Reflections on the Stations of the Cross

A Lenten Resource
Compiled by Catholic Youth Parramatta and the Pastoral Planning Office Catholic Diocese of Parramatta
Lent is a time of preparation for the Easter Triduum, the three-day liturgical commemoration of the central mystery of our Catholic faith: the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We hope this resource will be of use to all in our Diocese of Parramatta. It is particularly suited for use by young people in reflecting on the Paschal Mystery during Lent and Holy Week.

With the help of this resource we hope the younger members of our Diocese will walk in the steps of Christ through prayer, by reflecting on the sacrifice of Christ and how we can respond to his self-giving love more deeply in our lives.

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**Part 1 Reflections on the Stations of the Cross**

This is a series of reflections on the Stations of the Cross, aimed at revealing the truths expressed by the last moments of Jesus’ life as relevant to the lives of young people. They can be used as a prayerful group reflection activity, but are also appropriate for use in each young person’s personal prayer.

**Part 2 Enacted Stations of the Cross Script**

This script provides a guide with helpful instructions to enact the Stations of the Cross in your parish with young people. It is scripturally sound and a vivid way of bringing to life the mystery and power of Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross. Written by the leaders of a parish in our Diocese, this script can be used to help prepare a ‘Passion Play’ to be enacted by young people in the context of their whole parish community, inside a church or in any other way that would be appealing and appropriate for the prayer of your parish community.
PART 1

Reflections on the Stations of the Cross
Reflection:
How could Pilate condemn to death a man he knew was completely innocent? Pilate, the provincial governor, faced with a hostile situation simply washed his hands of the problem. For the sake of political expediency, he took the easy way out and went with the crowd.

But really, it’s not so hard to imagine. It happens every day on a smaller scale. We find it easier to play office politics than to speak plainly for the truth. We find ourselves more concerned about getting accepted by the right group at school than sticking up for a classmate who really needs someone there for them. How often do we condemn others, rather than standing up for what is right?

Prayer: Jesus, I know that there have been times when I have condemned my friends, my work colleagues, and even my own family, not just through things I have said but also when I have just stood by instead of standing up for them. I know that what I have done is cowardly – please forgive me. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
We adore you O Christ and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

2nd Station

Jesus takes up his Cross.

Reflection:
Jesus took up his cross. His cross? Jesus took up the cross for us, because of our selfishness; our sins; our unwillingness to take up our own cross.

In life we frequently fail to face up to our responsibilities, our faults, or our struggles. We instead deflect our limitations onto others, for example another family member or a junior at work. We are quick to blame, but how often are we willing to admit when we are at fault?

Prayer:
Jesus, forgive me for the times I have failed to bear my own cross. Help me to acknowledge where I have made mistakes, and forgive me for the times I have tried to avoid taking responsibility for them. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
Reflection:
As Jesus lay in the dust, he was surrounded by the taunts of people in the crowd simply consumed by anger.

When we let anger direct our thoughts, we easily lose perspective. We lash out and hurt friends over minor disagreements, even though they have always been there for us. Over time, we can even allow our anger to turn into a cold passive-aggression disconnected from the original problem, the cause of many long-term family disputes. Are anger and grudge holding problems in our lives?

Prayer: Jesus, too often I let myself get overwhelmed by my anger, and before I know it I do something that hurts other people, without really dealing with the original problem. Thank you for showing me how turning the other cheek can break the vicious cycle of blame and revenge. Please teach me patience and tolerance in difficult situations. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
Part 1 – Reflections on the Stations of the Cross

We adore you O Christ and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reflection:
The thought of a mother watching her son being led to his execution is simply heart-breaking, but Mary gave what support she could to Jesus, right to the end.

Do we forget the sacrifices our parents have made to bring us to where we are today? As we grow up and have our own families, do we continue to respect our parents and remain attentive to their changing needs?

Prayer:
Jesus, I am sorry for the times I have been disrespectful to my parents. Help me to forgive my parents when they seem to overlook my good efforts or lose patience with me. Help me to love them as you loved your mother Mary. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
Reflection:

Although Jesus was the Son of God he was also fully human, and he felt the agony of carrying the cross. Jesus accepted Simon’s help. Likewise, we must be willing to accept help from time to time.

Why do we sometimes find it so difficult to accept help from the right people? Why is it that we search for help from strangers on the internet, rather than seeking help from those who genuinely have our best interests at heart, such as our parents, teachers and Church ministers?

Prayer: Jesus, you have shown that there is grace in accepting help as well as giving it. Lead me to recognise when I need help, and forgive me for the times I have been too proud to accept the help of others. Forgive me also for the times I have misjudged my parents or people in authority by believing that they won’t listen or don’t understand. Help me to keep an open mind about their advice. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
Part 1 – Reflections on the Stations of the Cross

**Reflection:**

Jesus was mocked and rejected by some of the ‘in crowd’ of his day. Veronica didn’t care what they said; she went against the trend, even though it was a risk to her own reputation, and even safety. The media can often give us false images of how people should look and act. We strive to achieve this look so we feel part of the ‘in crowd’, but very often at the expense of those who don’t fit the so-called ‘perfect image’.

When have we avoided the company of others, simply because we’re worried they might take the gloss off our own image?

**Prayer:**

Jesus, heal those who suffer the pain of rejection, and forgive me for the times I have added to their loneliness because of my selfish desire to be popular. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
Reflection:
Another humiliating fall for Jesus, but he did not give in. Instead, he chose to follow the Father’s plan and give his life completely so that he, and all of us, could be raised to new life.

So often our pride blocks us from seeing the bigger picture that is God’s plan for us. It stops us from acknowledging when we are in the wrong, or when we should just let go of an argument and move forward. Is our pride getting in the way of humbly following God’s call?

Prayer: Jesus, time and time again I find myself unable to admit that I have made a mistake, or that someone else might be in a better position to make an important decision than me. My pride is a real stumbling block to making improvements in my life. Please grant me a humble heart, which will help me to live out the kind of life that you call me to lead. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
We adore you O Christ and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reflection:
Many of these women were sincere in their sorrow for Jesus: they knew Jesus and truly loved him. However, many others that day were simply going along with the crowd, or just caught up in the emotion of the day.

Likewise, for many of us today our relationship with Jesus is based only on the big events of the year, or a ‘cultural Christianity’ related more to family and tradition, rather than a genuine relationship with Jesus. Are we willing to genuinely hand ourselves over to God? Or do we just treat Jesus as the ‘safety net’ in our lives, doing what we see as the bare minimum to be a Christian?

Prayer: Jesus, following your way can be so difficult, even though I know you came to give life and give it to the full. May I come to you with a sincere heart, with a desire for change so I can live as a Christian in all aspects of my life. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
Reflection:

No matter how hard the soldiers whipped him, or how much the crowd jeered him, Jesus kept getting up. He knew what he had to do, and he would do it no matter what pressure people put on him.

Failure is rarely easy to accept, but when it happens time after time giving in can begin looking like an attractive option. This is even more so when those around us seem unsupportive – or even hostile – to important decisions we know we need to make, like a decision to overcome an addiction, or a decision to really reconnect with God and his Church. Are we prepared to make the tough decisions needed to get our lives in order?

Prayer: Jesus, there are some big changes I need to make in my life, even though things may seem OK on the outside. Please give me the courage to move beyond the past failures playing on my mind, and to turn away from everything distracting me from you. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
We adore you O Christ and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world

Reflection:
What a humiliation for Jesus: to be stripped before the crowd. Imagine if this happened to us! As it is, we’re already extremely self-conscious about the changes our bodies go through and how we appear to others. Yet, somehow, we think nothing of watching other people exposed and their dignity violated when we view inappropriate material on the internet or in the media. Are we willing to respect and treat our bodies – and other people’s bodies – as sacred gifts from God?

Prayer: Jesus, I get so worked up over how I look and what others think of me that I lose sight of the ‘me’ inside. My need to fit in is so strong sometimes that I lower my standards in what I wear and how I let others treat my body. Please help me to be true to myself. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
Reflection:
As Jesus’ bones gave way to the piercing nails, the agony must have been simply unbearable. However, Jesus was willing to go through suffering and death, rather than risk us spending eternity without him.

Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice is more than just a historical reality; it is a call to live our lives in service to God and one another. But doing so means making sacrifices in our own lives: not just changes in what we do, but a change of heart and mind.

Have we reflected on how we live our lives? Have we acknowledged where we have failed to love God and our neighbour? Have we sought forgiveness for our sins through the sacrament of reconciliation?

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for the Cross. Thank you for giving up everything to gain for me the offer of eternal life. Help me appreciate what you have done for me, and forgive me for the times I have taken it for granted. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
We adore you O Christ and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reflection:
Jesus called on people to turn to God and live a life of righteousness and compassion, and for this he was brutally tortured then executed, the victim of anger and jealousy.

Today, parts of our media and society are becoming increasingly hostile towards Christian faith and values. In the face of this, we can find it easier to minimise our faith or treat it as a purely private matter, rather than speaking out boldly for what is right. Are we prepared to stand up for Christian values with our school friends, at work, and in public?

Prayer: Jesus, through your life and your death on the cross, you have shown me the way of justice and compassion. I want to follow your way, but I admit I get worried about being criticised for it or being labelled as somehow ‘out of touch’. Please give me the courage to not just do what seems ‘nice’ or socially acceptable, but to really stand up for what is right. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
Reflection:

How hard it must have been for Mary to accept the death of her son. But Mary, like her son, was willing to accept the Father's will. God's ways are above our ways, but when we experience major personal disappointments, such as the death of a friend, being made redundant, or missing out on a university course, we so easily fall into despair. However, like Mary, we need to place our hope and our trust in God and His eternal plan for us. Have we spent enough time in prayer discerning God's plan for us?

Prayer: Jesus, I have had some big knocks in my life that have really shaken me up. I get worried about the future, and my faith has been rocked. But I know you are good, and I know your plan is bigger than I can ever even imagine. Please help me to let go of my doubts and fears, and trust you. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
Part 1 – Reflections on the Stations of the Cross

We adore you O Christ and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reflection:

It must have been tough for Jesus’ followers to lay him in the tomb, not yet knowing that he would rise on the third day to be with us always.

However, following Jesus’ resurrection, these followers would go on to spread the Good News to the world, though not without sacrifice – all but one of the apostles were killed for their faith. They knew that faithfully following Christ is the path to eternal joy. What changes do we need to make in our lives to allow us to follow the way of Jesus?

Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for the gift of your death and resurrection. Forgive me for the times I have been unwilling to open my heart to your presence. Strengthen my faith, and lead me to see your life, and your selfless death, as a source of inspiration, as a gift and a challenge to discipleship. Help me Jesus to follow your way.
Enacted Stations of the Cross Script

Used with permission of the authors with grateful acknowledgement of the many leaders of the LIFE TEEN youth ministry at St Bernadette’s Parish, Castle Hill, who have refined and contributed to this script over time.

The script is written for enactment within a church with a central aisle and at least two aisles on either side with sufficient room for the cast to move around the church for the various stations. A handful of songs are also suggested to assist people pray and reflect on the stations. Accompanying music is a great way of involving young musicians to be a part of the community’s worship at Easter. This Passion Play has also been enacted outdoors and can be adapted as needed and appropriate to your own parish setting.
PART 2

Enacted Stations of the Cross Script
Commentator: Our journey begins in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus goes with his disciples to pray.

(Jesus slowly walks up the middle aisle with his disciples behind him. Jesus directs his disciples to wait for him. They spread themselves around an appropriate space in front of the sanctuary and at the sides of the sanctuary, kneeling down to pray. Jesus kneels in front of the altar with his back to the congregation).

Jesus: Abba, Father! For you everything is possible. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it.

(Jesus continues to pray. The disciples fall asleep. Jesus goes and wakes up the disciples).

Jesus: Are you asleep? Had you not the strength to stay awake one hour? It is all over. The hour has come. Now the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is not far away.

(Drums sound and the soldiers enter from the back of the church, march down the middle aisle, with Judas. Soldiers 3 and 4 come down the centre aisle with Judas behind them. Soldiers 1 and 2 walk down the left aisle and soldiers 5 and 6 come down the right aisle. When the soldiers reach the front they make one line in front of Jesus and the disciples. Jesus and the disciples have made a line at the top of the step of the sanctuary. Judas steps through the line of soldiers).

Judas: (Approaches Jesus). Greetings Rabbi.

(Judas kisses Jesus on both cheeks. Soldiers go to take Jesus. The disciples draw their swords and soldiers point their spears back at them).

Jesus: Put your sword back in its scabbard. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?

(Soldiers take Jesus away down the centre aisle and outside then tie his hands together. The disciples move to the seats at the front left. Annas and Caiaphas enter from stage right).

Judas: (Moves towards the High Priests who give him the thirty pieces of silver). I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood.

Annas: What is that to us?

Caiaphas: That is your concern.

(Judas drops the money and runs out the back of the church looking guilty. Annas picks up the money and he and Caiaphas exit stage right).
1st Station. Jesus is condemned to death.

(The Crowd comes out from the back of the Church – slaves, weeping women, bandits, crowds, and High Priests. Judas joins the crowd. Slaves put a chair next to the presider’s chair for Pilate’s wife and take a pre-existing cover off the presider’s chair for Pilate. Pilate and his wife enter from stage left and go and sit on the chairs. Annas and Caiaphas enter stage right. Slaves 1, 2 and 3 sit at the back of the sanctuary).

The chief priests come before Pilate.

Pilate: (Pilate stands and moves towards the High Priests).
What charge do you bring against this man?

Caiaphas: (Annas and Caiaphas move up to the steps to the side of the chair).
If he were not a criminal, we should not have handed him over to you.

Pilate: Take him yourselves, and try him by your own Law.

Annas: We are not allowed to put anyone to death.

Pilate: (Pilate walks back towards the chair and signals to soldiers 1, 2, 3 and 4).
Bring him here.
(Soldiers 1, 2, 3 and 4 enter with Jesus down the left aisle and stand him at the bottom of the steps below the ambo. The soldiers move behind the ambo).

(To Jesus) Are you the King of the Jews?

Jesus: It is you who say it. (Crowd and the High Priests act agitated and yell out)

Pilate: Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?

Jesus: (Remains silent)

Pilate: (Pilate stands up and moves to front of the altar towards Jesus).
Are you refusing to speak to me? Surely you know that I have the power to release you and I have power to crucify you?

Jesus: You would have no power over me if it had not been given you from above; that is why the one who handed me over to you has the greater guilt. (Jesus turns his head to look at the High Priests as he speaks).

Pilate: (Pilate turns to the High Priests who are stage right).
I find no case against him. But according to a custom of yours I should release one prisoner at Passover. Would you like me, then, to release ‘the king of the Jews’?
Crowds: Not this man, but Barrabas.
(Pilate signals to soldiers 5 and 6. Soldiers 5 and 6 bring in Barrabas down the right aisle and stand him at the bottom of the steps right of the High Priests and then move behind the altar and chair. Pilate signals to soldiers 3 and 4 and they take the crown of thorns and purple robe and dress Jesus. Jesus groans in pain as the crown of thorns are placed on His head).

Soldier 3: Hail, King of the Jews.

Soldier 4: Your Majesty!
(They laugh and spit at him and the crowd join in the laughter at Jesus).

Pilate’s Wife: Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him.

Pilate: Who do you want me to release for you?

Crowds: (Crowd on front right seats point at Barrabas and call out at different times). Barrabas, Barrabas!

Pilate: But what should I to do with the man you call King of the Jews?

Crowds: (Crowd point at Jesus and call out various responses). Crucify him! Crucify him!

Pilate: Why? What harm has he done?

Crowds: (As before) Crucify him! Crucify him!

Pilate: (Looks at his wife again).
I am innocent of this man’s blood. It is your concern.
(Slaves 1, 2 and 3 walk up from the crowd with a bowl, jug of water and towel. Water is poured over Pilate’s hands and then he wipes them dry. The slaves go back to their seats).

Take him away to be crucified, and release Barrabas.
(Barrabas raises his hands in freedom).
Reader 1: How could Pilate condemn to death a man he knew was completely innocent? Pilate, the provincial governor, faced with a hostile situation simply washed his hands of the problem. For the sake of political expediency, he took the easy way out and went with the crowd.

But really, it’s not so hard to imagine. It happens every day on a smaller scale. We find it easier to play office politics than to speak plainly for the truth. We find ourselves more concerned about getting accepted by the right group at school than sticking up for a classmate who really needs someone there for them. How often do we condemn others, rather than standing up for what is right?

Reader 2: Jesus, I know that there have been times when I have condemned my friends, my work colleagues, and even my own family, not just through things I have said, but also when I have just stood by instead of standing up for them. I know that what I have done is cowardly – please forgive me. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: A suggested sung response is the chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.

Commentator: 2nd Station. Jesus takes up his Cross.

(Barrabas joins the back of the crowds. High Priests move to the bottom of the sanctuary. Pilate and his wife stay sitting on their chairs. Soldiers 3 and 4 take Jesus and make him kneel down, pretend to tie his hands in front of him and remove his purple robe. Soldiers 3 and 4 then pretend to whip him. Soldiers 1 and 2 go to get the cross).

Jesus: (Yells in agony)

Commentator: The flogging was so severe that his form did not look like that of a human being. People were appalled to look at him. (Soldiers 3 and 4 pretend to whip Jesus once more).
After such torture, he then had to take up the heavy wooden cross. (Soldiers 1 and 2 bring the cross over while Soldiers 3 and 4 untie Jesus’ hands and make him take up the cross).

Reader 1: Jesus took up his cross. His cross? Jesus took up the cross for us, because of our selfishness; our sins; our unwillingness to take up our own cross. In life we frequently fail to face up to our responsibilities, our faults, or our struggles. We instead deflect our limitations onto others, for example another family member or a junior at work. We are quick to blame, but how often are we willing to admit when we are at fault?
Reader 2:  Jesus, forgive me for the times I have failed to bear my own cross. Help me to acknowledge where I have made mistakes, and forgive me for the times I have tried to avoid taking responsibility for them. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All:  Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.

Commentator:  3rd Station. Jesus falls for the first time.

Soldier 3:  Move!

Soldier 4:  Now!
(Soldiers 1 and 2 lead in front of Jesus and the cross, soldier 3 is right in front of the cross, soldier 4 is just behind Jesus, while soldiers 5 and 6 follow behind the cross. Jesus begins walking with the cross down the left aisle. Soldiers 3 and 4 pretend to whip him and make sure he keeps moving. Soldiers 5 and 6 make sure the back of the cross does not hit anyone in the congregation! Disciples follow on, then the High Priests followed by the weeping women, bandits and crowd throughout the next stations. A slave takes a chair to the alcove while two other slaves cover the presider’s chair, marking a change of scene. All slaves then join back with the crowd. Pilate and his wife exit stage right and sit on the chairs in the alcove. Mary, Mary Magdala and Mary, mother of James, move out of the alcove and stand next to the lectern. Jesus falls over halfway down the left aisle).

Reader 1:  As Jesus lay in the dust, he was surrounded by the taunts of people in the crowd simply consumed by anger. When we let anger direct our thoughts, we easily lose perspective. We lash out and hurt friends over minor disagreements, even though they have always been there for us. Over time, we can even allow our anger to turn into a cold passive-aggression disconnected from the original problem, the cause of many long-term family disputes. Are anger and grudge holding problems in our lives?

Reader 2:  Jesus, too often I let myself get overwhelmed by my anger, and before I know it I do something that hurts other people, without really dealing with the original problem. Thank you for showing me how turning the other cheek can break the vicious cycle of blame and revenge. Please teach me patience and tolerance in difficult situations. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All:  Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.
Commentator: **4th Station. Jesus meets His mother.**

Soldier 3: Get up!

Soldier 4: Move!

*(Jesus continues to walk down the aisle and then walks back up the centre aisle toward the altar. Jesus stops halfway down the aisle).*

Commentator: Mary of Magdala and Mary, mother of James, accompany Mary to meet her son.

Mary: **Sings Verse 1 and Chorus of ‘With Hope’ by Steven Curtis Chapman.**


*(Mary, Mary of Magdala and Mary, mother of James, walk from the lectern down the middle aisle to Jesus. Mary of Magdala and Mary, mother of James, wait behind the soldiers while Mary walks through to Jesus, singing the song, and eventually places her hand on Jesus’ face).*

Reader 1: The thought of a mother watching her son being led to his execution is simply heart-breaking, but Mary gave what support she could to Jesus, right to the end. Do we forget the sacrifices our parents have made to bring us to where we are today? As we grow up and have our own families, do we continue to respect our parents and remain attentive to their changing needs?

Reader 2: Jesus, I am sorry for the times I have been disrespectful to my parents. Help me to forgive my parents when they seem to overlook my good efforts or lose patience with me. Help me to love them as you loved your mother Mary. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: **Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.**

Commentator: **5th Station. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the Cross.**

Soldier 3: Move!

Soldier 4: Now!

*(Jesus continues heading up the centre aisle, veering left and heading up the stairs, walk around the ambo along the back of the sanctuary and the chair and heads back down the stairs. Mary follows on behind the soldiers with Mary Magdala and Mary, mother of James, supporting her. Veronica exits stage left as she passes the alcove. The soldiers stop Jesus on top of the stairs).*
Soldier 3: Stop! Go and get someone to help. (Soldiers 1 and 2 search the congregation and then pull a ‘Simon of Cyrene’ out of the crowd. Soldiers 5 and 6 force Simon to carry the cross. Simon of Cyrene picks up the cross).

Reader 1: Although Jesus was the Son of God he was also fully human, and he felt the agony of carrying the Cross. Jesus accepted Simon’s help. Likewise, we must be willing to accept help from time to time. Why do we sometimes find it so difficult to accept help from the right people? Why is it that we search for help from strangers on the internet, rather than seeking help from those who genuinely have our best interests at heart, such as our parents, teachers and Church ministers?

Reader 2: Jesus, you have shown that there is grace in accepting help as well as giving it. Lead me to recognise when I need help, and forgive me for the times I have been too proud to accept the help of others. Forgive me also for the times I have misjudged my parents or people in authority by believing that they won’t listen or don’t understand. Help me to keep an open mind about their advice. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.

Commentator: 6th Station. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

Soldier 3: Move!

Soldier 4: Now! (Jesus heads down the stairs and then down the right aisle to the back of the church and turns left, walking along the back of the church. Veronica enters stage right and runs down the far right aisle meeting him at the back of the church and raises the cloth to Jesus’ face. As the response is sung, Veronica goes to the front of the altar, holds up the cloth and shows this holy face of Jesus to the entire congregation).

Reader 1: Jesus was mocked and rejected by some of the ‘in crowd’ of his day. Veronica didn’t care what they said; she went against the trend, even though it was a risk to her own reputation, and even safety. The media can often give us false images of how people should look and act. We strive to achieve this look so we feel part of the ‘in crowd’, but very often at the expense of those who don’t fit the so-called ‘perfect image’. When have we avoided the company of others, simply because we’re worried they might take the gloss off our own image? 
Reader 2: Jesus, heal those who suffer the pain of rejection, and forgive me for the times I have added to their loneliness because of my selfish desire to be popular. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.

Commentator: **7th Station. Jesus falls for the second time.**

Soldier 3: Move!

Soldier 4: Now!

(Veronica returns to the disciples. Jesus walks up the far right aisle. When Jesus reaches the steps of the sanctuary he falls on them).

Reader 1: Another humiliating fall for Jesus, but he did not give in. Instead, he chose to follow the Father’s plan and give his life completely so that he, and all of us, could be raised to new life. So often our pride blocks us from seeing the bigger picture that is God’s plan for us. It stops us from acknowledging when we are in the wrong, or when we should just let go of an argument and move forward. Is our pride getting in the way of humbly following God’s call?

Reader 2: Jesus, time and time again I find myself unable to admit that I have made a mistake, or that someone else might be in a better position to make an important decision than me. My pride is a real stumbling block to making improvements in my life. Please grant me a humble heart, which will help me to live out the kind of life that you call me to live. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.

Commentator: **8th Station. Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem.**

Soldier 3: Get up!

Soldier 4: Move!

(Jesus walks up behind the altar and ambo and heads to the front of the left aisle. Weeping women break away from the crowd and huddle along the stairs next to Jesus).

Jesus: Daughters of Jerusalem. Do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children.
Reader 1: Many of these women were sincere in their sorrow for Jesus: they knew Jesus and truly loved him. However, many others that day were simply going along with the crowd, or just caught up in the emotion of the day. Likewise, for many of us today our relationship with Jesus is based only on the big events of the year, or a ‘cultural Christianity’ related more to family and tradition, rather than a genuine relationship with Jesus. Are we willing to genuinely hand ourselves over to God? Or do we just treat Jesus as the ‘safety net’ in our lives, doing what we see as the bare minimum to be a Christian?

Reader 2: Jesus, following your way can be so difficult, even though I know you came to give life and give it to the full. May I come to you with a sincere heart, with a desire for change so I can live as a Christian in all aspects of my life. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.

Commentator: 9th Station. Jesus falls for the third time.

Soldier 3: (To the weeping women). Get back!

Soldier 4: Move! (Jesus continues down the left aisle again and around the back and up the centre aisle of the church. Weeping women join the crowd again. Bandits and Joseph of Arimathea exit stage left as they pass the alcove. Jesus falls down halfway up the centre aisle).

Reader 1: No matter how hard the soldiers whipped him, or how much the crowd jeered him, Jesus kept getting up. He knew what he had to do, and he would do it no matter what pressure people put on him. Failure is rarely easy to accept, but when it happens time after time giving in can begin looking like an attractive option. This is even more so when those around us seem unsupportive – or even hostile – to important decisions we know we need to make, like a decision to overcome an addiction, or a decision to really reconnect with God and his Church. Are we prepared to make the tough decisions needed to get our lives in order?

Reader 2: Jesus, there are some big changes I need to make in my life, even though things may seem OK on the outside. Please give me the courage to move beyond the past failures playing on my mind, and to turn away from everything distracting me from you. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.
Commentator: **10th Station. Jesus is stripped of His garments.**

Soldier 3: Get up!

Soldier 4: Move! 
( *Jesus gets up and continues to the bottom of the sanctuary steps*).

Soldier 5: *(To Simon of Cyrene)* Get out of here! 
(Simon of Cyrene joins the disciples who move to the left steps while the crowd move to the right steps. Mary, Mary Magdala, and Mary, mother of James, and John sit near the alcove. The High Priests stand in front of the veil. Bystanders 1 and 3 stand nearby. Bystander 2 kneels in right aisle. Bystander 4 sits in front of the front seat. Soldiers 1 and 2 go the left of stage and soldiers 5 and 6 go stage right and get the bandits’ crosses and place them in front of the ambo and chair. Soldiers 1 and 2 get the cross stand from behind the altar and place it in front of the altar and then get the cross off Jesus and put it on the stand. Soldiers 3 and 4 hold Jesus up and then bring him up next to the cross. Once all soldiers are back, Jesus is then stripped of his garments by Soldiers 3 and 4. Soldiers 1, 2, 5 and 6 fight over the garments while Soldiers 3 and 4 hold Jesus up).

Soldier 1: Wait! Instead of tearing it, let’s throw dice to decide who is to have it. 
( *Soldier 2 rolls the dice. Soldier 6 wins and he jumps up in glee and grabs the garments*).

Commentator: Then Scripture was fulfilled. ‘They divided my spoils among them. They cast lots for my clothing’.

Reader 1: What a humiliation for Jesus: to be stripped before the crowd. Imagine if this happened to us! As it is, we’re already extremely self-conscious about the changes our bodies go through and how we appear to others. Yet, somehow, we think nothing of watching other people exposed and their dignity violated when we view inappropriate material on the internet or in the media. Are we willing to respect and treat our bodies – and other people’s bodies – as sacred gifts from God?

Reader 2: Jesus, I get so worked up over how I look and what others think of me that I lose sight of the ‘me’ inside. My need to fit in is so strong sometimes that I lower my standards in what I wear and how I let others treat my body. Please help me to be true to myself. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.
Commentator: **11th Station. Jesus is nailed to the Cross.**

(Mary and John stand where they are. Soldiers 1, 2, 5 and 6 place the two bandits on their crosses with rope. Soldier 4 pretends to nail Jesus’ right hand to the Cross).

The nails were about 15 centimetres long and with a diameter of 1cm (Soldier 3 pretends to nail Jesus’ left hand) driven through the wrists and feet. (Soldier 3 pretends to nail Jesus’ feet. Soldiers 5 and 6 nail the sign to the Cross and then all soldiers stand behind the crosses).

**Jesus:** Forgive them, they know not what they do.

**Bystander 1:** Call yourself King!

**Bystander 2:** Where’s your God now?

**Annas:** So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself: come down from the cross!

**Caiaphas:** He saved others, he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now, for us to see it and believe.

**Right Bandit:** *(Looks at Jesus).* Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us as well.

**Left Bandit:** *(Looks at Right Bandit).* Have you no fear of God at all? You got the same sentence as he did, but in our case we deserved it: we are paying for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong. *(Looks at Jesus).* Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.

**Jesus:** *(Looks at Left Bandit).* Indeed, I promise you, today you will be with me in paradise.

*(Mary and John approach the Cross).*

**Woman this is your son. Son this is your mother.** *(John puts his arm around Mary).*

**Reader 1:** As Jesus’ bones gave way to the piercing nails, the agony must have been simply unbearable. However, Jesus was willing to go through suffering and death, rather than risk us spending eternity without him. Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice is more than just a historical reality; it is a call to live our lives in service to God and one another. But doing so means making sacrifices in our own lives: not just changes in what we do, but a change of heart and mind.


Have we reflected on how we live our lives? Have we acknowledged where we have failed to love God and our neighbour? Have we sought forgiveness for our sins through the sacrament of reconciliation?

Reader 2: Jesus, thank you for the Cross. Thank you for giving up everything to gain for me the offer of eternal life. Help me appreciate what you have done for me, and forgive me for the times I have taken it for granted. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.

Commentator: **12th Station. Jesus dies upon the Cross.**

(John and Mary return to the disciples).

Jesus: (Pause) (Breathing heavily).
Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani.
My God, My God, why have you abandoned me?

Bystander 3: Listen, he is calling on Elijah.

Jesus: I am thirsty.

Commentator: They offered Jesus a sponge soaked with wine vinegar.
(Bystander 4 runs up with a sponge and puts it near Jesus’ mouth. Jesus drinks it).

Jesus: It is accomplished. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.
(Jesus dies).

(Lights are switched off in the church and then silence).

(At the sound of thunder the crowd runs away in fear towards the back of the church. The High Priests tear the temple cloths).

Soldier 6: (Drops his spear).
In truth this man was the Son of God.
(Goes and sits with the disciples)

(Soldiers 1, 2, 4 and 5 pretend to break the legs of the two bandits. The Bandits yell in agony and then die).
Commentator: Scripture says not one bone of his will be broken. (Soldier 3 pretends to pierce Jesus’ side with a spear). They will look on the one whom they have pierced.

Reader 1: Jesus called on people to turn to God and live a life of righteousness and compassion, and for this he was brutally tortured then executed, the victim of anger and jealousy. Today, parts of our media and society are becoming increasingly hostile towards Christian faith and values. In the face of this, we can find it easier to minimise our faith or treat it as a purely private matter, rather than speaking out boldly for what is right. Are we prepared to stand up for Christian values with our school friends, at work, and in public?

Reader 2: Jesus, through your life and your death on the cross, you have shown me the way of justice and compassion. I want to follow your way, but I admit I get worried about being criticised for it or being labelled as somehow ‘out of touch’. Please give me the courage to not just do what seems ‘nice’ or socially acceptable, but to really stand up for what is right. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.

Commentator: 13th Station. Jesus is taken down from the Cross. (Soldiers 1 and 4 take down the bodies of the bandits and take them away).

A wealthy man named Joseph of Arimathea had asked Pilate to have the body of Jesus. He was a good and honourable man who agreed to place Jesus in his own tomb. (Joseph enters from stage left with the stretcher and white cloth. He gives the cloth to Mary Magdala and places the stretcher on top of the steps near Mary. John, Joseph and Soldier 6 take Jesus down from the cross and place him on the stretcher. John takes the crown of thorns off Jesus’ head and puts it on the cross with the purple robe).

Mary: Sings Verse 2 and Chorus of ‘With Hope’ by Steven Curtis Chapman.
Reader 1: How hard it must have been for Mary to accept the death of her son. But Mary, like her son, was willing to accept the Father’s will. God’s ways are above our ways, but when we experience major personal disappointments, such as the death of a friend, being made redundant, or missing out on a university course, we so easily fall into despair. However, like Mary, we need to place our hope and our trust in God and His eternal plan for us. Have we spent enough time in prayer discerning God’s plan for us?

Reader 2: Jesus, I have had some big knocks in my life that have really shaken me up. I get worried about the future, and my faith has been rocked. But I know you are good, and I know your plan is bigger than I can ever even imagine. Please help me to let go of my doubts and fears, and trust you. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: Sung chorus of ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ by Scott Underwood.

Commentator: 14th Station. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

(Mary of Magdala and Mary, mother of James, place the white cloth over Jesus. John, Joseph, Soldier 6 and Simon of Cyrene slowly carry him down the right aisle and then back up the far right aisle. The disciples follow behind. Annas and Caiaphas enter from stage left. Pilate enters from stage right).

Annas: Your Excellency, we recall that this impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again’

Caiaphas: Therefore give the order to have the sepulchre kept secure until the third day, for fear his disciples come and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead’. This last piece of fraud would be worse than what went before.

Pilate: You may have your guard. Go and make all secure as you know how. (Annas and Caiaphas send Soldiers 3 and 4 to follow the disciples. Annas and Caiaphas exit stage left. Pilate and Pilate’s wife exit stage right. Soldiers 1, 2 and 6 place a table with white cloth in front of the cross. These soldiers then exit down the centre aisle. Jesus is placed on the table and Mary moves to him, stays for a while and then exits down the centre aisle followed by everyone else except the soldiers who stay to guard Jesus).
Reader 1: It must have been tough for Jesus’ followers to lay him in the tomb, not yet knowing that he would rise on the third day to be with us always. However, following Jesus’ resurrection, these followers would go on to spread the Good News to the world, though not without sacrifice – all but one of the apostles were killed for their faith. They knew that faithfully following Christ is the path to eternal joy. What changes do we need to make in our lives to allow us to follow the way of Jesus?

Reader 2: Jesus, thank you for the gift of your death and resurrection. Forgive me for the times I have been unwilling to open my heart to your presence. Strengthen my faith, and lead me to see your life, and your selfless death, as a source of inspiration, as a gift and a challenge to discipleship. Help me Jesus to follow your way.

All: ‘Take My Life/Holiness’ is now sung in its entirety.

Commentator: Our priests will be available for reconciliation for anyone who wants to receive the Lord’s forgiveness. As you leave, please remain silent out of respect for anyone staying for reconciliation or staying to pray. Thank you.

(After approximately 15 minutes those who carried Jesus come back and carry him out to the back of the sacristy. The soldiers follow them).

Alternate song suggestions
The songs below could also be used as a response throughout the Passion Play:

‘Revive Us, O God’ by Jesse Manibusan.

‘You Know Who I Am’ by Matt Maher & Tom Booth.

‘Jesus My Everything’ by Matt Maher.