardens just north of Chicago are stunning places of natural beauty. In late fall, the gardens are filled with massive plantings of chrysanthemums in every imaginable hue. In winter, the beautiful twisted limbs and branches of barren trees are on full display against the dark sky. In the spring, tulips, daffodils, and crocus make their way up through the thawing ground. And at the end of summer, the air is perfumed with the scent of roses making their last appearance before fall sets in again. In short, the gardens are a little slice of paradise.

As he hung on the cross dying, Jesus promised the thief next to him, "Today, you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). This word that Jesus uses, a Persian word referring to a "park" or a "garden", only appears two other times in the scriptures. Paul uses it in 2 Corinthians when speaking of a vision he had (2 Corinthians 12:3-4), and John uses it in the book of Revelation to describe the life that awaits those who have been faithful: "To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7). Jesus' words in Revelation are clearly an echo back to the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. The promise of Jesus is that, in the end, all things will be restored to their perfect state. Paradise.

Paradise seems to be starting to bloom all around us in the springtime--flowers, buds on trees, and green grass. During the worship of Holy Week, many churches sing the ancient hymn, Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle. The last stanza says this: "Faithful cross, true sign of triumph, be for all the noblest tree; / one in foliage, none in blossom, none in fruit your equal be; / symbol of the world's redemption, for your burden makes us free."

The message of this station is that, for those who place their trust in Jesus, paradise begins to blossom...right here, right now. But just like the botanical gardens, there is a creative cycle in the paradise of life. Sometimes things are blooming all around us. Sometimes beauty is lying dormant for a while underneath a frozen earth. And sometimes things must wither and die in order to be renewed and reborn. This is all part of the life of paradise. But the promise of Jesus to the thief, and to us, is that today you can live with him there.

REFLECTION FOR CHILDREN:

There were two criminals crucified alongside Jesus on the day he died. One of them made fun of Jesus. But the other one knew that Jesus done nothing wrong. Because the man was a criminal, he thought that God didn't love him. But Jesus loved the man very much, and promised him that he would be able to live in paradise with him forever.

DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN:

- What do you think heaven looks like?
- Have you ever wondered what happens to people when they die?

GOING DEEPER:

- Jesus promised the criminal that today he would be with him in paradise. What do you think about the idea that paradise begins here and now?
- How might it change the way you practice your Christian faith to believe that we do not have to wait until we die in order to live in paradise with Jesus?

PRAYER:

Gracious God, death is scary. Give me hope that no matter what happens, no matter what I do, you are there for me, and you will bring me through. Amen.

NEXT GEOCACHE CODE:



STATION 8: SORROW

Jesus dies on the cross.

Scavenger Hunt: Take a picture of Jesus with the picture of a loved one who has died. **OR** Take a picture of Jesus upside down in a hole.

Geocache: Take a picture of Jesus with the 700 segregated, unmarked graves of 19th Century African Americans.

Learn more at about these graves at www.libertylegacy.com/memorial.org

READ THIS SCRIPTURE:

- **Spark Story Bible:** The Day Jesus Died, page 480-481 *only*
- **Action Bible:** Crucified/Sealed Tomb, bottom of page 638 to 641
- **Full Bible:** Luke 23:44-46

REFLECTION FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

On July 1, 1941, the Nazis occupied Riga, Lithuania. Four days later, every synagogue in Riga had been burned to the ground. Every synagogue except one. The Peitav Synagogue was too close to the city center, and the Nazis feared that setting it on fire would put the other city buildings in danger. So they ransacked it and converted it into a warehouse for their evil and dark purposes. If you go into a Jewish synagogue, you will notice that the most central feature of the sanctuary is the ark, the Aron Kodesh, where the Torah scrolls are housed. Many arks contain heavy curtains that are pushed aside during worship to reveal the scriptures they contain. Following the war, it was discovered that the eastern wall of the Peitav Synagogue, the wall where the ark was located, was a false one. Christians from the local Reformed Church, led by their pastor, Gustavs Shaurums, had hastily erected the wall to protect the sacred scrolls. Today the synagogue is a flourishing center of Jewish life within the city.

The curtains on the ark in many synagogues recall the ones that originally hung in the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple, separating the people from the inner sanctum of the sanctuary. Only the high priest was allowed to enter...and only once a year. In the beginning of Luke's gospel, Zechariah, the high priest, is performing his duties behind that curtain when the angel Gabriel appears to him telling him that he will have a son, John the Baptist.

After John's birth, Zechariah sings the Benedictus, a song known to many Christians. The last lines of that hymn say, "Through the heartfelt mercies of our God, God's Sunrise will break in upon us, shining on those in the darkness, sitting in the shadow of death" (Luke 1: 78-79, *The Message*).

At this station, we arrive at the end of Luke's gospel. All hope that God's sunrise will appear seems to be lost. Darkness comes over the land, and the sun's light fails. But then, an amazing event happens in the midst of this darkness. The veil in the temple is torn in two. The false wall that had been erected between God and humanity comes crashing down at the death of Jesus. Just as the scrolls that were discovered behind the wall in the Peitav Synagogue gave light to that community, so the tearing of the temple veil at the death of Jesus reveals to us the light that God has always intended for creation.

REFLECTION FOR CHILDREN:

Jesus worshipped at the Jerusalem Temple many times when he was alive. In that temple was a curtain that separated people from the Holy of Holies, the place where they believed God was present in a very special way. When Jesus died, two amazing things happened: it became very dark all throughout the city, and the curtain in the temple was torn in two. Because of Jesus' death, we can now always be in God's presence.

DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN:

- Think of a time when you might have been afraid of the dark.
- What did you do to help you overcome your fear?

GOING DEEPER:

- Where are some places in the world where you see people "sitting in the shadow of death?"
- How is God challenging you to bring "God's sunshine" to them?

PRAYER:

Gracious God, you are amazing. I'm glad I can talk to you like this, and that you always hear me and always care. Help me keep this conversation going with you every day. Amen.

THIS IS THE END OF THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS
Turn the page for final thoughts and prayer.

CONCLUSION

WE LOOK FORWARD WITH HOPE AND TRUST

It's tough to end with Jesus' death. It makes us uncomfortable. Then again, it should make us uncomfortable. It's good to sit in that uncomfortableness for a while because it reminds us how big of a deal this is. God doesn't skip the uncomfortable parts of our life.

Although we end here, we do so knowing the whole story. We know about Easter. We know Jesus rises from the dead. We know that God raises us to new life as well. However, it is God's love shown through his suffering and death that helps us know that we can trust God to follow through.

PRAYER:

Gracious God, thank you letting me walk this journey with you as you have walked so many journeys with me. Give me faith to see your love lived out in my life every day. Amen.

SHARE YOUR PICTURES

If you'd like to share your pictures, you are invited to share them on social media along with what this journey has meant to you this Holy Week.

You can also send your pictures to Pastor Mike at pastormike@hosannalutheranchurch.org.

Devotions © 2017 Illustrated Children's Ministry, LLC.

All rights reserved. May be reproduced for congregational and local use only, provided each copy carries this notice.