

# Journey to the Cross

## Easter Family Station Replication Guide

*A church handoff resource for creating a self-guided, hands-on Easter experience for families*



**Welcome**  
Journey to the Cross

A Family Prayer Experience

Rules of Engagement:

- Go at your own pace.
- There is no rush.
- Take your time.
- Follow the footprints.
- Walk with Jesus.
- Remember His love.

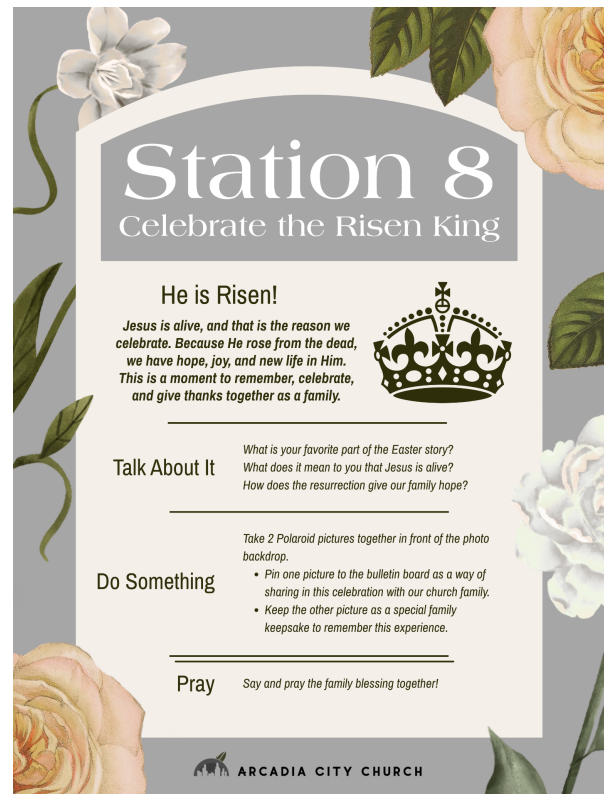
You Will:

- Read Scripture
- Reflect and talk
- Do a simple response
- Pray together
- Respond as a family

How it Works:

- Stop at each station
- Read the sign
- Look at the visual
- Do the activity
- Help your child


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**Station 8**  
Celebrate the Risen King

**He is Risen!**

*Jesus is alive, and that is the reason we celebrate. Because He rose from the dead, we have hope, joy, and new life in Him. This is a moment to remember, celebrate, and give thanks together as a family.*



Talk About It


*What is your favorite part of the Easter story?  
What does it mean to you that Jesus is alive?  
How does the resurrection give our family hope?*

Do Something

*Take 2 Polaroid pictures together in front of the photo backdrop.*

- Pin one picture to the bulletin board as a way of sharing in this celebration with our church family.
- Keep the other picture as a special family keepsake to remember this experience.

Pray *Say and pray the family blessing together!*

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### THE HEART OF THIS MODEL

Create a space where families can slow down, walk through the story of Jesus together, and leave feeling both spiritually moved and practically equipped to keep talking about faith at home.

*Based on Arcadia City Church's Family Easter Experience*

# Vision

Journey to the Cross is a self-guided Easter experience designed to help families slow down and walk through the story of Jesus together. Rather than simply telling children about Holy Week, this experience invites parents and kids to read Scripture, talk, pray, and respond with simple hands-on activities that make the Easter story tangible and memorable.

The heart behind this model is family discipleship. Parents are not spectators. They are gently equipped to lead, explain, and reflect with their children in a warm, low-pressure environment. Each station gives families a simple next step so even adults who do not always feel confident starting spiritual conversations can participate naturally.

This format works especially well because it is flexible, visual, and accessible across ages. Children from age two through adulthood can participate together. Younger children can engage through movement, symbols, and short prayers; older children, teens, and adults can go deeper through conversation and reflection. The goal is for families to remember what Jesus did on the cross, celebrate that He is alive, and leave encouraged to keep talking about faith at home.

## What this experience is designed to do

- Help families experience the story of Holy Week in a meaningful, age-appropriate way.
- Give parents simple language and structure for talking about Jesus with their children.
- Create hands-on moments that engage toddlers, kids, teens, and adults together.
- Turn Easter from a one-service event into a shared family discipleship moment.
- Send families home with practical resources that continue the conversation beyond church.

## Why it works across ages

<b>Ages 2-5</b>	Keep language very short. Let children touch, place, wave, stamp, draw, and repeat simple prayers after an adult.
<b>Elementary</b>	Invite children to answer questions, read short portions, and participate fully in each response activity.
<b>Teens</b>	Add space for deeper reflection, honest questions, and personal prayer. Teens can also help younger siblings and read the stations aloud.
<b>Adults</b>	Parents and caregivers model curiosity, prayer, and conversation. Their presence is one of the most important parts of the experience.

# How the Experience Flows

<b>1. Arrival Table</b>	Families begin at the instruction table in the sanctuary. Parents receive a take-home Family Devotional Sheet and children receive a Journey Passport.
<b>2. Self-Guided Movement</b>	Families follow the footprints and move from station to station at their own pace. Multiple families can be at a station at the same time.
<b>3. Station Rhythm</b>	At each station families read the sign, look at the visual, talk together, do the activity, pray, and stamp the child's passport.
<b>4. Celebration Ending</b>	At the final celebration station families take a photo together, pray the family blessing, and mark the experience with joy.
<b>5. Exit with Resources</b>	Before leaving the sanctuary, families browse a family resource cart with practical faith-at-home tools they can use in everyday life.

## Sanctuary setup & environment

- Set the experience inside the sanctuary or another quiet worship space so the environment already feels set apart.
- Use soft instrumental worship music, battery candles, floral elements, footprints, and clear signage to create a gentle flow.
- Keep everything self-guided and welcoming. Families should never feel rushed or afraid of doing it wrong.
- Use simple activities that are tactile but manageable. The goal is meaningful participation, not complexity.
- Place the final photo station and resource cart near the exit so families leave feeling celebrated and equipped.

## Entry table pieces to prepare



## Instructions Table

- Place this at the main sanctuary entry point so families know exactly where to begin.
- Display the welcome sign and the simple rules of engagement: go at your own pace, follow the footprints, take your time, walk with Jesus, and remember His love.
- Use volunteers here to smile, explain the flow, hand out materials, and reassure families that the experience is self-guided.

## Parent Take-Home Piece

- Give each parent or caregiver a Family Devotional Sheet that can be taken home and used later.
- This reinforces that the church experience is not the finish line; it is a bridge into everyday discipleship at home.

## Child Experience Passport

- Give each child a Journey Passport to carry from station to station.
- At each stop, children can complete the activity and stamp the passport. This keeps them engaged and gives them a keepsake to bring home.

# Master supply list

## Printing & Signage

- Welcome sign, instruction sign, 8 station signs, and finale/family blessing sign
- Journey Passports for children
- Family Devotional Sheets for parents
- Footprints or directional floor markers
- Labels, table signs, and simple instructions where needed

## Atmosphere & Setup

- Tables for entry, stations, photo area, and resource cart
- Battery candles, tablecloths, and light decorative elements
- Soft instrumental music
- Baskets, trays, or bins for station materials
- Bulletin board or display area for final photo station

## Station Materials

- Palm branches
- Bread/juice or communion elements if your church chooses to include them
- Potting soil, flowers, and a planter or shared prayer garden container
- Stones and paint markers

- Heart-shaped note cards and butcher paper
- Empty tomb visual and flowers
- Polaroid camera or photo setup with backdrop

# Station-by-Station Replication Guide

Each station follows the same basic rhythm: read, talk, do, pray. Keep the prompts simple, the visuals clear, and the activity easy enough for a family to complete together in just a few minutes.

## Station 1 | Jesus Is Our King Palm Sunday

### SCRIPTURE

John 12:12-13

### BIG IDEA

Jesus is a humble King who comes with love, peace, and humility.

### WHAT FAMILIES DO

Families read the passage, talk about what kind of King Jesus is, wave palm branches, and place one along the path as a sign of welcoming Him.

### CONVERSATION FOCUS

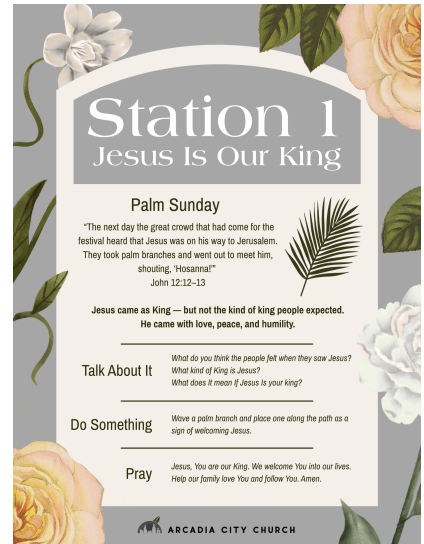
*What kind of King is Jesus? What does it mean to welcome Him into our lives?*

### MATERIALS

Station sign, basket of palm branches, pathway or floor space to lay branches, passport stamp.

### REPLICATION TIP

Let this station feel active and welcoming. Movement helps younger children connect right away.



## Station 2 | Jesus Shares a Meal The Last Supper

### SCRIPTURE

Luke 22:19

### BIG IDEA

Jesus wanted His followers to remember His love and the gift of His life.

### WHAT FAMILIES DO

Families pause at the table, name things they are thankful for, and if appropriate in your tradition, take communion or explain what communion means.

### CONVERSATION FOCUS

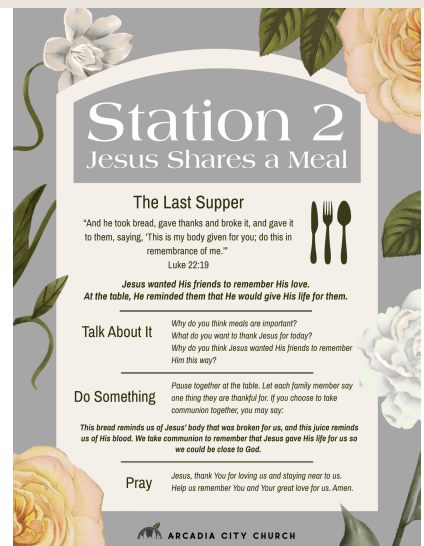
*Why are meals important? Why did Jesus want His friends to remember Him this way?*

### MATERIALS

Station sign, table setup, bread/juice or symbolic meal items, passport stamp.

### REPLICATION TIP

Keep this station calm and relational. A table naturally invites gratitude, memory, and conversation.



## Station 3 | Jesus Prayed Garden of Gethsemane

### SCRIPTURE

Matthew 26:39

### BIG IDEA

Jesus knows what it feels like to be sad, overwhelmed, and afraid, and He brought it honestly to the Father.

### WHAT FAMILIES DO

Families plant a flower in a shared prayer garden and pray together, asking God to grow faith, hope, and trust in their home.

### CONVERSATION FOCUS

*Have you ever felt worried or afraid? How can we trust God when life feels hard?*

### MATERIALS

Station sign, planter or shared soil container, flowers, gloves or wipes if needed, passport stamp.

### REPLICATION TIP

This station works well as a gentle tactile prayer response. Keep cleanup supplies nearby.

**Station 3**  
Jesus Prayed

**Garden of Gethsemane**

*"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."*  
Matthew 26:39

**Jesus knows what it feels like to be sad, overwhelmed, and afraid. He talked honestly with His Father and trusted Him.**

**Talk About It** Have you ever felt sad, worried, or afraid? What is something our family wants to give to God in prayer? How can we trust God when life feels hard?

**Do Something** Plant a flower in the shared prayer garden. As you place it in the soil, say a prayer together and ask God to grow faith, hope, and trust in your home.

**Pray** God, when we feel afraid or burdened, help us trust You. Thank You for hearing our prayers and helping us grow in faith. Amen.

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## Station 4 | Jesus Carried the Cross The Road to the Cross

### SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 53:4

### BIG IDEA

Jesus carried our sorrow, pain, and sin because He loves us deeply.

### WHAT FAMILIES DO

Families hold a stone quietly, write a burden or hard thing on it with a paint marker, and place it at the foot of the cross as an act of surrender.

### CONVERSATION FOCUS

*What are some hard things people carry? What would you like to give to Jesus today?*

### MATERIALS

Station sign, stones, paint markers, cross display, wipes or table covering, passport stamp.

### REPLICATION TIP

Offer a clear place to set the stones so the visual burden pile grows throughout the week.

**Station 4**  
Jesus Carried the Cross

**The Road to the Cross**

*"Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering."*  
Isaiah 53:4

**Jesus carried the weight of sin and sorrow because He loves us deeply. He understands our pain and came to rescue us.**

**Talk About It** What are some hard things people carry in life? What does it mean that Jesus carries our pain? What would you like to give to Jesus today?

**Do Something** Take a stone and hold it quietly for a moment. Use the paint markers to write a word that represents something you want to give to Jesus. Then place it at the foot of the cross as a sign of surrendering that burden to Him.

**Pray** Jesus, thank You for carrying what we could not carry on our own. We give You our worries, hurts, and burdens. Amen.

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## Station 5 | Jesus Gave His Life

### Good Friday

#### SCRIPTURE

Romans 5:8

#### BIG IDEA

The cross shows how much Jesus loves us and how far He went to bring us near to God.

#### WHAT FAMILIES DO

Families write or draw a thank-you prayer to Jesus on a heart-shaped note and place it on butcher paper or a response wall.

#### CONVERSATION FOCUS

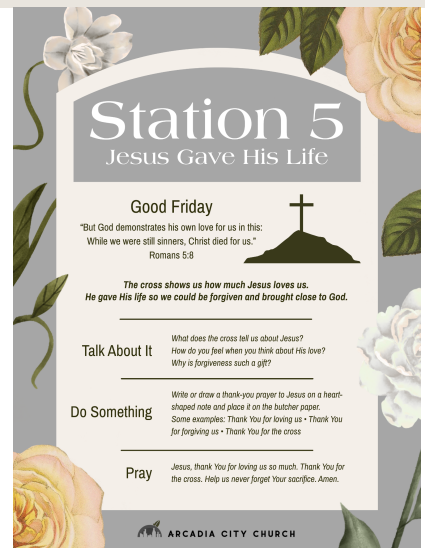
*What does the cross tell us about Jesus? Why is forgiveness such a gift?*

#### MATERIALS

Station sign, heart-shaped note cards, pens or markers, butcher paper or display wall, passport stamp.

#### REPLICATION TIP

Keep sample prompts visible so children can participate even if they are still learning to write.



## Station 6 | Jesus Was Buried

### The Tomb

#### SCRIPTURE

Matthew 27:59-60

#### BIG IDEA

This was a quiet and confusing moment, yet God was still at work even when people could not see it.

#### WHAT FAMILIES DO

Families pause in silence for a few moments together and practice quiet waiting before praying.

#### CONVERSATION FOCUS

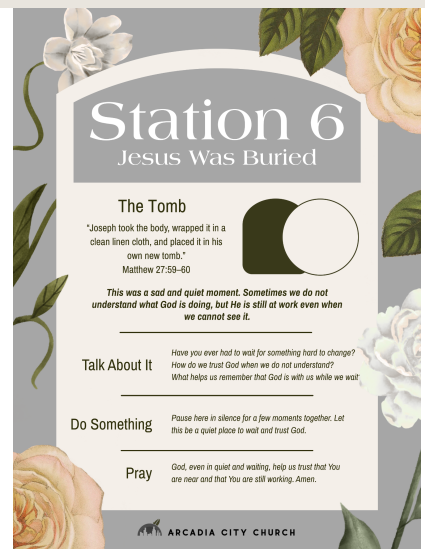
*How do we trust God when we do not understand? What helps us remember that God is with us while we wait?*

#### MATERIALS

Station sign, tomb visual or quiet corner, low lighting if possible, passport stamp.

#### REPLICATION TIP

Protect the quiet feeling of this station. Less is more here.



## Station 7 | Jesus Is Alive

### The Empty Tomb

#### SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28:5-6

#### BIG IDEA

Jesus is alive. Because He lives, we have hope, joy, forgiveness, and new life.

#### WHAT FAMILIES DO

Families look inside the empty tomb, place a flower nearby, and say together, 'He is risen! He is risen indeed!'

#### CONVERSATION FOCUS

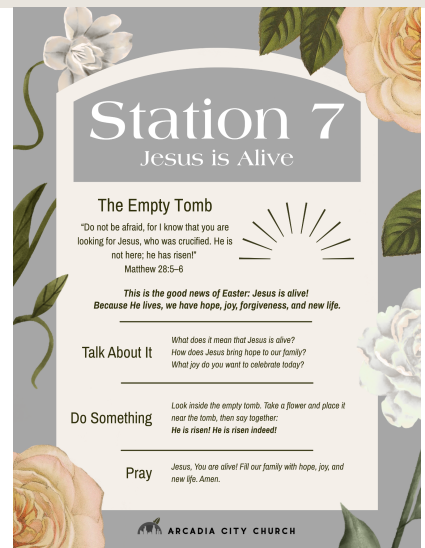
*What does it mean that Jesus is alive? How does Jesus bring hope to our family?*

#### MATERIALS

Station sign, empty tomb visual, flowers, basket or vase, passport stamp.

#### REPLICATION TIP

Make this station brighter and more celebratory than the previous one so families feel the emotional turn of Easter morning.



## Station 8 | Celebrate the Risen King

### Celebration & Keepsake

#### SCRIPTURE

Resurrection celebration

#### BIG IDEA

Easter ends in joy. Families remember, celebrate, and give thanks together.

#### WHAT FAMILIES DO

Families take two photos together in front of a backdrop, pin one photo to a bulletin board, keep one as a family keepsake, and pray the family blessing.

#### CONVERSATION FOCUS

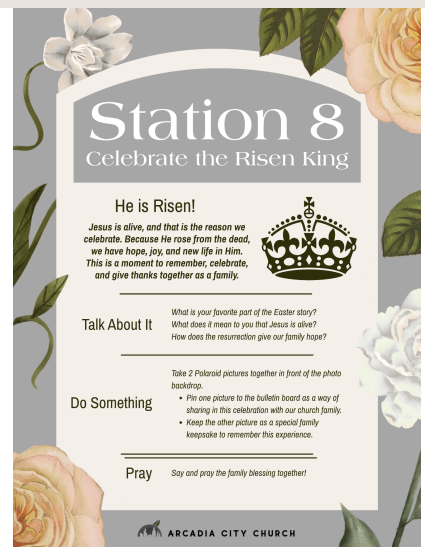
*What is your favorite part of the Easter story? How does the resurrection give our family hope?*

#### MATERIALS

Station sign, photo backdrop, instant camera or photo setup, pins or tape, bulletin board, printed blessing.

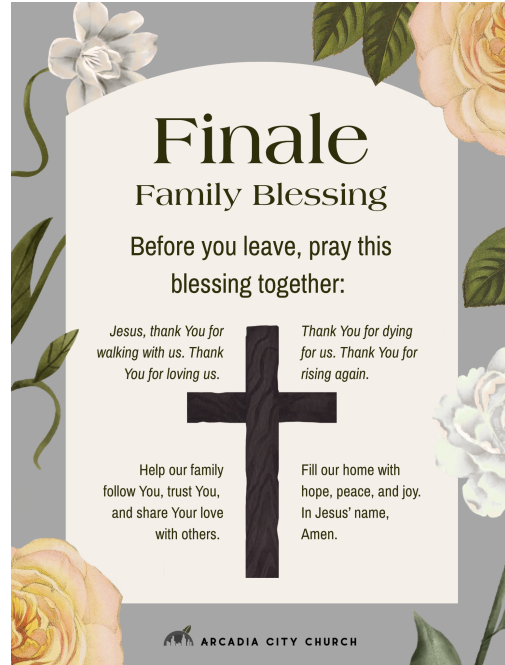
#### REPLICATION TIP

End with celebration, not just completion. This station helps the experience feel memorable and communal.



# Finale, Photo Moment, and Resource Cart

- Print the family blessing large enough for parents and children to read aloud together before leaving.
- Place the blessing near the photo station or exit so it functions as a commissioning moment.
- Position the family resource cart nearby with practical faith-at-home tools, recommended books, and free take-home materials.



## How to adapt this for your church

- You do not need a large budget for this to be meaningful. Many churches can recreate this with printed signs, simple visuals, and ordinary craft supplies.
- If needed, scale the experience down to 4-6 stations while keeping the overall rhythm: read, talk, do, pray.
- The most important pieces are clear flow, parent involvement, age-appropriate hands-on responses, and a joyful ending.

## One sentence summary to share with church leaders

*This experience helps families walk through the story of Easter together in a way that is visual, interactive, Scripture-centered, and simple enough for parents to lead with confidence.*

## Appendix: sample signage thumbnails

# Welcome

## Journey to the Cross

### A Family Prayer Experience

**Rules of Engagement:**


- *Go at your own pace.*
- *There is no rush.*
- *Take your time.*
- *Follow the footprints.*
- *Walk with Jesus.*
- *Remember His love.*

**You Will:**

- Read Scripture
- Reflect and talk
- Do a simple response
- Pray together
- Respond as a family

**How it Works:**

- Stop at each station
- Read the sign
- Look at the visual
- Do the activity
- Help your child

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# Instructions

## Journey to the Cross

<p><b>Kids:</b></p> <p><b>Take a Journey Passport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring it with you to each station.</li> <li>• Learn about Jesus</li> <li>• Do the activity</li> <li>• Stamp your passport</li> <li>• Take it home as a keepsake</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parents:</b></p> <p><b>Take a Family Devotional Sheet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a take-home resource for you to read later and continue reflecting on the Easter story together as a family.</li> </ul>
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*Walk with Jesus.  
Take it home.  
Remember His love.*


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# Station 1

## Jesus Is Our King

### Palm Sunday

"The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, 'Hosanna!'"  
John 12:12-13



**Jesus came as King — but not the kind of king people expected. He came with love, peace, and humility.**

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**Talk About It**

*What do you think the people felt when they saw Jesus?  
What kind of King is Jesus?  
What does it mean if Jesus is your king?*

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**Do Something**

*Wave a palm branch and place one along the path as a sign of welcoming Jesus.*

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**Pray**

*Jesus, You are our King. We welcome You into our lives. Help our family love You and follow You. Amen.*


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# Station 2

## Jesus Shares a Meal

### The Last Supper

"And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'" Luke 22:19



**Jesus wanted His friends to remember His love. At the table, He reminded them that He would give His life for them.**

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**Talk About It**

*Why do you think meals are important?  
What do you want to thank Jesus for today?  
Why do you think Jesus wanted His friends to remember Him this way?*

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**Do Something**


*Pause together at the table. Let each family member say one thing they are thankful for. If you choose to take communion together, you may say:*

**This bread reminds us of Jesus' body that was broken for us, and this juice reminds us of His blood. We take communion to remember that Jesus gave His life for us so we could be close to God.**

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**Pray**

*Jesus, thank You for loving us and staying near to us. Help us remember You and Your great love for us. Amen.*

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# Station 3

## Jesus Prayed

### Garden of Gethsemane

"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."  
Matthew 26:39



**Jesus knows what it feels like to be sad, overwhelmed, and afraid. He talked honestly with His Father and trusted Him.**

### Talk About It

*Have you ever felt sad, worried, or afraid?  
What is something our family wants to give to God in prayer?  
How can we trust God when life feels hard?*

### Do Something

*Plant a flower in the shared prayer garden. As you place it in the soil, say a prayer together and ask God to grow faith, hope, and trust in your home.*

**Plant a flower. Say a prayer. Trust God with what is growing.**

### Pray

*God, when we feel afraid or burdened, help us trust You. Thank You for hearing our prayers and helping us grow in faith. Amen.*



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# Station 4

## Jesus Carried the Cross

### The Road to the Cross

"Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering."  
Isaiah 53:4



**Jesus carried the weight of sin and sorrow because He loves us deeply. He understands our pain and came to rescue us.**

### Talk About It

*What are some hard things people carry in life?  
What does it mean that Jesus carries our pain?  
What would you like to give to Jesus today?*

### Do Something

*Take a stone and hold it quietly for a moment. Use the paint markers to write a word that represents something you want to give to Jesus. Then place it at the foot of the cross as a sign of surrendering that burden to Him.*

### Pray

*Jesus, thank You for carrying what we could not carry on our own. We give You our worries, hurts, and burdens. Amen.*




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# Station 5

## Jesus Gave His Life

**Good Friday**

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."  
Romans 5:8



*The cross shows us how much Jesus loves us. He gave His life so we could be forgiven and brought close to God.*

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**Talk About It**

What does the cross tell us about Jesus?  
How do you feel when you think about His love?  
Why is forgiveness such a gift?

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**Do Something**

Write or draw a thank-you prayer to Jesus on a heart-shaped note and place it on the butcher paper. Some examples: Thank You for loving us • Thank You for forgiving us • Thank You for the cross

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**Pray**

Jesus, thank You for loving us so much. Thank You for the cross. Help us never forget Your sacrifice. Amen.


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# Station 6

## Jesus Was Buried

**The Tomb**

"Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb."  
Matthew 27:59-60



*This was a sad and quiet moment. Sometimes we do not understand what God is doing, but He is still at work even when we cannot see it.*

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**Talk About It**

Have you ever had to wait for something hard to change?  
How do we trust God when we do not understand?  
What helps us remember that God is with us while we wait?

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**Do Something**

Pause here in silence for a few moments together. Let this be a quiet place to wait and trust God.

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**Pray**

God, even in quiet and waiting, help us trust that You are near and that You are still working. Amen.

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# Station 7

Jesus is Alive

## The Empty Tomb

"Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen!"

Matthew 28:5-6



***This is the good news of Easter: Jesus is alive! Because He lives, we have hope, joy, forgiveness, and new life.***

## Talk About It

What does it mean that Jesus is alive?  
How does Jesus bring hope to our family?  
What joy do you want to celebrate today?

## Do Something

Look inside the empty tomb. Take a flower and place it near the tomb, then say together:  
**He is risen! He is risen indeed!**

## Pray

Jesus, You are alive! Fill our family with hope, joy, and new life. Amen.

# Station 8

Celebrate the Risen King

## He is Risen!

***Jesus is alive, and that is the reason we celebrate. Because He rose from the dead, we have hope, joy, and new life in Him. This is a moment to remember, celebrate, and give thanks together as a family.***



## Talk About It

What is your favorite part of the Easter story?  
What does it mean to you that Jesus is alive?  
How does the resurrection give our family hope?

## Do Something

Take 2 Polaroid pictures together in front of the photo backdrop.

- Pin one picture to the bulletin board as a way of sharing in this celebration with our church family.
- Keep the other picture as a special family keepsake to remember this experience.

## Pray

Say and pray the family blessing together!

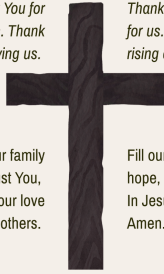
# Finale

## Family Blessing

Before you leave, pray this blessing together:

*Jesus, thank You for walking with us. Thank You for loving us.*

*Thank You for dying for us. Thank You for rising again.*



Help our family follow You, trust You, and share Your love with others.

Fill our home with hope, peace, and joy. In Jesus' name, Amen.



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