



GUIDELINES

for a community event

including an outline script

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages Christians have responded to the Good Friday story by commissioning public art or music, or by performing Passion plays. But hearing the story is not enough. We need to find fresh ways of retelling the story for each new generation. The challenge to produce a response to the themes enables us to connect them to our own lives. Those who follow the path of Jesus for the first time may find that it has a remarkable power to speak to their own experience. Those of us who have walked this road many times may find a fresh understand of it from the responses of creative adults and children in our communities.

Why the Stations of the Cross?

The Stations of the Cross represent the events that happened to Jesus as he made the journey from his trial to his execution. For many hundreds of years Christians of every tradition have re-enacted this journey along the Via Doloroso, the Road of Sorrow, as they remembered the last hours of Jesus' life. Those who couldn't make pilgrimage to Jerusalem have recreated the route in their own locations, using art or sculpture to express the aspects of the story.

Through the years the precise number and description of the stations has changed. Tradition settled on fourteen stations, but some of these recorded events that aren't in the Bible account. In 1991 Pope John Paul II inaugurated a revised set of stations based only on the Bible text. These Scriptural Stations of the Cross are the ones on which **ONE FRIDAY** is based.

For each station we have allocated a theme and provided notes to help groups relate to and respond to the story. So the journey through **ONE FRIDAY** touches on betrayal, mercy, forgiveness, family, death and finally hope.

How does it work?

Invite fourteen community groups to take part in the project. Use as much imagination as you can in deciding who to ask. They might be schools, colleges, youth groups, or adult social groups such as drama or craft groups or keep fit classes. They might be local shops or businesses. Or they might be groups associated with the church, such as guides and scouts, a choir, bell-ringers or a lunch club. Or they could be individuals or families who are willing to take part.

Explain that at the beginning of Lent each group will be allocated a "station" with a theme attached. They will be asked to respond to the theme in whatever way they see fit - through art, music or other forms of creativity. They don't need to retell the Bible story (though they can if they want to.) The important thing is that the group thinks about the theme and find some way to express what it means to them. Then they will be asked to bring their contribution to a special event during Holy Week. All the contributions will then be woven together into a unique offering from and for the community. Emphasise that this isn't a competition. We won't be judging the contributions. Instead we will weave them together into one community presentation as we re-tell the story of the first Good Friday in our own unique and creative way.

ONE FRIDAY is managed by St John's College, Durham. Core funding has been provided by The Jerusalem Trust, and support has also come from the Deo Gloria Trust, CPO and SGM LifeWords.

For more information please visit www.onefriday.info or contact info@onefriday.info

OUTLINE SCRIPT

Participants

You will need a NARRATOR whose job is to host the event and tell the story. You will also need a PRESENTER whose job is to introduce the work that groups have brought. If necessary these could be the same person. In addition you will need a BIBLE READER – this could be a different person for each reading, but if you have a really good reader it will add continuity to use them throughout.

Introduction

NARRATOR Welcome to this unique event. It's great to have you here. My name is _____. I'm joined by _____. This is the very first time that _____ has created its own Community Passion.

One Friday almost 2000 years ago in the city of Jerusalem a good man called Jesus set out on a journey that would change the world. He walked less than a mile. But in the course of that day's journey he was wrongly arrested, betrayed by his closest friends, tried in a rigged court and then horribly executed in public.

From the events of that day in a corner of the Middle East, a message of forgiveness, hope and reconciliation has spilled out through the centuries to every corner of the world. That's why Christians call this day Good Friday.

PRESENTER Our community has been on its own journey. Six weeks ago, fourteen groups from our community were each given a theme based on part of the Good Friday story. Since then the groups have been working to express the themes in their own unique way. Today our fourteen

groups will re-tell the story of the first Good Friday in our own unique way.

Station 1 **Fear of the future**

NARRATOR Our story begins on Thursday evening. Jesus and his friends had gone to Gethsemane, a small plantation of olive trees just outside Jerusalem. It's pretty clear that he knew what the next 24 hours would hold.

BIBLE READER Jesus said to his friends, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." Full of sorrow and distress he fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep.

PRESENTER Have you ever had to face something really tough, like Jesus did, and face it on your own? [Group 1] have been thinking about fear of the future, and this is what they have brought.

[Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 2 **Jesus is arrested**

NARRATOR Before Jesus and his friends had a chance to leave the garden a mob arrived. They were heavily tooled-up with knives and sticks and they'd come to arrest Jesus.

BIBLE READER Judas, one of Jesus' friends, arrived. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "the man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead

him away." He immediately went over to Jesus and said, "Teacher." And he kissed him. Then they grabbed him and arrested him.

NARRATOR So Jesus was betrayed; grassed-up by one of his closest friends. But he'd done nothing to deserve arrest. He was unarmed and had no history of violence. This arrest was totally unjustified. It was purely political – a set-up for the cameras.

PRESENTER It's terrible to be betrayed, and even more so when you're let down by someone you loved and trusted. [Group 2] have been thinking about the theme of betrayal.

[Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 3 Jesus is condemned

NARRATOR The next morning Jesus was dragged in front of the court, known as the Sanhedrin. – the local Magistrates' Court. It was their job to work out whether he had a case to answer. He was accused of claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God. He refused to plead. But he was judged anyway.

BIBLE READER When day came the council of elders of the people met, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." But he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." Then they said, "We don't need to hear from any other witnesses. We have heard it from his own mouth."

PRESENTER

Sometimes we have to make huge choices that will affect our lives, even though we don't feel we have enough information. Where will I live? Who will I live with? These people had to decide whether Jesus was just a trouble-maker, or whether he really was claiming to be God. And since claiming to be God was punishable by death, they were effectively deciding whether the man in front of them would live or die. [Group 3] have been thinking about the theme of judgement.

[Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 4 **Jesus is betrayed by his friend**

NARRATOR

If Jesus had a best friend, it was Peter. Peter had been with Jesus since the very beginning. Now Jesus was in big trouble. He was under arrest and could be facing the death penalty. Did Peter stand by him? No, he pretended he didn't know him - not once, but again and again.

BIBLE READER

Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A woman came over to him and said, "You were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I don't know what you are talking about!" As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazarean." Again he denied it, saying "I don't know the man!" A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, "Surely you are with them; your accent gives you away." At that he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately a cockerel crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: "Before the cockerel crows you will deny me three times." He went out and began to weep bitterly.

NARRATOR Peter must have hated himself, especially when he remembered that Jesus had once predicted that he would do just that. Jesus knew him better than he knew himself. He wept bitterly, partly for good the friend he was losing, but also for the bad friend he had become.

PRESENTER How you ever been let down by a friend? I mean really let down. It feels terrible doesn't it? And usually it feels just as terrible for the person who's been disloyal to you. [Group 4] have been thinking about the theme of disloyalty, and this is their coal truck.

[Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 5 **Jesus is judged by Pontius Pilate**

NARRATOR Now Jesus was handcuffed. In this powerless state he was brought face to face with Pontius Pilate, the most powerful man in the whole country. Pilate had the authority to release Jesus or to have him executed. What he couldn't do is get a straight answer out of him. For some reason Jesus didn't even want to defend himself. Perhaps he knew that Pilate would never understand his message? Perhaps he wanted to teach Pilate a lesson about the limits of his power?

BIBLE READER They tied up Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.... Pilate, wishing to stay on the right side of the crowd, released Barabbas and handed Jesus over to be crucified.

NARRATOR In the end it turned out that Pilate, the most powerful man in the land, was more scared than Jesus, the prisoner in the dock. Under pressure from the crowd Pilate released a convicted murderer and sentenced Jesus to death.

Here you've got an immensely powerful man, Pontius Pilate, the Prime Minister of the province, face to face with Jesus, tied up and seemingly powerless. And yet it seems like it was Pilate who had his hands tied. With all the power in the world he felt like there was nothing he could do. And Jesus, with all the power in heaven, chose to do nothing.

PRESENTER We asked [Group 5] to think about what it feels like to be powerful, and what it feels like to be powerless. This is what they have made. [Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 6 **Jesus is tortured and mocked**

NARRATOR When Pontius Pilate had made his decision to sentence Jesus to death, he handed him over to the palace guards to carry out the execution. But before they killed him they wanted to have some fun with him. So they stripped Jesus of his own clothes and dressed up like a pretend king. Then he was mocked and tortured. Jesus was powerless, naked and defenseless.

BIBLE READER Then Pilate took Jesus and had him whipped. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly.

PRESENTER Hopefully none of us will ever have to face torture. But we all know what it's like to be mocked. From the political debate to the playground, ridicule is a powerful weapon. It strips away a person's

dignity and humanity and makes them feel vulnerable. It makes the bully feel strong.

[Group 6] have been looking at the theme of torture and mockery. Let's find out what they have produced for us.

[Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 7 **Jesus carries his cross**

NARRATOR When they had finished torturing him, the soldiers brought two huge pieces of timber which they had made into a cross shape. This was the cross on which they planned to kill him. Already weakened by terrible beating, Jesus was forced to carry the heavy wood up the hill towards his place of execution. Christians believe that Jesus also "carried" the weight of the world's evil to the cross with him.

BIBLE READER When the chief priests and the guards saw Jesus they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to a place called Skull Hill.

PRESENTER There are many different types of burden, but all of us have some burdens to carry. Some are visible and some only we know about. Our burdens can weigh us down, especially if we have to carry them alone.

We gave the theme of burdens to [Group 7].

[Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 8 **Jesus is helped by a stranger**

NARRATOR As he travelled towards his crucifixion, Jesus was surrounded by a hostile, angry, jeering crowd. Seeing that he was stumbling, the soldiers pulled a random bystander from the crowd and forced him to carry Jesus' cross. All we know about him is that his name was Simon, and that he was a foreigner. Had one of the soldiers taken pity on Jesus, or had Simon volunteered in an act of mercy towards a stranger? Either way, Simon took the burden of the heavy cross and his kindness enabled Jesus to continue his lonely journey.

BIBLE READER They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross.

PRESENTER Kindness, particularly from strangers, is unexpected and can make a huge impact on our lives.

[Group 8] have been thinking about the theme of mercy.

Station 9 **Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem**

NARRATOR As he continued his journey Jesus came across some women – perhaps his mother and her friends, and the other women who had followed him. They were weeping as they watched him struggle. But in the middle of his own terrible pain there was a moment of compassion. He knew that there were times of terrible suffering coming their way.

BIBLE READER A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children

PRESENTER We all cry sometimes. Yes, men too. And we've all known how good it is when you're hurting and someone stops to show you that they understand. [Group 9] have been thinking about the theme of compassion.

[Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 10 **Jesus is crucified**

NARRATOR Now Jesus had reached the end of his journey – the place where he would die. Crucifixion was one of the most cruel and painful forms of execution ever devised. The victim was nailed to a cross-shaped piece of wood and left to dehydrate or bleed to death as others watched. And yet at this point Jesus spoke again to his Father God. This time it wasn't to ask to be rescued. Instead he was praying that the people who crucified him would be forgiven.

BIBLE READER When they came to the place called Skull Hill, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they have no idea what they're really doing."

PRESENTER Have you ever been really hurt by someone, and you wanted to forgive them, but you found it really hard to let go? Forgiveness is not just a feeling. It's also a choice. We can only really forgive the people who have hurt us. Notice how Jesus asks God to forgive his murderers – as if God is the one who is really being wounded.

Forgiveness is the theme we asked [Group 10] to explore for us.

[Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 11 **Jesus promises heaven to the Good Thief**

NARRATOR Jesus found himself executed between two proper criminals. One joined in the taunting of the crowd – but the other recognised that Jesus didn't deserve to die. He asked Jesus for mercy even after his death.

BIBLE READER One of the criminals being crucified with Jesus cursed him. "I thought you were supposed to be the Messiah? Save yourself then... and us too." But the other criminal told him off, saying "Have you no fear of God? We're all in the same boat here. Except, we've been condemned justly. We've been sentenced for things we've done, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied to him, "OK, I promise you, today you will be with me in Heaven."

PRESENTER We know about hopelessness, and we also know about hope. When Jesus talked about Heaven, he was talking about the unshakeable hope that God's plan for the world will come true. By promising the thief that he would be with him today, Jesus was indicating that there is hope beyond death, and that hope started there and then.

We're going to hear now how [Group 11] have expressed the theme of hope.

[Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 12 **Jesus speaks to his mother and his friend**

NARRATOR For Mary, that Friday brought every mother's worse nightmare - the loss of her child. In the middle of his darkest hour, Jesus saw how his

death was going to leave his mother and his friends bereft. So he welded them together into a new family.

BIBLE READER

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, this is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "This is your mother." And from that moment the disciple took her into his home.

PRESENTER

Love them or hate them, our families are the foundation of our lives. Just as every birth happens in the context of a family, so does every death. The loss of a family member changes everything. It affects far more than just the person who dies; family, friends, colleagues and neighbours.

We can't avoid loss. It's a huge part of family life. But we can open our families to include those who have lost the people closest to them – parents, children, lovers and friends.

Here's how [Group 12] has responded to theme of family.
[Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 13

Jesus dies on the cross

NARRATOR

We're approaching the end of the Good Friday story. Jesus has been betrayed, falsely accused, tried by a mob, tortured and crucified. He hung on the cross for about three hours, gasping for breath and in great pain. At the end, he uttered his last few words, trusting himself into God's hands.

BIBLE READER

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the

veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last breath.

PRESENTER

And so he died. Death is one of the great taboos of life. We don't like to talk about it, and we're rarely there when it happens. But it comes to us all one day; we can't avoid it. Death is a natural part of life.

We asked [Group 13] to explore the theme of death.

[Short interview and/or presentation]

Station 14 Jesus' body is placed in the tomb

NARRATOR

It was Friday, and because of the Jewish law, Jesus' body would have to be left until after the Sabbath before it could be properly prepared for burial. That would be tomorrow, a day that Jesus' friends and family could hardly bear to think about. Their thoughts were taken up with what had happened today and yesterday. In the meantime a man called Joseph risked his own reputation to ensure that Jesus' body was taken down from the cross, wrapped in a shroud and placed in a tomb.

BIBLE READER

When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph arrived. He was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had cut in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb, and left.

PRESENTER

If you were hoping for a happy ending, I'm sorry. That's the end of today's story. What a sad note to finish on. But don't think that the story of Good Friday ends in tragedy. There's more to come tomorrow. Tomorrow is a day of promise and hope. Tomorrow, the followers of Jesus were going to see a miracle....

We asked [Group 14] to think about the theme of tomorrow.

[Short interview and/or presentation]

Conclusion

NARRATOR

That's the end of the story....at least that was what everybody thought. Jesus was dead and buried. But it wasn't the end. In some ways it was just the beginning. Because early on the Sunday morning they made an extraordinary discovery – one that would change not only their own lives, but the whole world.

Along with people all over around the world we will tell the next part of the story this Sunday morning at [*time and place of Easter service*]. I hope you can join us then.

PRESENTER We want to thank.....