

VERSES AND MEDITATIONS

Below are some verses and questions that can assist you in creating a meditative journey for your community.

1. JESUS IS TEMPTED

Verses

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matthew 26:38-39).

Matthew 26:36-46

Meditation

Jesus is driven to desperate prayer.

Think of Jesus' complete honesty in prayer.

Jesus calls together his friends in his most desperate time of prayer. What drives you to such a desperate time of prayer? With whom could you pray in desperate times?

Action

Call your friends together virtually through social media for a time of prayer.

2. JESUS IS BETRAYED

Verses

“Friend, do what you came to do” (Matthew 26:50).

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me” (Matthew 26:20-21 NIV).

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵and said, “What will you give me if I betray him to you?” They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him (Matthew 26:14-16 NRSV).

Meditation

The son of God was betrayed by a friend.

The son of God was betrayed by his creation for thirty pieces of silver.

What does it feel like to be betrayed?

What is the cost of doing what we know has to be done? What did it cost Jesus, God in flesh, to submit to betrayal at the hands of a friend? What was the cost of betrayal to Judas?

Action

Find thirty coins in your home and send them, or any monetary donation, to an organization that helps people who are innocent victims in your community that might feel betrayed by society. It could be an organization that helps victims of abuse, poverty, racism, or other forms of discrimination.

3. JESUS IS CONDEMNED

Verses

“Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered (John 19:15 NIV).

“But this is your hour - when darkness reigns” (Luke 22:53 NIV).

Meditation

What does the image tell you about whether the chief priests accepted the kingship of Jesus?

Do you see Jesus as king?

Jesus is calm in the face of difficult times. Jesus is calm in the midst of the storm.

How do you stay calm “when darkness reigns” and you face tough situations?

Action

Light a candle and pray for the light of Christ to bring you peace in dark times.

4. JESUS IS MOCKED

Verses

“But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” (John 18:23 NIV)

They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said (Matthew 27:28-29, NIV).

Meditation

These soldiers bully Jesus. Possibly, bullying was their common response to Jewish prisoners. Imagine the Son of God being bullied by others.

How does it feel to be bullied? Share times when you were bullied for your beliefs.

Action

Write a letter or use social media to share words of kindness and encouragement with someone who has been bullied.

5. JESUS IS GIVEN HIS CROSS

Verses

The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived (Numbers 21:8-9 NIV).

"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him" (John 3:14-15 NIV).

M

How is Jesus like the bronze snake that Moses lifted up in the desert?

This image reminds us of the caduceus, which is a symbol for medicine that has a snake wrapped around a staff.

What kind of healing can Jesus offer us from the cross?

Action

Pray for those in the medical field who are helping those who are sick.

6. JESUS FALLS

Verses

"Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" (John 12:24 NIV).

Meditation

This station, although not found in scripture, is traditionally in three stations. It symbolizes his humanity and his ever-decreasing strength as he moves towards his public death.

Imagine Jesus experiencing weakness and distress in a public setting with nowhere to hide. Imagine the exhaustion of the last twenty-four hours of his life.

How can you tell when you are exhausted?

How does this image compare with John 15, where we read that Jesus is the vine and we are the branches?

Like leaves falling from a branch, do we feel that we are more disconnected from God or one another during this time?

Like falling leaves, what have we had to let go of in the past few weeks? How do we feel about that?

Action

Rest and do something that can help your physical, emotional, or spiritual exhaustion.

7. SIMON CARRIES JESUS' CROSS

Verses

Simon the Cyrene carries his cross:

As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus (Luke 23:26, NIV).

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24 ESV).

Meditation

Imagine being pulled from the crowd and carrying this man's device of death. What is it like to walk alongside Jesus in this?

Who needs you to walk alongside them as they face difficult times?

Like the image of the branch, how can God use you to help people stay connected to God and others?

Action

Offer to help someone with something.

8. JESUS IS STRIPPED

Verses

"If they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?" (Luke 23:31, CEB)

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots (Luke 23:34 NIV).

Meditation

Romans crucified criminals naked.

Just as bark covers a tree to protect it, clothes cover us up. When clothes are removed, it can make us feel vulnerable.

What makes you feel vulnerable?

What don't we want others to see about us?

Action

Write down things that make you feel vulnerable and share those things with God in prayer.

9. JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Verses

"When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me" (John 8:28 NIV).

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32 NIV).

So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25 NASB)

Meditation

The long physical pain of crucifixion was excruciating. What does the word excruciating mean? The word "excruciating" is derived from crucifixion. How does that change your understanding of the word "excruciating"?

In American Sign Language, the sign for "Jesus" is made by touching the palms of your hands as a reminder of the nails in Jesus' hands. How important are nails to understanding who Jesus is and what Jesus came to do?

Scars are a sign that healing has occurred in the body. Even though Jesus rose from the dead, the scars from the nails were still on his hands. Do you have any scars? How are they a sign of your healing?

Action

Find a nail around the house if you have one, or draw a picture of a nail and hold it in your hand as you remember the excruciating pain Jesus experienced to bring healing to all of us.

10. JESUS DIES

Verses

Isaiah 53:7

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13 NIV).

“It is finished” (John 19:30 NIV).

“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46 NIV).

Meditation

Jesus died. He died. Our greatest fear is death. The only way for Jesus to overcome death was to go through it. His physical body stopped working. His friends watched him die.

How are we affected by the death of Jesus and the death of others we know?

How has our way of life died? How has our social circle died? What in this story gives us hope because this is not the last station? Does our story end in death?

11. JESUS IS BURIED

Verses

“When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial” (Matthew 26:12 NIV).

Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. ⁵⁴It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment (Luke 23:50-56 NIV).

Meditation

His friends buried Jesus.

Have you ever buried a loved one?

Imagine doing that with the one you believed was going to change the world and bring ultimate justice and healing.

Like a rose, how is grief both beautiful like the petals of a rose and painful like the thorns?

12. JESUS RISES

Verses

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays his life down for the sheep" (John 10:11 NIV).

"Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead" (Matthew 17:9 NIV).

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit (Isaiah 11:1 NIV).

"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades" (Revelation 1:17-18, NIV).

Meditation

Consider the other side of our greatest fear.

Jesus shows us that there is something beyond death.

The leaves are not falling from the tree anymore; they are connected again. The shoot has come up from the stump. How does Jesus' resurrection help us connect to God and one another?

Look at the shepherd's crook in the image. How does Jesus take care of us like a shepherd? How can we shepherd and take care of one another?

The disciples shared the story of Jesus after his resurrection.

Action

How can you share the good news of Easter with someone this year?

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