### Opening Prayer Service

### Journey with Jesus to the Cross

##### Gather

Jesus, we are beginning a journey with you to the cross.

Help us to understand the meaning of your sacrifice.

Give us the courage to walk with you each day

as we take up our cross and follow you.

##### Listen and Respond

**First Station: The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Olives**

Gospel reading: Mark 14:32-36

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: large plant representing the garden

Sensory Experience: none

Sing the refrain.

**Second Station: The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus**

Gospel reading: Mark 14:43-46

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: rope to tie up Jesus’ hands

Sensory experience: touch the piece of rope on each table

Sing the refrain.

**Third Station: The Sanhedrin Condemns Jesus**

Gospel reading: Mark 14:55, 60-64

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: a judge’s gavel

Sensory experience: none

Sing the refrain.

**Fourth Station: Peter Denies Jesus**

Gospel reading: Mark 14:66-72

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: shaking head to indicate “no”

Sensory experience: none

Sing the refrain.

**Fifth Station: Pilate Condemns Jesus to the Cross**

Gospel reading: Mark 15:1, 6-15

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol: none

Sensory experience: none

Sing the refrain.

**Sixth Station: Jesus Is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns**

Gospel reading: Mark 15:17-19

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: crown of thorns and large strip of leather

Sensory experience: thorns or thorny branch and strip of leather

Sing the refrain.

**The Seventh Station: Jesus is Mocked by the Soldiers and Given His Cross**

Gospel reading: Mark 15:16, 18a, 19-20

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: large cross

Sensory experience: rough wood or piece of bark

Sing the refrain.

**The Eighth Station: Simon the Cyrenian Helps Jesus Carry His Cross**

Gospel reading: Mark 15:21

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: none

Sensory experience: none

Sing the refrain.

**The Ninth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem**

Gospel reading: Luke 23:27-28

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: none

Sensory experience: none

Sing the refrain.

**The Tenth Station: Jesus is Crucified**

Gospel reading: Mark 15:22-24

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: spikes or large nails

Sensory experience: spike or large nail

Sing the refrain.

**The Eleventh Station: Jesus Promises Paradise to the Penitent Criminal**

Gospel reading: Luke 22:33, 39-43

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: none

Sensory experience: none

Sing the refrain.

**The Twelfth Station: Jesus Speaks to His Mother and Disciple**

Gospel reading: John 19:25-27

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol: statue or picture of Mary, picture of Mary and John at the foot of the cross

Sensory experience: none

Sing the refrain.

**The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross**

Gospel reading: Mark 15:33-37

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: crucifix or picture of crucifixion

Sensory experience: none

Sing the refrain.

**The Fourteenth Station: The Burial of Jesus**

Gospel reading: Mark 15:42-46

Response: Jesus, give us the strength to follow your way of living and loving.

Symbol suggestion: burial clothe (large while sheet) and large stone

Sensory experience: stone

Sing the refrain.

##### Go Forth

You are the one who knows the hearts of people,

you are the Light,

you who change hearts,

you who are the Lord.

Here you are, with your arms extended and nailed down,

carrying the sorrows, the suffering and the evil that tear the world apart.

Here you are on the cross,

taking along with you all the unhappy and mistreated

in order to protect them.

Here you are on the dead wood,

sowing the life of God in all the children of the earth.

Here you are exposed on the hill,

whispering to all of us:

“I am staying with you forever.”

I bow down,

I humble myself,

I become very small,

I kneel with wonder and with joy

before you, our Lord,

and before your love

that is so great.

(Charles Singer. *Prayers for Feasts.*)

### Handout #1.

### Readings for the Scriptural Stations of the Cross

##### First Station: The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Olives

**Gospel reading: Mark 14:32-36**

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, ‘I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.’ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, ‘Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.’

##### Second Station: The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

**Gospel reading: Mark 14:43-46**

Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.’ So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, ‘Rabbi!’ and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.

##### Third Station: The Sanhedrin Condemns Jesus

**Gospel reading: Mark 14:55, 60-64**

Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. . . Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, ‘Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?’ But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, ‘Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?’ Jesus said, ‘I am; and “you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power”, and “coming with the clouds of heaven.” ’ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?’ All of them condemned him as deserving death.

##### Fourth Station: Peter Denies Jesus

**Gospel reading: Mark 14:66-72**

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, ‘You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.’ But he denied it, saying, ‘I do not know or understand what you are talking about.’ And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, ‘This man is one of them.’ But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, ‘Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.’ But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, ‘I do not know this man you are talking about.’ At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.’ And he broke down and wept.

##### Fifth Station: Pilate Condemns Jesus to the Cross

**Gospel reading: Mark 15:1, 6-15**

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. . .

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. 7Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. 9Then he answered them, ‘Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?’ For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, ‘Then what do you wish me to do\* with the man you call the King of the Jews?’ They shouted back, ‘Crucify him!’ Pilate asked them, ‘Why, what evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Crucify him!’ So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

##### Sixth Station: Jesus Is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns

**Gospel reading: Mark 15:17-19**

And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him.

##### The Seventh Station: Jesus is Mocked by the Soldiers and Given His Cross

**Gospel reading: Mark 15:16-20**

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

##### The Eighth Station: Simon the Cyrenian Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

**Gospel reading: Mark 15:21**

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

##### The Ninth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

**Gospel reading: Luke 23:27-28**

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

##### The Tenth Station: Jesus is Crucified

**Gospel reading: Mark 15:22-26**

Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take. It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, ‘The King of the Jews.’

##### The Eleventh Station: Jesus Promises Paradise to the Penitent Criminal

**Gospel reading: Luke 22:33, 39-43**

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

##### The Twelfth Station: Jesus Speaks to His Mother and Disciple

**Gospel reading: John 19:25-27**

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

##### The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

**Gospel reading: Mark 15:33-37**

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, ‘Listen, he is calling for Elijah.’ And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, ‘Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.’ Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

##### The Fourteenth Station: The Burial of Jesus

**Gospel reading: Mark 15:42-46**

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

### Handout #2.

### Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

##### Investigating the Death of Jesus

Imagine yourselves as CSI investigators who only know that Jesus has been crucified, but don’t know why. You need to solve the mystery of why Jesus was crucified. What were his crimes that would justify a death sentence? Why did this happen? Your mission, as a group, is to figure out why Jesus was put to death. You will only have the glues you find in the Gospels to help you. Here is how you should proceed:

**Step 1.** Begin your work by sharing your own ideas about why you think Jesus was put to death. List your ideas on a sheet of paper.

**Step 2.** Divide up the Gospel passages on Handout #3 among the members of your group. Make sure that all of the Gospel passages are used, giving several group members two shorter passages to read if necessary. Read the Gospel passages and try to discover clues in each passage that will help you understand why Jesus was put to death. What did Jesus do in his life that would lead to a death sentence and crucifixion? Prepare a brief report of what you find.

**Step 3**. Have all group members share what they discovered in the Gospel passages. Discuss what you heard and develop your final report on the death of Jesus. Why was Jesus put to death? What were the reasons? Create a newsprint report with your reasons. You can use Gospel quotes to support your reasons.

**Step 4**. Share your report with another group and then post them on the wall for everyone to read.

##### Reflecting on the Death of Jesus

Jesus followed the will of God faithfully, 100%, and this often brought him into conflict with the Jewish and Roman authorities of his day. Based on your Gospel research, discuss the following two questions:

* What did Jesus think following the will of God meant? How did he do it?
* How did following the will of God bring Jesus into conflict with the Jewish and Roman authorities of his day?

Read the following reasons why Jesus met opposition to his mission and was eventually put to death and crucified by the religious and civil authorities of his day.

Imagine that you were a religious leader or government leader in Jesus’ day. You saw Jesus in action; you heard his message. What were you thinking? Through his words and actions Jesus was challenging the established religious and political order of the day. Crowds of people listened to his message and followed him. Consider the following:

* Jesus associated with sinners and outcasts. Jesus’ message was one of compassion and love, a love that extended to everyone. Jesus made the outcasts of society the cornerstone of his message. He preached to those condemned to live on the margins of society: he healed them, he offered them hospitality, and he loved to be with them.
* Jesus treated women as equals with men in a society that considered women as little more than slaves. Jesus ignored the rules and practices of his day, and even made women some of his most trusted followers.
* Jesus believed that people were more important that the Law. He was criticized for curing people on the Sabbath, which was against Jewish law.
* Jesus healed people and claimed that he could forgive sins. Jews believed only God could forgive sins. Whenever Jesus forgave sins, the religious authorities considered this blasphemy, which means they saw Jesus claiming himself as God.
* Jesus’ basic conviction that the God of Israel was a God of love and justice, whose love was offered to all, even the unjust, the sinner, and the poor, was a challenge to many religious people of his day. It challenged many people’s understanding of their faith and confronted values in their life that were not from God. Religious leaders saw this as an attack on their own idea of God and religion and were very threatened.
* Jesus claimed for himself a position of authority above that of both the religious and political powers of his day. Jesus’ authority came from his own personal experience of God. Basic convictions about God as a loving parent and about love as the fundamental bond of human relationships were joined to an unshakable integrity that translated principle into action. Jesus’ words and actions took on an authority that affronted his critics and drew forth their cries of blasphemy.
* Jesus’ intimate relationship with God, whom he called Abba (or “Daddy”), threatened the religious leaders of his day who were supposed to be close to God.

All this and much more brought Jesus to an unavoidable confrontation with the Jewish and Roman authorities. He was a very real threat to religious tradition and political stability. In the end the religious and political authorities of his day chose to kill him— “better that one man die…”

Discuss the following questions:

* How do the Gospel passages you read and the summary reflections above compare with your own understanding of why Jesus was killed?
* What new insights came to you about why Jesus was crucified?
* Why is it so important to understand why Jesus was crucified?

##### Living the Will of God in My Life

Jesus’ death was final testimony to his trust in the faithful, loving God he had proclaimed. His death was an act of love, a gift of himself to God and to his fellow human beings—“laying down his life for his friends.” *This was the ultimate sacrifice.* Jesus identified with the sufferings of all humanity. He freely allowed himself to suffer and be put to death. Jesus lived the law of love he calls us to live. His death was the price he paid for a life lived in faithfulness to God and to God’s will.

Jesus’ death opened the possibility of salvation for all people because his death freed us to live in a totally new way—as sons and daughters of God who are forgiven and loved unconditionally. Jesus’ death on the cross was a verification of God’s love and forgiveness, of God’s longing to save us from sin and death. His ultimate sacrifice teaches us the way to God. It teaches us how to live our lives.

Jesus was willing to sacrifice everything to do the will of God. Now think about your own life:

* What does following the will of God mean to you in your life?
* What are you willing to sacrifice to follow Jesus?

Share some of your reflections on the questions above with your group.

### Handout #3.

### Death of Jesus: Gospel Passages

##### 1. Mark 11:15-19: Jesus cleanses the temple.

Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. He was teaching and saying, ‘Is it not written,
“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations”? But you have made it a den of robbers.’

And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

##### 2. John 5:2-18: Jesus heals on the Sabbath.

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ The sick man answered him, ‘Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Stand up, take your mat and walk.’ At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, ‘It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.’ But he answered them, ‘The man who made me well said to me, “Take up your mat and walk.” ’ They asked him, ‘Who is the man who said to you, “Take it up and walk”?’ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, ‘See, you have been made well! Do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.’ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath. But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is still working, and I also am working.’ For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.

##### 3. Mark 6:1-5: Jesus is rejected in Nazareth.

He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, ‘Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?’ And they took offense at him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Prophets are not without honor, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.’ And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them.

##### 4. Mark 1:21-28: Jesus heals a man with an unclean spirit.

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.’ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, ‘What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.’ At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

##### 5. Mark 1:40-45: Jesus cleanses a leper.

A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, ‘If you choose, you can make me clean.’ Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I do choose. Be made clean!’ Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, saying to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’ But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

##### 6. Mark 2:1-12: Jesus heals a paralytic.

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ‘Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’ At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, ‘Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven”, or to say, “Stand up and take your mat and walk”? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—he said to the paralytic—’I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.’ And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this!’

##### 7. Mark 2:13-17: Jesus eats with sinners.

Jesus went out again beside the lake; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he got up and followed him.

And as he sat at dinner in Levi’s house, many tax-collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him. When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax-collectors, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does he eat with tax-collectors and sinners?’ When Jesus heard this, he said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.’

##### 8. Mark 2:23-28: Jesus picks grain on the Sabbath.

One sabbath he was going through the cornfields; and as they made their way his disciples began tuck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, ‘Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?’ And he said to them, ‘Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.’ Then he said to them, ‘The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.’

##### 9. Mark 3:1-6: Jesus heals a man with a withered hand.

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, ‘Come forward.’ Then he said to them, ‘Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?’ But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

##### 10. Luke 7:11-17: Jesus raises the widow’s son.

11 Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother’s only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’ Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, ‘Young man, I say to you, rise!’ The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has risen among us!’ and ‘God has looked favorably on his people!’ This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.

##### 11. Luke 7:36-50: Jesus forgives a sinful woman.

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.’ Jesus spoke up and said to him, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ ‘Teacher,’ he replied, ‘speak.’ ‘A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?’ Simon answered, ‘I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You have judged rightly.’ Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.’ Then he said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, ‘Who is this who even forgives sins?’ And he said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.

##### 12. Luke 13:10-17: Jesus cure the crippled woman on the Sabbath.

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, ‘Woman, you are set free from your ailment.’ When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, ‘There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.’ But the Lord answered him and said, ‘You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?’ When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

##### 13. Matthew 21:23-32: Jesus’ authority is questioned.

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?’ Jesus said to them, ‘I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?’ And they argued with one another, ‘If we say, “From heaven”, he will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?” But if we say, “Of human origin”, we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.’ So they answered Jesus, ‘We do not know.’ And he said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

‘What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, “Son, go and work in the vineyard today.” He answered, “I will not”; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, “I go, sir”; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

##### 14. John 7:11-29, 37-52: Jesus is questioned about being the Messiah.

The Jews were looking for him at the festival and saying, ‘Where is he?’ And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, ‘He is a good man’, others were saying, ‘No, he is deceiving the crowd.’ Yet no one would speak openly about him for fear of the Jews.

About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. The Jews were astonished at it, saying, ‘How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?’ Then Jesus answered them, ‘My teaching is not mine but his who sent me. Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him.

Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?’ The crowd answered, ‘You have a demon! Who is trying to kill you?’ Jesus answered them, ‘I performed one work, and all of you are astonished. Moses gave you circumcision (it is, of course, not from Moses, but from the patriarchs), and you circumcise a man on the sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man’s whole body on the sabbath? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.’

Now some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, ‘Is not this the man whom they are trying to kill? And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Messiah? Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.’ Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, ‘You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me.’ Then they tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come. . .

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.” ’ Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, ‘This is really the prophet.’ Others said, ‘This is the Messiah.’ But some asked, ‘Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?’ So there was a division in the crowd because of him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, ‘Why did you not arrest him?’ The police answered, ‘Never has anyone spoken like this!’ Then the Pharisees replied, ‘Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed.’ Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, ‘Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?’ They replied, ‘Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee.’

##### 15. John 8:12-20: Jesus is the light of the world.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’ Then the Pharisees said to him, ‘You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid.’ Jesus answered, ‘Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf.’ Then they said to him, ‘Where is your Father?’ Jesus answered, ‘You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also.’ He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

##### 16. John 10:22-39: Jesus is rejected by the Jews.

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, ‘How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered, ‘I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.’

The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus replied, ‘I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?’ The Jews answered, ‘It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.’ Jesus answered, ‘Is it not written in your law, “I said, you are gods”? If those to whom the word of God came were called “gods”—and the scripture cannot be annulled— can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, “I am God’s Son”? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.’ Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands.

### Worksheet: Investigating the Death of Jesus

##### What I found. . .

*Read the Gospel passage and try to discover clues that will help you understand why Jesus was put to death. What did Jesus do in his life that would lead to a death sentence and crucifixion?*

##### What we learned as a group about why Jesus was put to death. . .

### Handout #4.

### The Sacrifice of Jesus

Take a moment to reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus using the following questions:

* What sacrifices do you think Jesus made to live his mission faithfully?
* Think for a moment about Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice–his death on the cross. Why do you think Jesus was crucified? Try to think of specific reasons from his life that give us clues into why he was crucified.
* What do you think is the significance or importance of Jesus’ death on the cross?

Have everyone in the group share responses to the questions.

##### The Death of Jesus: Exploring the Gospels

Divide up the Gospel passages on Handout #3 among the members of your group. Make sure that all the Gospel passages are used, giving several group members two shorter passages to read if necessary.

Read the Gospel passages and try to discover clues in each passage that will help you understand why Jesus was put to death. What did Jesus do in his life that would lead to a death sentence and crucifixion?

Share what you have discovered in the Gospel passages with group. Then discuss: Why was Jesus put to death? What were the reasons identified in the Gospel passages?

Read the following summary of reasons why Jesus met opposition to his mission and was eventually put to death and crucified by the religious and civil authorities of his day.

 Imagine that you were a religious leader or government leader in Jesus’ day. You saw Jesus in action; you heard his message. What are you thinking? Through his words and actions Jesus was challenging the established religious and political order of the day. Crowds of people listened to his message and followed him. Consider the following:

* Jesus associated with sinners and outcasts. Jesus’ message was one of compassion and love, a love that extended to everyone. Jesus made the outcasts of society the cornerstone of his message. He preached to those condemned to live on the margins of society: he healed them, he offered them hospitality, and he loved to be with them.
* Jesus treated women as equals with men in a society that considered women as little more than slaves. Jesus ignored the rules and practices of his day, and even made women some of his most trusted followers.
* Jesus believed that people were more important that the Law. He was criticized for curing people on the Sabbath, which was against Jewish law.
* Jesus healed people and claimed that he could forgive sins. Jews believed only God could forgive sins. Whenever Jesus forgave sins, the religious authorities considered this blasphemy, which means they saw Jesus claiming himself as God.
* Jesus’ basic conviction that the God of Israel was a God of love and justice, whose love was offered to all, even the unjust, the sinner, and the poor, was a challenge to many religious people of his day. It challenged many people’s understanding of their faith and confronted values in their life that were not from God. Religious leaders saw this as an attack on their own idea of God and religion and were very threatened.
* Jesus claimed for himself a position of authority above that of both the religious and political powers of his day. Jesus’ authority came from his own personal experience of God. Basic convictions about God as a loving parent and about love as the fundamental bond of human relationships were joined to an unshakable integrity that translated principle into action. Jesus’ words and actions took on an authority that affronted his critics and drew forth their cries of blasphemy.
* Jesus’ intimate relationship with God, whom he called Abba (or “Daddy”), threatened the religious leaders of his day who were supposed to be close to God.

All this and much more brought Jesus to an unavoidable confrontation with the Jewish and Roman authorities. He was a very real threat to religious tradition and political stability. In the end the religious and political authorities of his day chose to kill him— “better that one man die…”

For further study read Handout #4: Reflections on Why Jesus Was Sentenced to Death by Donald Senior.

Discuss the following questions in your group:

* How do the Gospel passages you read and the summary reflections above compare with your own understanding of why Jesus was killed?
* What new insights came to you about why Jesus was crucified?
* What do you think is the significance of Jesus’ death on the cross for us today?
* How does his death give new meaning to sacrifice and suffering?

##### Living the Will of God in My Life

Jesus’ death was final testimony to his trust in the faithful, loving God he had proclaimed. His death was an act of love, a gift of himself to God and to his fellow human beings—“laying down his life for his friends.” *This was the ultimate sacrifice.* Jesus identified with the sufferings of all humanity. He freely allowed himself to suffer and be put to death. Jesus lived the law of love he calls us to live. His death was the price he paid for a life lived in faithfulness to God and to God’s will.

Jesus’ death opened the possibility of salvation for all people because his death freed us to live in a totally new way—as sons and daughters of God who are forgiven and loved unconditionally. Jesus death on the cross is a verification of God’s love and forgiveness, of God’s longing to save us from sin and death. His ultimate sacrifice teaches us the way to God. It teaches us how to live our lives.

Jesus was willing to sacrifice everything to do the will of God. Now think about your own life:

* What does following the will of God mean to you in your life?
* What are you willing to sacrifice to follow Jesus?

Share some of your reflections on the questions with your group.

### Handout #5.

### Reflections on Why Jesus Was Sentenced to Death

#### By Donald Senior

Jesus’ death does not break into the gospel story unexpectedly. Almost from the beginning, the rumble of opposition and hostile threats against his life are heard in the background. The source of opposition is not some faceless and senseless plot against Jesus. Nor is it the result a fated divine drama. It is Jesus’ own determined actions that provoke the opposition to him and gradually make his enemies determined enough to kill him.

First, through the gospel accounts, practically from the very beginning of his ministry, Jesus draws fire because of his association with sinners and other social, religious and political outcasts. Jesus’ message was one of compassion and love, a just love that extended to the clean and unclean, to sinners as well as the righteous. He refused to be hemmed in by the taboos that human tradition had built around those who were unable or unwilling to keep the law. He preached to those condemned to live on the margins of society: he healed them, he offered them hospitality, and he loved to be with them.

Reaction was quick and vicious. Jesus’ ministry became unpalatable to the religious leadership of his day; it tore holes in their very conception of what religion was and challenged their own convictions about who truly belong to the people of God. The Pharisees, for example, had limited the traditional term of the God’s beloved “poor” to those who kept the law, who were not necessarily the economically poor. But Jesus insisted that it was the genuinely poor, the materially poor, who were God’s favorites and the prime beneficiaries of his kingdom. The religious leaders had declared the “unclean” and sinners to be unworthy of God’s grace. But Jesus said they especially were destined to receive it. Jesus’ own patriarchal society, along with the rest of the ancient Mediterranean world, considered women as little more than slaves. But Jesus ignored their strictures, and he made several women his most trusted followers.

Thus Jesus’ basic conviction that the God of Israel was a God of love and justice, the Abba whose love was offered to all—the just and unjust, good and bad, poor and not poor—was not a harmless, pious sentiment. It drew upon the very heart of Israel’s own experience of God and its soundest tradition. It becomes the driving conviction of Jesus’ own mission and was enacted with such conviction and force that it became an affront to many of his contemporaries whose choices were sometimes captured by other values and concerns. It challenged his contemporaries’ understanding of what fidelity to God and the covenant meant and thereby threatened their very notion of religion. And Jesus would have to pay a price for this conviction. The murmuring and the offense that Jesus so frequently provoked by his ministry soon hardened into steely hatred.

But that was not the only root cause of Jesus’ death. Some of the sharpest conflicts between Jesus and his opponents were over questions of interpreting the Jewish law. . . Jesus recoiled from the sense of self-satisfaction and moral certainty that a concern with religious law easily can breed. The heart of genuine religion was the intimate bond of love between God and God’s people. True fidelity could be nothing less than a full, loving response to that gift of love. This is the center that judges all else, prescriptions of the law included. Being religious can never be measured by the number of laws kept. Its only qualitative test is whether our own response to the needs of others matches the unselfish quality of God’s love for us. Thus if the Sabbath regulations stood in the way of responding to need, Jesus did not hesitate to set them aside. If piety and tradition became so encrusted with formalism that they hampered genuine love, then their shallowness should be unmasked. If acts of mercy or of asceticism became podiums for one’s sense of righteousness, then they were to be declared a sham.

So it was Jesus’ own integrity and compelling honesty that led him to face-offs with his opponents on questions of law. He was affronting their own self-image as the “saved,” daring to teach the teachers of religion what faith in God really meant. It was a lesson his contemporaries could not bear, and as the gospel ominously notes, “They began to plot . . . how they might destroy him (Mark 3:6)

Another note of opposition registered in the gospels is perhaps subtler than the ones we have listed above. The gospels call it Jesus’ “authority.” The title most commonly applied to him in the gospels is “teacher.” But the gospels also insist that Jesus did not teach as the scribes and Pharisees did. For them, to teach “with authority” usually meant to cite suitable traditions, to appeal to the opinions of former rabbis. But never in any of Jesus’ sayings does he cite another rabbi; never does he appeal to the weight of another’s opinion. Even his citation of scripture serves only to confirm what he himself already had stated confidently. The source of Jesus’ authority is his own experience. From his intimate life of prayer with God and from a prayerful searching of the scriptures, Jesus had forged the basic convictions that animated his life and ministry. Basic convictions about God as a loving parent and about love as the fundamental bond of human relationships were joined to an unshakable integrity that translated principle into action. Jesus’ words and actions took on an authority that affronted his critics and drew forth their cries of blasphemy.

He dared to address God in such affectionate terms that probably many of his contemporaries would be shocked. His own public prayers that he shared with his disciples were direct and uncluttered, different from the differential and more elaborate prayers of many of his contemporaries. He tendered his own conclusions about what was proper on the sabbath, he had unorthodox views about the regulations for ritual purity. And he was not afraid to make his views known with an air of quiet confidence that so often reduced his opponents to rage.

The things he did reflected that same determined conviction. He sought out the poor and the outcasts because he was sure they needed him. He was diffident about the commotion his miracles caused, but when the sick approached him, his healing touch was unhesitant. The voice that commanded the evil spirits to leave their victims brimmed with power. And he was not afraid to lead that ragtag group of baffled disciples and tattered onlookers into his opponents’ own nests. He dined with the wealthy and with the Pharisees, unshaken by the critical stares that tested everything he did. Even the affectionate gratitude of a prostitute did not embarrass him when he dined with Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50). He commended her, and he exposed the hypocrisy of his host. He led a large parade of exuberant followers into Jerusalem. He must have known that such a popular display would distress the Jewish authorities and rattle the nerves of the Romans. But he was convinced that his mission was right; and at least for this one time, when he knew that the final crisis was almost upon him, he was not afraid to let the power of this mission intimidate those who opposed him. The same triumphant surge would carry him into the temple itself: he, a Galilean peasant who should have been blinking in awe, instead cleared the moneychangers and the stands of those who sold bird and animals for the sacrifices from the temple courtyard (Mark 11:15-19). Like one of the prophets of the past, Jesus chose a dramatic gesture to let his countrymen know that the repentance and reform he had preached in the countryside of Galilee applied with equal vigor to the center of power and worship in Jerusalem. Herod had built that magnificent temple, and even through the people knew that Herod’s piety was counterfeit, they took pride in that magnificent building. But Jesus’ provocative action warned that even this stunning edifice meant nothing without a pure heart, and in the approaching rule of God its stones would be tossed aside.

This sense of mission, never fanatical, never demagogic, yet fearlessly determined, characterized Jesus’ every action. It gave him the forceful sense of authority that provoked a continuing chorus of exclamation in the gospels: “What does this mean? A completely new teaching in a spirit of authority!” (Mark 1:27). “They were awestruck; all gave praise to God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this!” (Mark 2:12). Such authority could be viewed only as a threat to the religious and political establishment of Israel. And the threat became so unnerving that it eventually would bring about a most unlikely alliance of Jew and Roman to cope with it. So it had become one more than one occasion in these turbulent political times. The Jewish leaders had no love for the Romans but they did have to be concerned about order in the capital city. And sometimes, for the good of all concerned, the religious tenacity of the Jewish authorities and the might of Rome needed to work in an uneasy concert.

. . . Jesus knew, as generations of Christian martyrs would know after him, that ultimately the worldly powers would understand that what Jesus said and did could shake the very foundations of their thrones—and then they would move to destroy him.

(*Jesus: A Gospel Portrait*. Donald Senior)

### Handout #6.

### Preparing the Closing Prayer Service

##### Adolescent Groups: Writing a Prayer

Step 1: Read the Gospel passage for the Station.

Step 2: Talk about what this Station means to everyone at the table.

Step 3: Generate thoughts, concerns, and hopes for what people want to include in the prayer for the Station. Write these on newsprint or paper.

Step 4: Write a short prayer that reflects the thoughts, concerns, and hopes of the group. Direct the prayer to Jesus requesting a grace or ability connected with the Station. Write the prayer on a large file card or piece of paper.

Step 5: Identify one person who will come forward during the Prayer Service to read the prayer.

##### Adult Groups: Writing a Contemporary Reflection

Step 1: Read the Gospel passage for the Station.

Step 2: Talk about what this Station means to everyone at the table.

Step 3: Generate thoughts on how to connect Jesus' experience in the Station to our own life experience and contemporary life. Write these thoughts on newsprint or paper.

Step 4: Write a short reflection on the Station that reflects the thoughts of the group. Write the prayer on a large file card or piece of paper.

Step 5: Identify one person who will come forward during the Prayer Service to read the prayer.

##### Stations of the Cross

First Station: The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Olives (Mark 14:32-36)

Second Station: The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus (Mark 14:43-46)

Third Station: The Sanhedrin Condemns Jesus (Mark 14:55, 60-64)

Fourth Station: Peter Denies Jesus (Mark 14:66-72)

Fifth Station: Pilate Condemns Jesus to the Cross (Mark 15:1, 6-15)

Sixth Station: Jesus Is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns (Mark 15:17-19)

The Seventh Station: Jesus is Mocked by the Soldiers and Given His Cross (Mark 15:16, 18a, 19-20)

The Eighth Station: Simon the Cyrenian Helps Jesus Carry His Cross (Mark 15:21)

The Ninth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem (Luke 23:27-28)

The Tenth Station: Jesus is Crucified (Mark 15:22-24)

The Eleventh Station: Jesus Promises Paradise to the Penitent Criminal (Luke 22:33, 39-43)

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Speaks to His Mother and Disciple (John 19:25-27)

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross (Mark 15:33-37)

The Fourteenth Station: The Burial of Jesus (Mark 15:42-46)

### Handout #7.

### Stations of the Cross at Home

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| --- | --- |
| First Station: The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Olives(Mark 14:32-36)Second Station: The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus (Mark 14:43-46) | Third Station: The Sanhedrin Condemns Jesus (Mark 14:55, 60-64)Fifth Station: Pilate Condemns Jesus to the Cross (Mark 15:1, 6-15) |
| Fourth Station: Peter Denies Jesus (Mark 14:66-72) | Sixth Station: Jesus Is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns (Mark 15:17-19)The Seventh Station: Jesus is Mocked by the Soldiers and Given His Cross (Mark 15:16, 18a, 19-20) |

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| The Eighth Station: Simon the Cyrenian Helps Jesus Carry His Cross (Mark 15:21)The Ninth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem (Luke 23:27-28) | The Tenth Station: Jesus is Crucified (Mark 15:22-24) |
| The Eleventh Station: Jesus Promises Paradise to the Penitent Criminal (Luke 22:33, 39-43)The Twelfth Station: Jesus Speaks to His Mother and Disciple (John 19:25-27) | The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross (Mark 15:33-37)The Fourteenth Station: The Burial of Jesus (Mark 15:42-46) |

### Closing Prayer Service

##### Gather

The presider invites participants to gather in silence, reflecting on the profound sacrifice of Jesus on the cross which he offered in total obedience to the Father and with complete love for us.

##### Listen

For each station, listen and watch as a family presents their artwork, followed by a prayer from the adolescent group, and a reflection from the adult group.

##### Respond

Let us contemplate Jesus the Lord: instead of the joy meant for him, he endured the cross, disregarding its disgrace.

Response: We worship you, Lord, upon the cross.

O Jesus Christ, born in humility to confound the proud and to raise the humble…

Response: We worship you, Lord, upon the cross.

You lived among us, healing the sick, proclaiming Good News to the poor and freedom to prisoners.

Response: We worship you, Lord, upon the cross.

You came to unbind the chains of every slave, you were friend of the humble and bread for hungry hearts,

Response: We worship you, Lord, upon the cross.

Jesus, full of patience and goodness, you showed forgiveness and kindness to the very end.

Response: We worship you, Lord, upon the cross.

Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, you call to yourself all who are weary and burdened.

Response: We worship you, Lord, upon the cross.

Jesus, you came into the world to serve and give your life; you were betrayed for money, dragged before judges, and nailed to the cross.

Response: We worship you, Lord, upon the cross.

Jesus, Lord of the universe, by your resurrection from the dead you are alive at the Father’s side. There you prepare a place for us.

Response: We worship you, Lord, upon the cross. (*Prayer for Each Day*. Taize)

##### Go Forth

What does it mean to have a part in the Cross of Christ?
It means to experience, in the Holy Spirit, the love hidden within the Cross of Christ.
It means to recognize, in the light of this love, our own cross.
It means to take up that cross once more and, strengthened by this love, to continue our journey...
To journey through life, in imitation of the one who “endured the cross,
despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (*Heb* 12:2)