

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

VISUALIZE JESUS' JOURNEY
TO THE CROSS IN THE STREETS

SAMPLE PARTICIPANT GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

Before you start, we encourage you to take a moment to center yourself by saying the Jesus Prayer: **"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me."** Know that many in our congregation are praying these same words today and that your journey is bathed in prayer and upheld by our community. Please take time to read this introduction and prepare your heart.

SOME BACKGROUND FOR THIS SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

We are taking a meditative prayer walk. This gets our whole being (body, mind, and spirit) engaged in prayer. Most Roman Catholic buildings have pictures of these "stations" on their walls – people take this prayer walk in the quiet of a sanctuary, considering the Lord's sacrifice for them and entering into His death. We take the walk out to the streets to help ourselves see the right now nature of what Jesus is doing and the present reality of how we can enter into it with Him, in our time and city.

The "Stations of the Cross" originated with believers who visited Jerusalem and literally went along the way Jesus went to the cross. There are records of their acts of devotion dating back to the 300s. The followers of Francis of Assisi (Franciscans) were the great promoters of this practice after they were given custody of the holy sites in Israel/Palestine during the 1300s. The fourteen stations are traditional, not strictly biblical. They function as visio divina, a visual portal for us to see the passion of Jesus re-enacted. The stations are also rarely acted out on city streets. So this meditative prayer walk will require determination and imagination. We are contemplating in mostly noisy places and we are asking ourselves to see familiar sites in deeper ways. Using our imagination and the streets around us, Pilate's court and Golgotha become present realities.

Some help for experiencing this journey

Identify with Jesus in His "death march", go with Him to the cross

Go on an inward journey, remember, grieve, repent.

Receive the love and forgiveness of Jesus in a fresh way.

Go on an outward journey, see the city through the eyes of our dying Savior.

Pray that others remember, turn away from sin, grieve.

See the love of Christ & receive God's forgiveness in Him.

Let this symbolize your own journey of suffering love for your neighbors.

Visualize Jesus in each of the stations. See Him there broken, torn, suffering in love. Don't rush by Him as we often do, as others around you on the street may be doing. The stations slow us down and force us to truly be with Him in His suffering, in our time and in our city, as who we are right now. The New Testament scripture passages are included to help us imagine the scenes. Take a Bible along if you like, so the other passages can help you meditate and pray.

TO BEGIN

Outside the sanctuary [*insert start location address here*] nearest Red Rd, stand by the bench underneath the giant tree.

Reflect on how sin first entered the world through a tree in the Garden of Eden. That's the backdrop to the story of Christ's journey to the cross.

Take a moment to pray and center in on how to take the next step and to consider the city where many have little concern for or understanding of this journey.

FIRST STATION

Walk to the corner of Red Rd and Ponce, and turn LEFT toward UM.

Walk about 70 yards, then cross the street to the Goodwill trailer and turn RIGHT.

Stand near the tree planted in the center of the sidewalk and look across US1. Notice the building behind Chase Bank with all the antennas and radar systems – the authorities have been watching Jesus & plotting against him.

Contrast Christ's "goodwill" toward men on your left and the authorities' obsession with control on your right. This is where the religious leaders treated Jesus with disdain.

Pause to read the scripture below and consider that Jesus is condemned to death.

Again the high priest asked Him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned Him as worthy of death. (Mark 14:61-64 – see Psalm 2:1-8)

SECOND STATION

Continue on the pathway to the corner of US1 and Red Rd. Push the crosswalk button and cross US1.

Turn LEFT in front of Wendy's, walk until you reach Chase Bank, then cut through its parking lot and cross the street to the tree planted in the sidewalk.

Turn LEFT and walk to the driveway of the Kendar building.

Hold a bar of the railing and study the building's entrance with its royal blue and decadent pillars. There you'll see the carpet that Pontius Pilate stood upon as he handed Jesus over to be crucified. Imagine the parking lot and surrounding streets filled with massive crowds.

Feel the heat from their anger and watch as Jesus is made to carry His cross.

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take Him away! Take Him away! Crucify Him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no other king but Caesar," the chief priest answered. Finally, Pilate handed Him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying His own cross, He went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). (John 19:14-17 - see Isaiah 53:1-4)

THIRD STATION

Continue walking and turn RIGHT at the first corner.

Stay on the sidewalk as it bends, then cross over to the park in front of Publix.

Head on the sidewalk in the direction opposite of US1 and stay on this path until you reach a green piece of exercise equipment that is a bench sloping downward.

Here Jesus had to get up after his first fall.

If you can, lay on the bench.

As you slowly lift yourself up, feel the weight of the world's sin that Jesus was carrying to the cross.

This is where Jesus falls for the first time.

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: "No servant is greater than his master." If they persecuted me, they will persecute you, also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. (John 15:18-20 – see Psalm 140:5-6)

FOURTH STATION

Take the pathway that cuts through the park and stay left of the pavilion.

Take a seat on one of the benches near the play area.

Rest for a moment and think about the mothers that bring their children to play here. Imagine what it was like when Mary played with Jesus as a toddler.

When you're ready, pluck a leaf from the bush in the center and crumble it in your hand. Smell its scent after being torn from its mother plant. Hold the crushed leaf as Jesus meets His sorrowful mother.

Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. (John 19:25-27 - see Lamentations 2:10-13)

FIFTH STATION

Continue on the pathway and turn LEFT when it divides.

Walk to the end of the park and cross the street to the gated building.

Walk past the building so it's on your right.

Once you're across from the Coco Plum Women's Club, cross the street and approach the large brown doors.

Sit on the ledge near the plaque.

Take a moment to read the smaller plaque given for community service.

Reflect on how a stranger served and supported a struggling man as Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry His cross.

And when they had mocked Jesus, they took the purple cloak off and put His own clothes on Him, and they led Him out to crucify Him. A certain man from Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. (Mark 15:20-22 - see Psalm 142:3-5)

SIXTH STATION

Go back across the street and continue to the corner.

Turn RIGHT and walk past the shops until you come to Yumari St.

Turn LEFT and cross 72nd St, then turn RIGHT and walk a few feet till you're under the giant tree and a gate is on your left.

Lean in where the tree's roots create a small nook.

Consider how this shade and shelter provide a moment of rest in the midst of the hustle and bustle all around.

Use the space as a short intermission as Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" And the King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:37-40 - see Psalm 119:105-112)

SEVENTH STATION

Continue down 72nd to the orange “End Road Work” sign.

Cross 72nd and walk LEFT.

Walk until you come to a shop called The Archive that is just past Sports Grill.

Observe the contents displayed in the window.

Think about the irony of the Humpty Dumpty doll and the skull above it.

This is where Jesus falls the second time.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. (Psalm 22:14-15 - see Psalm 119:25-28)

EIGHTH STATION

Keep on 72nd and cross Red Rd.

Come to the entrance of Sunset Place, take a RIGHT and follow the walkway until you reach the waterfalls.

Head to the far wall of the waterfalls, past the tables, and sit on the small stone bench attached to the wall.

Slow down. Pay attention.

Close your eyes and feel the mist of the waterfall as the women of Jerusalem weep over Jesus.

A large number of people followed Him, including women who mourned and wailed for Him. Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children." (Luke 23:27-28 - see Lamentations 1:12,16)

NINTH STATION

Walk toward the Gelato Express kiosk in front of you and go up the escalator behind it.

Once at the top, walk to the vending machines and hold onto the railing to the right.

Look up and you'll see what appears to be a crown.

Contemplate this as a crown of thorns and the red flowers below it as blood from Christ's brow.

Watch as Jesus falls the third time.

It was our weaknesses He carried, our sufferings that he endured... He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:4-6 - see Psalm 26:1-3)

TENTH STATION

Head down the escalator and walk LEFT back toward the way you entered Sunset Place.

When you get to 72nd, cross the street and turn RIGHT.

You'll come to a manatee statue on your left. Go to the Second Time Around shop behind it.

As you stand outside, survey the clothes being resold.

Think about the people they might have formerly belonged to.

It is here in this place that Jesus is stripped of His garments.

There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, He refused to drink it. When they had crucified Him, they divided up His clothes by casting lots. (Matthew 27:34-35 - see Psalm 69:19-21)

ELEVENTH STATION

Continue on 72nd until you reach 58th Ave.

Take a RIGHT and walk to US1, then turn RIGHT and go to the AMC 24 sign.

Veer to the RIGHT and follow the sidewalk past LA Fitness.

You'll see a large roundabout in the road. Look for oncoming traffic, then step onto the road and go to the center of the circle.

Stand there. Look up all around you.

Imagine this to be the headquarters of the Roman Soldiers where Jesus is interrogated and treated as a criminal.

See the balcony and windows filled with Soldiers making taunting jeers as Jesus is nailed to the cross.

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with Him to be executed. When they came to the place called the skull, there they crucified Him, along with the criminals - one on His right, the other on His left. Jesus said, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:32-34 - see Psalm 22:1-2, 16-18, Job 16:18-21)

TWELVETH STATION

Walk under the overhang toward Buffalo Wild Wings.

When you reach Red Rd, turn LEFT and walk to the corner of US1.

Sit on the concrete slab underneath the palm trees and look across the highway.

Fix your eyes on the huge electrical beam near the metro rail that reaches high into the sky.

Count how many lines you see coming out of the beam, and consider how love radiated out from the cross in every direction.

This is where Jesus is raised upon the cross and dies.

It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When He had said this, He breathed His last. (Luke 23:44-46 - see Colossians 2:13-15)

THIRTEENTH STATION

Push the crosswalk button and cross US1.

Continue for a few feet, then turn LEFT at 68th St and walk until you come to a car graveyard on the corner.

Make your way around the fence until you see the yellow car with its insides spilling out of the trunk.

Notice the keys are still in the door – this car’s desolation came all of the sudden.

Here is where Jesus is taken down from the cross.

When the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead so they did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. (John 19:33-34, 38 – see Acts 2:22-23)

FOURTEENTH STATION

Walk back to Red Rd and turn LEFT.

If the bus benches in front of the Mobile station are open, have a seat.

Take a panoramic look around you.

With your eyes and ears open, take in the city more than you have before. (If you include the stained-glass window, you'll see 3 crosses in front of you.)

Take as long as you'd like to pray here.

In the middle of our city, Jesus is laid in the tomb.

Joseph took the body, wrapped it in clean linen cloth, and placed it in his new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. (Matthew 27:59-60 – see Psalm 30:2-5)

CONCLUSION

Finally, cross the street and return to the sanctuary's steps. Reflect on your experience of Christ and the cross in the streets of Miami.

Fifteenth Station

Many renditions of the Stations of the Cross include a final station named Jesus rises from the dead.

We will journey to that station of resurrection together on Sunday in public worship.