

WAY OF THE CROSS

Australian Young Christian Students and Australian Young Christian Workers

This resource was first published in *Cross Roads: National Pastoral Planning Handbook* for the Journey of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon. It was created by young students and workers across Australia. All references to Scripture are from the Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version.

Young Christian Students (YCS)

YCS is an organization run by and for secondary students. It challenges students to live out their faith in action to change their lives and the world around them.

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Young Christian Workers (YCW)

The YCW is an international movement that is run by, for and with young workers between the ages of 18 and 30. The YCW seeks to organize, educate and empower young people to be leaders of positive change within their own lives and community.

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YCS and YCW are working in partnership to offer resources, programmes and events around World Youth Day 2008. For more information contact the YCS and YCW World Youth Day Coordinator:

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YOUNG CHRISTIAN STUDENTS



YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKERS



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Station One **Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane**

Dramatisation Directions

There will be an inner circle and an outer circle. Those in the inner circle are in freeze frames expressing the pain sorrow and anguish felt by Jesus as well as many young people. Examples of positions may include hands over one's face or head turned away and downcast. In the outer circle actors will be frozen in praying and sleeping positions alternately.

Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."
(Matthew 26:36 – 39)

Reflection

Jesus is scared. He does not want to face what is ahead. He is sad, he is tired, he is fully and utterly human. Weak.

As young people, we too experience weakness. From time to time, the actions of others, the pressures of society, our insecurity break us. We are frightened of the way ahead.

All the while we are expected to be on top of things. Nothing scares us more than being vulnerable. Getting sick, failing the test, letting down the team. On TV, if someone is weak, you vote them off the island. Homeless people and people with disabilities make us uncomfortable.

And yet, in Jesus, God says it's okay to be small. God knows weakness, and asks for our trust.

Prayer

Lord, help us to accept our humanity and own up to our weakness. Give us the strength to believe in you through hard times, and let us see your suffering as a sign that you are with us and one of us. May we always treat the weak ones among us with same respect and care that we would offer you.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Two **Jesus betrayed by Judas**

Dramatisation Directions

The inner circle and outer circle remain. Those in the inner circle are frozen in a depiction of the passage below: the disciple striking out at the slave, and Jesus raising his hand to protest. In the outer circle actors are in positions depicting violence.

Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back in its place; for all who live by the sword will perish by the sword."

(Matthew 26:50 – 52)

Reflection

Jesus demands an end to cycles of hate. Fighting, he says, breeds only more fighting.

Bullied or betrayed, we are also drawn into violence. I hit you, you hit back. Like the disciple our anger is natural and understandable. But like the disciple we are called by Jesus to another way.

Jesus challenges his friend to stop and to think about his actions, and to question his judgments. When, like Jesus, we reflect and act in faith, we make real peace possible.

Activity: Art Reflection

Ask participants to get into small groups. Each group should be given an A3 piece of paper and asked to take turns at using a paint brush to create a drawing which represents the scripture reading (in silence). It is suggested that 5 colours are used.

Prayer

As you were betrayed, Lord, so we may be betrayed in our own lives by those around us. We pray we do not react in ways that are destructive to ourselves and others.

May those striving for justice follow your example, not taking up the sword but acting with love and compassion.

Make us instruments of your peace.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Three **Jesus condemned by the Sanhedrin**

Dramatisation Directions

One actor, representing Jesus, stands in the centre of a (semi) circle of interrogators. Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." He replied, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." All of them asked, "Are you, then, the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it from his own lips!"
(Luke 22:67 – 71)

Reflection

Everyday, Jesus speaks to all people in the reality of their lives. In a world that suffers, he cries out questions that could tumble injustice, and he calls all to love.

Yet there is suffering we choose not to see and there are questions we choose not ask. Jesus speaks – are we listening?

Dramatisation Directions (Continued)

The inner circle and outer circle re-form. The inner circle stands surrounded by the outer circle in which actors are sitting or crouching on the ground. The inner circle turns away as those in the outer circle reach out to them for help.

Prayer

Thankyou, Lord, for being the Word of God calling us on and on to believe and to act. We are sorry for the times we have shut out your voice. Forgive us and open our hearts to you.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Four **Jesus denied by Peter**

Dramatisation Directions

The inner circle and outer circle remain in positions from Station Three. Those in the inner circle break free and walk away to one side as those on the ground stand but continue to reach out for their help. Those from the inner circle turn away and crouch in fear.

Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, "Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about!" At that moment, while he was still speaking the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." And he wept bitterly.

(Luke 22:59 -62)

Reflection

Solidarity means to stand with each other. Through his life and now facing death, Jesus stands in love. Peter huddles in fear.

To live like Jesus comes at a great cost. Our popularity, our image, our security, our comfort – we may risk it all. In the face of this, and in spite of our best intentions, we are sometimes not up to the challenge. We fail to speak out for our friends and for what we believe in.

Prayer

Free us, Lord, from the fears and pressures that force us into hiding. Forgive us for choosing what safe over what is honest and right. We ask you to give us the courage to be true to ourselves and to you.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Five **Jesus condemned by the people**

Dramatisation Directions

Actors are arranged in groups of three for a tableau. In each group there is one person attacking another, while the third person whispers in the attacker's ear. Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

Then Pilate 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 Barrabas instead. Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you want me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" They shouted back, "Crucify him!"
(Mark 15:9 – 13)

!

Reflection

Still today, leaders face the temptation of using power without justice. In our workplaces, our schools and our communities, there are people who offer the easy answers of fear and blame. Many ordinary people are willing to be led in this way. Since 2001 young Muslims in Australia have experienced the judgment of the crowd through insults, exclusion and violence.

Religious leaders, political leaders, the people themselves – each had a share of power at the trial of Jesus. How they used it was up to them. God gives us all the ability to act as leaders in some way, and asks that we always act in love.

Prayer

Lord, we ask your Holy Spirit to come upon all leaders.
May the leaders of our communities act with wisdom.
May the leaders of our Church urge peace not blame.
May the leader in each one of us come bravely to life.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Six

Jesus crowned with thorns and clothed in purple

Dramatisation Directions

Groups of three change postures so that two actors are laughing and mocking the other actor.

Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face.

(John 19:1 – 3)

Reflection

Jesus was whipped and teased because he told people who he truly was. When he told them he was the Son of God, they could not understand and they teased him by saying "Hail, the King of the Jews!" So often young people are put down when they show who they truly are.

Dramatisation Directions (Continued)

This drama should show two young people being teased when they show who they really are and this doesn't fit with the what is "cool." You can use the script below or develop a way of showing this situation that is relevant to your local community.

Two teenage girls are standing together talking, one (Jan) is wearing a crucifix and the other (Leigha) is wearing "alternative" clothes. Three other young people (the 'mean girls' who are all dressed in similar style of "cool clothes") come up and start mocking them.

Mean Girl 1: Ew, what the hell is wrong with you!

Mean Girl 2: Yeah why are you wearing those stupid clothes?

Jan giggles at their joke

Mean Girl 3: And you, what are wearing that Cross for Jan?

Mean Girl 2: You don't believe in that do ya?

Mean Girl 1: Nah she's gonna be a Nun when she grows up, aren't ya?

Mean girls laugh

Prayer

Lord, we ask for the power of your Holy Spirit so that we can live as who we truly are without hiding behind what is "cool" or "normal."

Please forgive us when we don't allow others the chance to be different to ourselves.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Seven **Jesus carries the cross**

Dramatisation Directions

One actor is frozen trying to carry a large cross. Others move into postures of taunting, abuse or indifference.

Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

(John 19:16 – 17)

Reflection

Jesus was made to carry his cross in a way that physically hurt him and publicly humiliated him, stripping him of his dignity. Many people around the world are hurt and humiliated by the decisions of leaders. Young refugees who bear the pain of being put in Australian Detention Centres for years on end would know the experience Jesus had in carrying his cross.

At the last supper Jesus told his disciples *“Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”* In carrying his cross, Jesus showed us his love for those who are on the edge of society. Let us ask Him to help us show that same love to those who are hurt and humiliated in our world.

Prayer

Lord, we remember your struggle on the streets of Jerusalem, and we see in it the struggle of young people all over the world. Grant all of us commitment and hope like your own so we can deal with the injustices around us.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Eight **Jesus assisted by Simon of Cyrene**

Dramatisation Directions

The actor holding the cross falls. One of the taunters grabs another actor (Simon) who is on the outer edge of the crowd and pushes him towards Jesus. Simon helps him with the cross.

Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. (Luke 23:26)

Reflection

Simon was an innocent bystander who was made to carry Jesus' cross for him. In our every day lives we are called to help the people around us when they are in difficult situations, even when we don't want to and don't have to. We are called to do this because Christ is alive in every one of those people.

Dramatisation Directions (Continued)

In front of the main tableau, another scene takes place. This could be done using the script below or mimed as preferred.

One boy, Geoff who is seen as a loser is walking along and drops all his books on the floor. Simon (the main character) and his two friends (friend 1 and friend 2) come walking past.

Geoff: Hey could you please help me? (Geoff picking up books off floor)

Friend 1: Ooh don't worry about that loser (friend 1 keeps walking)

Friend 2: Yeah, c'mon lets go (friend 2 follows friend 1)

Simon: Nah, sorry mate I've gotta go (Simon hesitates and is unsure of what to do)

Geoff: Please I need some help (still on the floor)

Friend 1: Hurry up (friend 1 keeps walking)

Simon: Guys, I'll catch up in a second (going to help Geoff on the floor)

Geoff: Thanks heaps, man (picking up his books with Simon helping)

Simon: Don't worry about it mate, I've gotta go (running back to friend 1 and friend 2)

Geoff: Thanks again! (keeps walking)

Prayer

Lord, makes us like Simon. Help us to carry people when they are struggling. We remember that you said, "whatever you do to the least of my sisters and brothers, you do it to me." Please forgive us for the times that we walk away from helping others and grant us the support of the Holy Spirit so that we can do as you have asked us.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Nine **Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem**

Dramatisation Directions

The crowd around Jesus changes positions to gather around him or at his feet in postures various to represent the women. Some are crying, some have their hands over their mouths to show that they are voiceless and disempowered.

Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breast 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....”

(Luke 23:27 – 28)

Reflection

In Jesus’ society, women didn’t have much authority. They were second class citizens then, as they still are in many places. The women of Jerusalem had very little say in how the events of that day turned out.

They remind us of the times today when we see young people in pain. We don’t choose loss, family breakdown or mental illness. Often our lives are affected by the decisions of others; sometimes it seems like there is no decision at all.

And yet, in their sorrow, the women of Jerusalem did not abandon Jesus. They walked with Christ, and together cried out a sad protest.

Prayer

Lord, wipe the tears from the eyes of all people in pain. May your Spirit comfort us with the bigger picture of your love. May your Spirit challenge us to make sure all people have a voice.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Ten Jesus is crucified

Dramatisation Directions

Two actors stand a distance apart with their arms in the air as if they are crucified. A third actor (Jesus) is led by fourth to the space between them. Another actor stands somewhere in front or to the side. Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right hand and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing.
(Luke 23:32 – 38)

Reflection

Jesus showed us the true meaning of forgiveness, a forgiveness that has stood the test of time.

In a word that sometimes seems full of hatred and violence, we must be confident of God's continuous love for us, even during times of doubt and distress.

Dramatisation Directions (Continued)

The fourth actor raises Jesus' arms one by one to imitate nailing him to the cross. Sound effects may be used to evoke the nailing. At the same time, as the nails are driven in, the fifth actor to the side or front flinches and jerks to imitate being hit or offended. There is a pause and then he or she looks up at the participants and raises his or her arms as if to embrace them.

Prayer

Lord, you are our life, and our hope, even in death. Help us to mirror your compassion and love. Make us the builders and dreamers of our time, and help us strive for peace.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Eleven **Jesus speaks to the thief**

Dramatisation Directions

The three crucified actors remain. A number of other actors assemble in a group in front of the crucifixion scene. They are friends who are in their comfort zone with each other. Another actor stands a little away from them.

One thief turns his head to look at Jesus while the other looks on unconvinced. Meanwhile in front the other actor approaches the group. Most are react in fear but one person takes that actor's hand and is drawn out of the group. Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

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."

(Luke 23:39 – 43)

Reflection

Pope Benedict has said:

"If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation.

... Dear young people: do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life. "

Prayer

Lord, draw us into relationship with you. Wherever we have been and whatever we have done, help us to know that you always offer us friendship. May the love and joy with you give us hope for this life and for eternal life.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music as participants move to the next station.

Station Twelve **Jesus speaks to his mother**

Dramatisation Directions

Only Jesus remains crucified. Other actors re-form a circle around him. A woman appears at the foot of Jesus' cross and reaches up her hand to touch him. Meanwhile the outer circle freeze in various postures to represent parenthood, for example, nursing a child, playing with a child, etc. Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

...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."
(John 19:25 – 27)

Reflection

The bond between mother and child is like no other. Around the world, many mothers stand at the foot of the cross for their children. Even in difficult times they remain dedicated and offer unconditional love.

Prayer

Thank you Lord for mothers. We reverence their commitment and stand with them in their suffering.

Please hold gently all mothers who have experienced a loss of a child.

We ask for your forgiveness for the times we have failed to love unconditionally.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Thirteen **Jesus dies on the cross**

Dramatisation Directions

Jesus suddenly looks up and pauses. He then droops his head down onto his chest. Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a large voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent."
(Luke 23:44 – 49)

Reflection

Jesus liberated all people in their suffering. He faced the reality of death, and in his death brought us the hope of resurrection.

For us many events and changes in life are like small deaths. The end of a relationship, a battle with illness, moving house, losing a job or a friend or a dream. Each time we have to give something up and our world is turned around.

But in this uncertainty, a new reality is born. "Struggle is the gift of new life in disguise." (Joan Chittester)

Dramatisation Directions (Continued)

Jesus brings his arms down from the cross and walks through the front of the surrounding circle. He sits down in front. He looks peaceful, quietly free.

Prayer

Lord, in the midst of isolation and loneliness, may we place ourselves in your care. Help us always to see the light that will overcome our darkness. We ask that you take special care of young people who struggle with sadness. May your Holy Spirit make us witnesses of your promise to them and to all people.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music *as participants move to the next station.*

Station Fourteen

Jesus is buried

Dramatisation Directions

An actor helps Jesus to gently lie down.

Other actors assemble in a number of tableaux depicting the dignity of work and people living their mission in different ways. Examples could include a teacher and students, someone serving the homeless, someone planting a tree, drinking fair trade coffee, sitting with friends, building a house, etc.

Approximately 30 seconds of reflective music accompanies the dramatization.

Scripture

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, had not agreed with their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had been laid.

(Luke 23:50 – 53)

Reflection

When Joseph buries Jesus in a simple way he offers him respect. Since his arrest this respect was denied to Jesus – as it is denied day by day to many young workers and students in Australia and across the world.

In gentle act, Joseph not only restored Jesus' dignity but showed his own. Like Joseph, we too are called to be apostles for this generation.

Prayer

Lord, we pray for the workers of the world, who each day carry out your holy work.

May they experience the dignity of Jesus as he was laid to rest.

Help us to carry out our mission in our daily lives as young people, in our homes, our workplaces, universities, schools and communities.

Give us the courage to make real your reign in this world now.

Reponse

Lord move us, change us, make us into your image.

Silence

Music to conclude.

A Note on Music

Music used for this Way of the Cross may include reflected instrumental music, reflected chants (eg. music from Taize) or contemporary music. All music should be used with appropriate permission.

The following contemporary songs may be helpful:

Cry by James Blunt

Cry by Hilary Duff

No Bravery by James Blunt

The Crowd by The Cat Empire