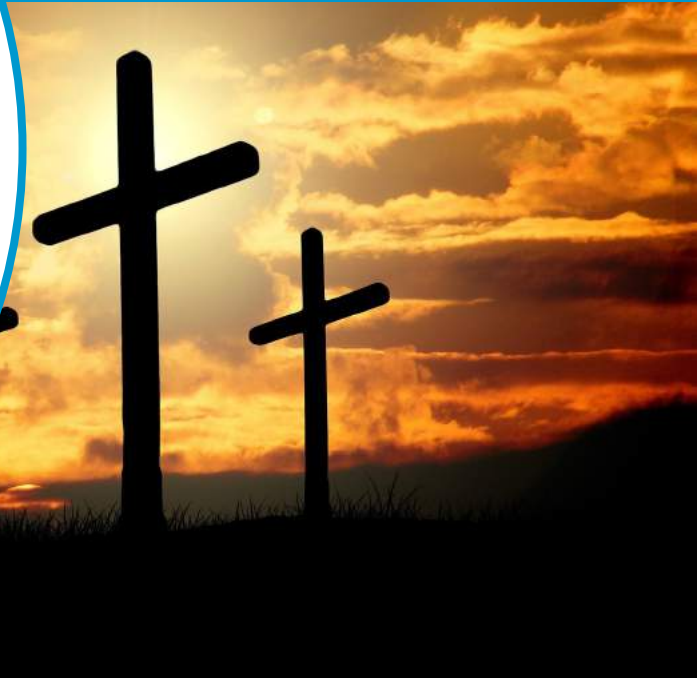


WORSHIP & TEACHING

CASE STUDY

Sharing our story:
Salisbury Diocese
resource for Easter



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The Stations of Creation

The Stations of the cross tell the story of the journey that Jesus made from when he was condemned to death, to crucifixion.

Sometimes the stations continue to the resurrection and that is what I am going to do here so that if people are following the stations with children they will understand that the ultimate destination is life not death. These stations tell that story, but also relate it to the suffering of the natural world that we see all over our planet at the moment.

The idea would be to set this up around the churchyard or other public space so that families or individuals could go and engage with it if they chose to.

Each station has a focus which ideally would be something easily found in the chosen space; some words which could be read out loud; and action, and a prayer.

I am imagining the words printed out and put on a weatherproof sign for all to read without touching.

Intro - Welcome to the stations of creation. Traditionally, the stations of the cross tell the story of the journey that Jesus made from when he was condemned to death, to crucifixion and then to resurrection - coming back to life. These stations tell that story, but also relate it to the suffering of the natural world that we see all over our planet at the moment.

Some of the story is sad and is about death, but at the end it is about life. Take your time, and remember that even in the sad moments, this is a story of hope.

1. Condemned

Focus - a tree.

Jesus was condemned to die for something he had not done and the person who could have stopped it washed his hands in front of the crowd to say it was nothing to do with him.

The way people treat the earth means that parts of it are dying because of pollution, cutting down trees, and destruction of good land. Many of the people who could stop it happening do nothing.

Action - Pretend to wash your hands and talk or think about what you would do if someone wanted to cut down this tree.

Prayer - Creator God, help everyone to do what they can to protect the Earth. Amen



2. Carrying the cross

Focus - make a cross shape with two twigs and a long piece of grass to tie them together.

Jesus had to carry the cross. It was very big, and very heavy, and too much for him to carry on his own.

The Earth is trying to carry too much too. We are trying to make the Earth give us too much, and it is struggling.

Action - look at your small cross and imagine what it might be like to carry one that was as big as you. (Keep your small cross with you as you move on.)

Prayer - Creator God, help us to truly care for the Earth. Amen



3. Falling

Focus - find a leaf that has fallen off a tree.

As Jesus carried the cross through Jerusalem, he fell because it was too heavy and he was not allowed to rest.

The leaf that you are holding has fallen from the tree; this is part of the natural cycle of the tree that allows it to rest. All of creation needs to rest sometimes in order to carry on being strong and beautiful.

Action - hold your leaf up against the light and look at the patterns in it, then simply let it fall to the ground again to carry on being part of the natural cycle.

Prayer - Creator God, show us how to let your creation have the rest it needs. Amen



4. A Helper

Focus - another person.

Because Jesus could not carry the cross alone, a man called Simon was called from the crowd to help him. Creation needs our help now. Protecting it and caring for it is something that we can all do.

Action - Think of something your other person does for you and say thank you. If you are alone – perhaps you could call someone when you get home.

Prayer - Creator God, show each one of us what is ours to do to help the Earth carry its burdens.



5. Everything taken away

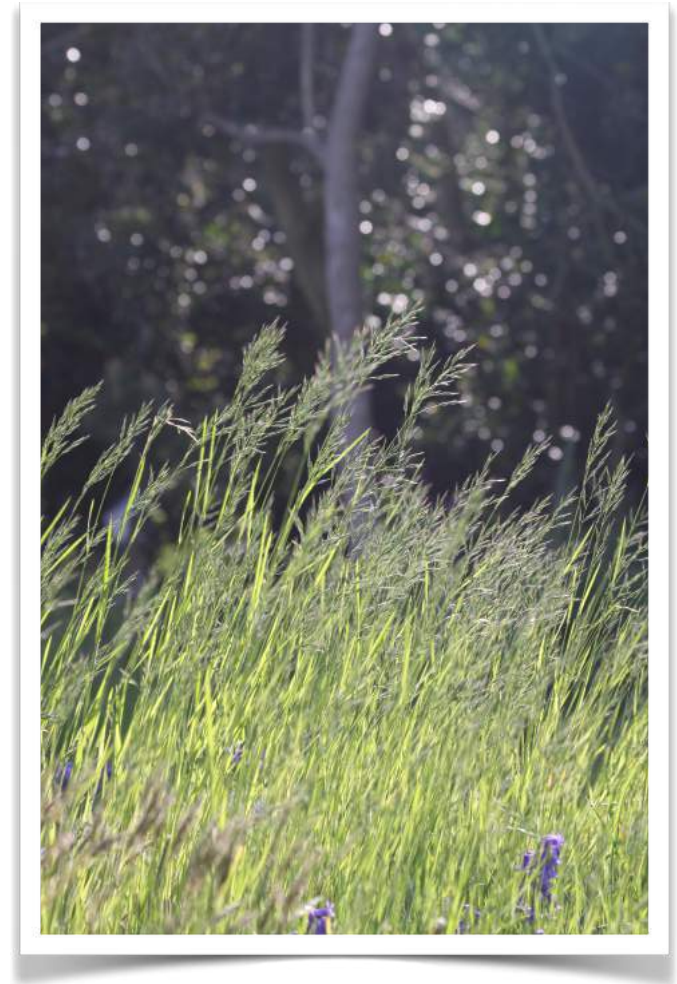
Focus - any patch of natural ground.

When Jesus got to the place where they would put him on the cross, everything he had was taken away from him, even his clothes.

Around the world people are taking trees away from oxygen-giving forests, polluting fresh water, and over using the soil that we need to grow food.

Action - look down at the place where you are standing and see what sort of plants or even animals you can see.

Prayer - Creator God, help us to notice what is around us and to appreciate even the simplest parts of your natural world. Amen



6. Death

Focus - The cross you made for station 2.

Jesus was put on the cross and left there until he died. Then he was taken down by his friends, wrapped in clothes and laid in a tomb. His friends were very sad.

The bad things that some people are doing to the Earth make us very sad too.

Action - find a place that you would like to leave your cross and put it down.

Prayer - Creator God, help us to be brave enough to say no to people when we see them hurting your creation. Amen



7. Resurrection

Focus - find a sign of the new life of Spring; a flower, or buds, or tiny new leaves on a tree.

Jesus did not stay dead. God brought him back to life, and he is still alive with God today; a sign of hope for us all.

We see signs today not only of the new life around us, but signs of hope for the whole earth in those people who are prepared to act to protect it.

Action - Think or talk about whether there is something that you don't do already, that you could do to be part of bringing hope and protection to the natural world.

Prayer - Creator God, thank you for the beauty of your creation. Help us to do whatever we can to protect the Earth, to value it as you do, and to be part of bringing hope to the world that you love. Amen

