

Reflections on the Stations of the Cross for Children



Introduction

This resource provides you with guidance for creating your own reflections on the Stations of the Cross with children.

It can be used in a variety of ways:

- Once a week over four or five weeks throughout Lent
- Once a day over five consecutive days
- As a one-off Lenten service

It has been designed so that every class can take part and contribute to the overall reflection, and is suitable for all ages. We also suggest that you might like to invite parents to your weekly or daily reflections, or to the one-off Lenten service.

The reflection uses sculpture mime, which children will find both enjoyable and prayerful. A short film offering a full demonstration of how to lead sculpture mime with your children can be found on this page of our website:

www.tentenresources.co.uk/LentReflection

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We hope that you find this resource to be a reflective and prayerful experience for all of your children, staff and parents.

What are the Stations of the Cross?

The Stations of the Cross – or the Way of the Cross – is a Lenten devotion which helps us to reflect prayerfully on Jesus’ final steps on the way to his crucifixion and death. It marks 14 different stages of Christ’s Passion from the moment he was condemned to death, to receiving the Cross and then the events on the walk to his crucifixion.

You will usually find plaques which commemorate the Stations of the Cross around the walls of most Catholic churches as a permanent fixture. However, the prayer can happen in a variety of ways. Catholics throughout the world follow these stations as part of their Lenten practice because they can help us to grow in relationship with Jesus. In particular, children can, in an age-appropriate way, use their senses and imagination to prayerfully reflect on the Passion of Jesus.

Often, when praying the Stations of the Cross, people physically move from station to station, as if on a pilgrimage, and if you present your own Stations you might want to consider incorporating some movement, or pilgrimage. As we tend to each station, we imagine ourselves walking with Jesus on his journey, and then we link our reflection to whatever is going on in our lives today. Reflecting on Jesus’ journey can lead us to pray for all kinds of suffering in the world, and in our own hearts.

For our reflections, we offer a model for children to imaginatively engage with the Stations of the Cross by using a technique called ‘sculpture mime.’

How to teach sculpture mime

Sculpture mime is, simply, a way of creating freeze frames in a prayerful and reflective manner.

Stage One – Reflect on the Station

- To begin, introduce children to the Station of the Cross that they are going to create. Offer a short description, perhaps by reading the first part of the reflection (see below in ‘The 15 Reflections’).
- To help paint a picture, you might like to show the children some age-appropriate images of that particular station. We have provided links below to some possible images.
- Engage the children in a conversation about what the image might look like (e.g. the setting, the crowd, Jesus’ action, the cross, the proximity of other characters to Jesus), and discuss what emotions the different characters might be feeling. It is important here to get as much varied detail from the children as possible. If there are differences of opinion, this should be encouraged and highlighted.
- Summarise the picture that the children have provided.
- If you are creating numerous sculpture mimes at the same time, repeat Stage One for each station that you are creating.

Stage Two – Creating the freeze frame

- Divide the children into groups of about 6 - 10 and tell them which mime that they are going to create.
- Out of the small group, invite 3 or 4 children to be readers, if reading is appropriate for the age group. Nominate, or ask the children to nominate, one person who will be ‘sculptor’. For younger children, a teacher or older pupil may be the sculptor.
- The sculptor is like the director of the piece; they will guide others where to be and what to do during the freeze frame.
- Allow a few minutes for each group to create a freeze frame. Once freeze frames have been created, walk around each one, and encourage each of the ‘actors’ to expand the emotion on their face, or create larger or more dynamic shapes, or use more space in the room, whatever is suitable to the storytelling. Tell them to remember their shape, emotion and place in the freeze frame before asking them to relax.

Stage Three – Performing the sculpture mime

- Create a calm and reflective atmosphere by playing gentle music
- Ask all of the children to sit in their groups in a circle or semi-circle facing the ‘performance area’ (see diagram below in ‘3 ways to lead the reflection’)
- Introduce the first sculpture mime by reading (or asking a child to read) the first part of the reflection for that Station.
- To create the sculpture mime, the sculptor should place his or her hand on the shoulder of one person to invite him/her to take his/her position in the mime. The sculptor should only choose one person at a time and they **must wait** until that person has taken their position and held their freeze for a few moments. Only then should the sculptor invite the next person to join the freeze by place a hand on their shoulder. To maintain a prayerful and reflective atmosphere, it is vital that the process of creating the freeze happens slowly and intentionally. The sculptors must be patient!
- Once the freeze has been created, the reader continues with the second part of the reflection. The children should hold the freeze throughout this reading.
- Only after the final element of the reflection which includes the response from everyone should the sculpture mime dissolve and the children sit down.
- Repeat the process with the next group. Try to maintain a reflective and prayerful atmosphere throughout.

Images of the Stations of the Cross

You may find it useful to review some images of the Stations of the Cross before leading the session, or you might like to share some images with the children for inspiration.

For copyright reasons, we are not permitted to reproduce images in this document. However, you might like to click on the following link which will point you towards some child-friendly images of the Stations of the Cross:

[Click here for images](#)

3 ways to lead the reflection

You may adapt the content in this resource to whatever format or structure suits your purposes. However, we would like to suggest three possible ways in which the material can be used throughout the season of Lent.

1. A Weekly Prayer

Once a week over 4 or 5 weeks, you could present 3 or 4 Stations of the Cross as a mini-service. This could be done during a whole-school assembly or as a special weekly Lenten event to which parents can be invited. A different class may be responsible for each week, or a number of classes may contribute at the same time.

2. A Five-Day Reflection over one week

This may be most appropriate during Holy Week or, if you are on school holidays then, in the week before school holidays begin. Presented over five consecutive days, at the same time each day, this format provides a more focused time of reflection on the Stations of the Cross.

For both suggestions above, you could break down the service in the following ways:

Part One – Stations 1 - 3

Part Two – Stations 4 - 6

Part Three – Stations 7 - 9

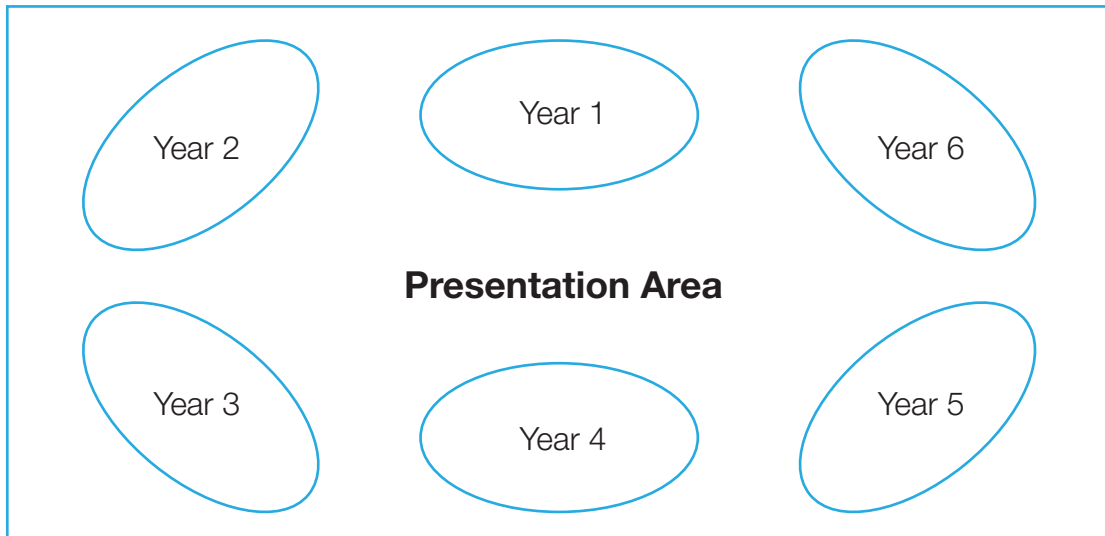
Part Four – Stations 10 - 12

Part Five – Stations 13 - 15

We would recommend starting each mini-service with the **opening prayer**, and ending with a **final hymn**.

3. As a one-off Lenten service

You may consider using sculpture mime to reflect on the Stations of the Cross as your Lenten service. This may involve the entire school contributing to the various Stations. In this situation, you might consider presenting the service 'in the round' with all classes sat together in a large circle facing a 'presentation area' in the middle where the mimes are created, like this:



If presenting the service in this way, the children would enter the Presentation Area from where they are sat to present their sculpture mime.

Please note: to present the full text in one go including the sculpture mime would take at least 45 minutes, and may take up to an hour. Therefore, we would advise you to cut some of the text, or reduce the number of mimes, if you plan to present it as one-off Lenten service.

PowerPoint and Music

As part of the download, we have provided you with a single PowerPoint slide which displays the following words:

Reader:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

This is the response at the end of each Station and should be displayed on the projector screen in your hall.

The slide also includes a single piece of reflective music which can be played throughout to create a prayerful atmosphere. If you are presenting a one-off Lenten service, you may like to vary the music with a selection of your own choice for variety.

The 15 Reflections

Opening

Welcome and explain that those attending should respond to 'We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you' by reading the words on the screen: 'For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.'

Begin by making the Sign of the Cross.

Reader:

Today, to show our love to Jesus,
we are going to follow Him on His final journey
on the road to Calvary.

Jesus is our friend.
He died for us.
Let us carry His cross with Him.

Play Music

The First Station

Reader One:

The First Station: Jesus Is Condemned To Death.

Reader Two:

Jesus is silent. But the people around Him are screaming for Him to be crucified. They are angry and they tell lies about Jesus. Pilate, the leader, sees no wrong in Jesus and wants to set Him free. But He is afraid of the violent crowd. "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" they yell. So Pilate gives in. He condemns Jesus to death.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

Look at Jesus.

People have said nasty and hurtful things about Him. Has anyone ever said nasty or hurtful things about you? If so, how did you feel? Have you ever felt the same way that Jesus feels in this scene?

Reader Four:

Jesus understands the times when you have felt hurt and upset. He also forgives you if you have hurt others. Remember that God is with you through these times of hurt and pain.

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Second Station

Reader One:

The Second Station: Jesus Takes His Cross.

Reader Two:

A crown of thorns is pressed into Jesus' head and a huge, heavy, wooden cross is placed on His shoulders. Jesus takes it. He doesn't tell them to stop; He doesn't try to run away. He looks at the long road ahead of Him and He turns to His Father in heaven to ask for help as He begins the long, lonely journey.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

Look at Jesus.

See the look on His face as He faces the long, lonely journey ahead. It must be a terrifying time for Him.

Reader Four:

Sometimes we face long, lonely and painful journeys. Jesus knows and understands what we are going through. At times like this, we can also turn to our Father in heaven to ask for His help when we face situations that might seem impossible.

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Third Station

Reader One:

The Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time.

Reader Two:

The stones on the path cut into His bare feet. People around Him shout and call Him names. The Roman soldiers push Him to hurry up. But Jesus' legs cannot resist the pressure. His legs shake, His knees can't take the pressure and He stumbles and falls.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

Look at Jesus.

He is weak and tired but He is also determined to finish the job that God has for Him. He knows that He must do the right thing. He must find the strength to stand up and continue His mission.

Reader Four:

Have you ever found it hard to do the right thing? Have you also felt too weak to do what God wants you to do? If so, then Jesus knows how you felt. At times like this, you can turn to Him and ask for His help to be strong. Say to yourself, "Dear Jesus, help me to be strong."

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Fourth Station

Reader One:

The Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother.

Reader Two:

Jesus' mum, Mary, breaks through the crowd to see her son. She sees the terrible pain that He is going through and it breaks her heart. Jesus sees His mother and looks at her bravely. They love each other very much. Jesus wants to tell her that He was born for this. But the Roman soldiers push Mary away.

Sculpture Mime

Reader Three:

Look at Mary.

Imagine the sadness that Mary must have felt seeing her son hurt and bleeding. She knows that Jesus has chosen to do this, that this is God's plan, but it doesn't make the pain any easier. It is very hard when she is taken away from her son.

Reader Four:

Sometimes we are separated from the people we love. This is very hard and it hurts. During these times, we can ask for peace in our hearts because Jesus and Mary know what we are going through. Say to yourself, "Dear Jesus, help me when I am separated from the people that I love."

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Fifth Station

Reader One:

The Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross.

Reader Two:

The Roman soldiers can see that Jesus is weak and they are concerned that He won't make it all the way up the hill. So they drag a man from the crowd called Simon to help Jesus carry the Cross. Simon was just a passer-by, he didn't want to help. But then he looks at Jesus and sees that He really needs him, so he accepts.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

Look at Simon.

It wasn't his plan to help Jesus carry His cross. But he could tell that Jesus really needed him to fulfil God's plan. And so he changed his own plans for Jesus. Jesus changed his life.

Reader Four:

Jesus really needs you too. He asks you to help Him show His Father's love to others. You might be reluctant because you have other things to do, or other plans to make. At times like this, imagine looking into Jesus' eyes so you can gain strength to accept His invitation.

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Sixth Station

Reader One:

The Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

Reader Two:

A courageous woman breaks through the angry crowd and the violent soldiers to stand before Jesus. Her name is Veronica and she loves her Lord. She offers a simple, gentle act of kindness. Veronica takes a cloth and carefully wipes the face of Jesus.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

Look at Veronica.

How brave is she to fight through the crowds and face her Lord? When she wiped His face, Jesus must have felt very loved and comforted in His time of need.

Reader Four:

Who needs your love and care today? Is there anybody you know that has been left out, or who is uncared for or unloved? Can you be like Veronica and offer kindness and comfort to someone else? If you do, it will be just like you are also wiping the face of Jesus.

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Seventh Station

Reader One:

The Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time.

Reader Two:

The hill gets steeper. The path gathers stones. And Jesus feels weaker and weaker. He falls again and the cross weighs down heavily on His back.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

Look at Jesus.

He is exhausted. He just wants the pain to stop. He rests here for as long as He can, gathering the strength to continue.

Reader Four:

Sometimes we fail. Sometimes other people fail. Jesus knows this. He wants to encourage us when we fail, and He wants us to be kind to others when they fail. At times of failure, ask Jesus for help and strength to pick ourselves up and carry on.

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Eighth Station

Reader One:

The Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem.

Reader Two:

Some women from Jerusalem are nearby when Jesus passes with the cross. They know that He will soon die and they cry for Him. Jesus, however, speaks to them and tells them not to cry for Him. He tells them that they should save their tears for other people who need help.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

Look at the women.

They are sad for Jesus, like we feel sad for Jesus. But Jesus is kind to these ladies. He tells them that He is doing His Father's work and they should care for others in need instead.

Reader Four:

We can show our compassion for Jesus by showing compassion for other people in the world who need help; for example, the homeless, the refugees and those who are hurt because of their beliefs. Say to yourself, "Dear Jesus, help me to show compassion to others too."

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Ninth Station

Reader One:

The Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time.

Reader Two:

Jesus is close – so close – to His final destination. But His body is now so weak it can hardly move. The cross is heavy, the pain in His body is unbearable and the crowd continues to beat Him as He passes. Jesus can't take any more. He falls for the third time.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

Look at the crowd.

They see Jesus weak and alone, but no one will help. They jeer and laugh. The soldiers prod and push. But no one reaches out to Him. They just wait for someone else to do it.

Reader Four:

Have you ever been like the crowd? Have you ever seen someone who needs help but you have just waited for someone else to reach out? Next time you are on the playground, ask Jesus to help you reach out to someone who needs your friendship.

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Tenth Station

Reader One:

The Tenth Station: Jesus Is Stripped Of His Garments.

Reader Two:

Finally, Jesus reaches the top of the hill. It is the end of His journey. The Roman soldiers prepare Jesus for His crucifixion by removing His clothes. Jesus is very vulnerable as He stands in front of the crowd watching Him.

Sculpture Mime

Reader Three:

Look at your Jesus.

Everything has been taken away from Him, even His clothes. Imagine for a moment how He must have felt about that.

Reader Four:

Sometimes we can put too much value into possessions such as toys, games, food, achievements and even friends. We can become very proud. Say to yourself, "Dear Jesus, help me to be more like you – more loving and less proud."

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Eleventh Station

Reader One:

The Eleventh Station: Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross.

Reader Two:

The cross is now on the ground and Jesus is laid on top of it. The soldiers pull His arms into place whilst one big soldier, the strongest one, drives a thick nail through His wrists with a heavy hammer. Jesus can't help Himself – He screams out in pain. The soldiers continue, nailing His arms and legs to the cross.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

Look at Jesus.

The pain that He experiences is unbearable. But He does not feel anger or hate towards the soldiers. No, He feels love. He forgives them for what they are doing.

Reader Four:

Remember that no matter what is the worst you can do, Jesus loves you and forgives you, just like He forgives the people who killed Him. Say to yourself, "Thank you, Jesus, for loving me."

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Twelfth Station

Reader One:

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross.

Reader Two:

Jesus hangs on the cross. It is a dark, sad day. His breath gets shorter and shorter. The pain hurts every single part of His body. At the foot of the Cross, His mum kneels, praying – she remembers God’s promise about new life. But for now, there is nothing that she can do. There is nothing that anyone can do. Jesus prays to His Father in heaven and tells Him that His job on earth is now finished. Jesus’ head drops and He dies.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

Look at the scene. Spend a few moments in silent prayer.

Silence**Reader Four:**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Thirteenth Station

Reader One:

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus Is Taken From The Cross.

Reader Two:

It is a sad day. The crowd have gone. Only a few soldiers remain. The sun has disappeared. Only Mary and a small number of friends remain at the foot of the cross. Jesus is taken down and placed in the arms of His mother. She is very, very sad but she doesn't cry, because she remembers God's promise.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

Look at Mary.

She holds Jesus in her arms like a mother holds a new-born baby. She loves Jesus. But she is not crying because she remembers God's promise. Death is not the end. It is only the beginning.

Reader Four:

God promised that Jesus would beat death and rise again. We place all our hope in Him. Like Mary, say to yourself, "Dear Jesus, I love you and my hope is in you."

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Fourteenth Station

Reader One:

The Fourteenth Station: Jesus Is Put Into The Tomb.

Reader Two:

A friend offers to bury Jesus in a tomb that he owns. It is a sad time as the body of the Lord is carried to this resting place. Jesus' body is placed in the tomb and a large, heavy stone is rolled across the entrance. Soldiers guard the tomb and everyone goes home.

Sculpture Mime**Reader Three:**

The friends of Jesus must have felt very, very sad indeed. Jesus was dead and seemed far away. But did they remember God's promise?

Reader Four:

Sometimes Jesus can seem far away from us too. During these times, we can remember God's promise that death is not the end. There is hope. There is always hope.

Reader One:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

Everyone:

For by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

Sculpture Mime dissolves

The Fifteenth Station

Teacher:

Although this might seem like a sad end to the story, there is a very, very important thing to remember. **This is not the end of the story!** God's promise that Jesus will defeat death and rise again will be realised on Easter Sunday.

So let us look forward to that day when we will celebrate the end of this story – when the stone is rolled away and Jesus rises from the dead. This time, we know, Jesus will never leave us. He will be with us forever.