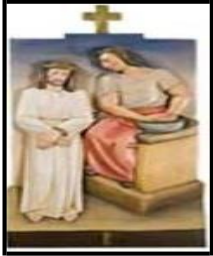


Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The First Station: Jesus is condemned to death

Mark 15:12-14:

Pilate brought Jesus outside and said to the people, “What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?” “Crucify him!” they shouted. “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

Remember

Jesus receives the condemning pronouncement. Have you ever experienced condemnation from others: been told you were not good enough, cut from the team during tryouts, criticized and made fun of on Twitter? The embarrassment of this experience is almost too much to take. It is humbling, painful and humiliating.

Reflect

Clear your mind for a moment. Think about those words: humbling, painful and humiliating. Notice the thoughts that come to mind. Notice what humbling, painful and humiliating feel like to you. Notice any sensations in your body and where they are located as you pay attention to your thoughts and feelings (nausea, butterflies, urge to cry, etc.)

Remind (Yourself)

What has been the most humbling, painful or humiliating moment in your experience of sports? As you recall that/those moment(s), how do your thoughts, feelings and sensations compare to those you imagine Jesus felt? How are they the same? How do they differ?

Review

Review the list of character strengths listed at the end of this document. Which strengths do you think Jesus needed to call upon to get through this station?

Recite

“Jesus, your strength inspires me. Help me to accept the challenges I face as a coach, player, official or parent and a Christian with strength and grace.

Physical Activity [Proper Stretching](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Second Station: Jesus is made to carry the cross

John 19:16-17:

The soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha).

Remember

Jesus commits to the way chosen for him. Athletes take up their own cross daily when they welcome the monotony of some practices, the repetitions of scouting or performance reports, the dullness of drills. At times these kinds of exercises can seem boring, routine and meaningless but they are a part of my commitment to being an athlete.

Reflect

Clear your mind again. Think about those boring, routine, repetitive, seemingly meaningless activities you have to perform on a daily basis in service of your sport(s) and your athletic goals. How do they compare or differ from Jesus' taking up of the cross? Notice any thoughts or feelings you have; any sensations that arise in your body.

Remind (Yourself)

How can you accept the, at times, monotony and dullness of sports preparation?

Review

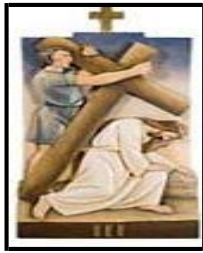
Which strengths do you need to call upon to carry your own personal crosses? If you need some ideas, review the list of character strengths listed at the end of this document.

Recite

"Help me Jesus, to embrace with courage my daily tasks, especially the ones that seem burdensome.

Physical Activity [Lunges for Beginners](#) [More Advanced Lunges](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Third Station: Jesus falls for the first time

Philippians 2:8:

And being found in human form, Jesus humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Remember

Jesus trips up the first time. He is thinking: Can I make it? Will I have enough energy to make it to the end? Will I fall again? As an athlete, can I accept my limitations and realize that I will not always get a new move right the first time through or even the second?

Reflect

Clear your mind again. Think about Jesus falling for the first time. Imagine how that felt. What thoughts do you imagine were going through his mind? How must he have felt at that moment? What sensations do you imagine were going on in his body?

Remind (Yourself)

How can I keep trying when the process of growth or getting better at my sport seems endless and daunting?

Review

Which strengths do you think can help you get through the process falling and getting up again to grow? If you need some ideas, review the list of character strengths listed at the end of this document.

Recite

"As I stumble in life, may I find motivation in Jesus' example of getting back up in the face of adversity?"

Physical Activity: [Burpees](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Fourth Station: Jesus meets his Blessed Mother

Luke 2:34-35:

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, Jesus' mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Remember

Our parents/guardians have a way of bearing our pain for us. Have you ever met with a mother of an athlete who has been hurt, who lost a big game, made the error that lost the big game? It is hard for a parent of an athlete to be in the stands and hear the fans ripping his/her child or see a referee make a bad call against his/her child.

Reflect

Take a couple of deep, cleansing breaths and clear your mind. Think about a time when you were hurt playing your sport, made a game-changing error, had a bad call go against you, or had a parent or player from the other team say mean or bad things about you. When you can recall a specific incident, imagine you can see yourself from the stands, through the eyes of one of your parents, a grandparent or someone else who you know loves you unconditionally. What thoughts or feelings come to mind seeing yourself there in pain through the eyes of someone who loves you? What sensations do you notice in your body?

Recall

Parents do have a way of bearing this pain. If they can't take it away, they can just be with it (that's compassion, not empathy). That is what Mary did for Jesus. How can Mary's example help parents in this difficult situation? What can YOU learn from Mary's example to help you have compassion for a teammate, opponent, coach or official experiencing a painful situation?

Review

Which strengths do you think are most useful for developing compassion for others? Review the list of character strengths listed at the end of this document if you need ideas.

Recite

"Jesus, help me to show compassion for others and simply "be" with them in their pain and in their blessings."

Physical Activity: [Planks](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Fifth Station: Simon helps Jesus carry his cross

Luke 23:26:

As they 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.

Remember

As an athlete who is taught to take the pain and not allow others to know they need help, can we be aware of our limitations and vulnerabilities? Can we be open to others reaching out to us and help us?

Reflect

Clearing your mind again, ask yourself the question, "Is there any part of me that objects to or resists asking for help?" Don't answer too quickly. Wait for the answer to come into your mind. If you find that a part of you does object to or resists asking for help, then ask this question, "What is its objection or resistance all about?" Alternately, you can ask, "In what way is this objection or resistance trying to help me?" Again, wait for an answer rather than answering quickly without reflection. Finally, if your best friend on the team came to you and said that he/she was afraid to ask anyone for help, what would you say to him/her?

Remind (Yourself)

As an athlete, are you coachable? Are you able to take the constructive criticism of your coaches, teammates and others so that you can grow and strengthen our good points?

Review

Which strengths does it take to admit to the need and ask for help? Review the list of character strengths listed at the end of this document if you need ideas.

Recite

"Jesus, lead me to a gracious acceptance of where I need assistance and guidance in my life."

Physical Activity: [Cool Moves](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Matthew 10:40, 42:

He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.

Remember

Sometimes we like to think we have it all together or give others the impression we don't need help.

Reflect

Take a moment to think about a time when you helped someone out, not like help carry groceries, but truly helped them with something that was painful to them. How did helping them feel to you? Did you help because you pitied them, felt they were weak, or looked down on them in some way; or, did you help because you had compassion for them, and cared about them? What if the person in need of help was an opponent rather than a teammate or friend?

Remind (Yourself)

Can I allow others to mend my hurts and comfort my sorrows, wipe away my tears? Can I allow them to know that it hurts that I messed up in the game? Can I allow another to reflect back to me my weakness and still be okay?

Review

Which strengths does it take to help out someone in need, particularly those who might be your competitor - either someone on your team vying for your position or playing time or a member of the other team? Review the list of character strengths listed at the end of this document for help.

Recite

"My prayer is to recognize how I might be a Veronica for someone who needs my care and support. How can I wipe my brother or sister's face in comfort?"

Physical Activity: [Jump Rope](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Seventh Station: Jesus falls a second time

Psalm 22:6-7:

But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads.

Remember

Author, Criss Jami, once said, "The harder you fall, the heavier your heart; the heavier your heart, the stronger you climb; the stronger you climb, the higher your pedestal." Shaun White, winner of three Olympic Gold Medals in snowboarding has said, "You take a crash, you get back up and next time you succeed and that's a great feeling." Getting back up after a fall, whether carrying a cross, making an error, recovering from an injury, or suffering a series of losses is called *resilience*. Successful athletes learn to develop resilience in the face of defeat.

Reflect

With a clear mind, think for a moment about a time when you felt you had failed in your sport in some way. What thoughts went through your head and what feelings did you notice at the moment you experienced failure? How did your body feel inside? If your immediate thoughts and feelings were to give up, what changed to allow you to get up again and continue competing?

Remind (Yourself)

Who or what in my life allows me to go out and try it again? Or trying out again after I have been cut from the team? Who or what helps me compete again when I have been injured, or suffered many defeats.

Review

Which strengths does it take to help develop resilience? Review the list of character strengths listed at the end of this document for ideas if needed.

Recite

"Support me Lord in handling moments of failure in my life as integral to my journey."

Physical Activity: [Sit Ups](#) or [Curl Ups](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Eighth Station: Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem

Luke 23:27-29

As Jesus walked toward Golgotha, a large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him; and he turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me...”

Remember

Have you ever been in a losing situation and reached out to another in pain? Pain tends to make us want to go away and hide and cover ourselves up. Here in the midst of his pain, with nowhere to hide or cover up, Jesus reaches out to those who were counting on him and yet feel his pain also.

Reflect

Clearing your mind, think about a painful experience from your sports history. Recall what you were thinking in the midst of your pain. Recall also the feelings and sensations in your body at that moment. Was your instinct to reach out to those closest to you – teammates, coaches, friends and family in the stands – or was your instinct to withdraw and cover up? The instinct to withdraw is a normal reaction. But the way out of pain is not to try and push it away, but simply be with it and push through it.

Remind (Yourself)

Can you get through your own pain or get out of yourself in the midst of feeling downcast because of a loss, an error, an injury? Are you able to open yourself up to others' pain when you, yourself, are in pain too?

Review

Which strengths do you think are needed get through your own pain AND be with others in pain at the same time? If you need some ideas of which strengths are needed, review the list of character strengths listed at the end of this document.

Recite

“Enable me to see the Compassionate Christ in my life and be the Compassionate Christ for others.

Physical Activity: [Agility Training](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Ninth Station: Jesus falls the third time

Psalm 22:14:

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me.

Remember

Have you ever felt the feeling of wanting to quit because things are just not going your way? You have persevered through some tough times and almost made it but the pain Comes back. You were once the “go---to---person” on your team, but this is not the case now. You were an all---star and now you are not seeing any playing time. But deep in your gut, you know you can’t quit.

Reflect

Free your mind of all thoughts. You’ve probably heard these lyrics from a song by Chumbawamba, “We’ll be singing when we’re winning. We’ll be singing I get knocked down But I get up again You’re never going to keep me down. He sings the songs that remind him of the good times... He sings the songs that remind him of the better times... I get knocked down. But I get up again. You’re never going to keep me down...” As those song lyrics and melody resonate through your head, what thoughts come to mind? How does the song make you feel inside? What sensations do you notice in your body? Athletes often use music to inspire and motivate them. What music inspires you to get up again when you’ve been knocked down?

Remind (Yourself)

Who or what can give you the courage to go out there one more time to get it right?

Review

Which of your character strengths help you when you get knocked down to get up again? Review the list of character strengths listed at the end of this document if you need help deciding.

Recite

“Give me the gift of persistence so that I might persevere to become more like you.”

Physical Activity: [Push-Ups](#) or [Push Up Plank Workout](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Tenth Station: Jesus stripped of his garments

Mark 15:19:

Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. They stripped off his clothes and began to mock him, saying: "All hail, King of the Jews."

Remember

There can be times when our integrity or dignity can be stripped from us during a game. Think of a time when you could have reacted to being called a name or responded to a well-aimed elbow and did not. How did you react? Were you able to "turn the other cheek?"

Reflect

Clear your mind again. Think of a time when you were heckled, taunted, made fun of or were embarrassed and you reacted rather than acted, in essence you lost it. Recall your thoughts and feelings at that time. Note how your body felt inside. Now shift your memory to another time when you were embarrassed or taunted, but this time you acted rather than reacted. Again note your thoughts and feelings. Key in to the sensations in your body. Now, comparing the two situations, what differences do you note between the one where you reacted (perhaps inappropriately or violently) and the time you acted in a way that made you proud?

Remind (Yourself)

What prevents you from acting out violently when scorned, embarrassed or humiliated? How do you take Jesus' example to turn the other cheek?

Review

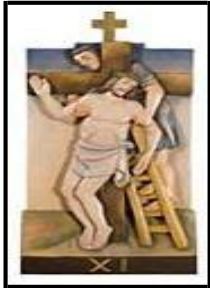
Which strengths do you think Jesus needed to call upon to get through this station?

Recite

"Grant me the courage to stand up against injustice in my world."

Physical Activity: [Believe, Achieve and Tone](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the cross

John 17:19:

Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). Here they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

Remember

Life isn't fair, though we often think it should be. There are times when hurt, pain, injury and suffering need to be endured. Without it, joy and happiness would not make sense.

Reflect

Put your mind at rest. Imagine a giant movie screen where you can watch the various times you have had to handle hurt and pain in your sports career. Notice the thoughts that go through your mind as you see yourself handling hurt and pain. How do you feel about the way you handle your hurt and pain? Do you sometimes handle the hurt and pain better than you do at other times? If so, what differences do you note between the times you handle it well and the times you don't?

Remind (Yourself)

How do you deal with the hurt and pain (emotional and physical) that are a part of a season or a career?

Review

Which character strengths can you call upon to deal with your hurt and pain better?

Recite

"Empower me Jesus with the virtue of fortitude to endure hardships."

Physical Activity: [Dirty Dozen](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the cross

John 19:28-29:

Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Remember

The inevitable will come. You may not know when or why yet, but your playing career will come to an end. Whether it is because of an injury or getting cut or your eligibility has been exhausted, your playing time will come to an end.

Reflect

Relax your mind. Think about the coming end to your athletic career, hopefully a long way off. What thoughts go through your head? What feelings or sensations do you notice in your body? How do you say goodbye to your career? Do you get angry? Disappointed? How will you deal with this?

Remind (Yourself)

When the time comes, how can I say goodbye to my career in a way that leaves me feeling good about myself? Who or what can help me prepare for this time to come?

Review

Which character strengths can both help you prepare for and deal with the inevitable end of your sports career?

Recite

"When all seems lost, sustain me, Jesus, in your mercy."

Physical Activity: [Strength, Cardio and Pilates Workout](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken down from the cross

John 19:33-34:

When the soldiers came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out.

Remember

In the heat of the moment of a loss or a significant error or turnover, is it possible to remain calm and peaceful? Rather than display anger or violence, can you participate without partaking in negative behavior? Think about how you typically handle errors and losses. How would your teammates and coaches characterize you: as a good sport or bad sport when it comes to dealing with errors and losses?

Reflect

Think about how you handle mistakes, losses and disappointments. Do you think you handle them well? If not, here's some ways that might help 1) simply imagine you can flush the mistake down the drain and be rid of it, 2) in your mind, chop it up into little pieces and let the pieces float up into the sky, or 3) notice your breathing and any stressful feelings or sensations in your body. Take a deep breath in and as you do, silently count to five, hold your breath for one count then s-l-o-w-l-y let the breath out counting backwards from five to one. Repeat a few more times if you need to.

Remind Yourself

What can I do in the heat of the moment of a loss or a significant error or turnover to remain calm and peaceful? Whose or what help might I need to do so?

Review

Which character strengths can help you to remain calm and peaceful in the face of mistakes, losses and/or disappointments?

Recite

"Love is the greatest commandment. May my life be rooted in love and service to others?"

Physical Activity: [Tabata Workout](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Fourteenth Station: Jesus is placed in the tomb

John 19:38-41:

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.



Remember

Hope is a wonderful stance, a gift from God. Have there been times when you were really down---and---out and at the last moment of the game, something happened that saved the game?

Reflect

Think about someone you know personally or someone you've encountered who seems to lack hope; always sees the glass as half empty. What does it feel like to be around that person for any length of time? What does their attitude and behavior do to your energy level? Do you find yourself drawn to this individual or do you look for ways to avoid them? What kind of reactions and emotions do they trigger in you?

Recall

Can you be patient enough to wait for God's great surprise to work for your game, your life?

Review

Hope is powerful character strength. What other strengths can help you learn to be more patient and wait for good things to happen when you're in a slump or things aren't going your way?

Recite

"Jesus, help me to rest in the uncertainty of my future knowing that if I stay rooted in your love and energized by your grace, I will be your worthy disciple."

Physical Activity: [Zumba Workout](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



The Fifteenth Station: The Resurrection

Luke 24:4-6

Then suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning appeared next to the women who had come to anoint his body. The men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

Remember

Sport is a means of recreation or "re---creation" in body, mind and soul. Sport, when conducted in the right environment, can transport us beyond the ordinariness of daily life and help us reach transcendence with Christ.

Reflect

*Go ahead and clear your mind one last time. Sports use the term **flow** or **flow state** also referred to as being in the **zone**. Flow is the mental state in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the **process** of the activity. If you've encountered the flow state before, recall what it was like. If you haven't yet achieved a flow state, don't give up; you'll get there soon enough. For now, just imagine the feeling(s) you would get when you're in a flow state. What would your body feel like? What might you be thinking? You are being transformed from doing the ordinary to achieving the extraordinary. Is it possible that flow is a way we can reach transcendence with Christ?*

Recall

How do you put sport in this broader context of your life and keep your perspective there?

Review

Review the many gifts you have received from your sports participation. Make a list if you need to. To who and for what are you most grateful? What lessons have you learned from sports? Is there anyone you need to thank for helping you achieve what you have so far? How will you thank them?

Recite

"Lord, grant me the virtue of temperance to understand sport as a spiritual gift in my life."

Physical Activity: [Total Body Sculpt](#)

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



Some Common Character Strengths

Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teamwork• Fairness• Leadership
Fortitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bravery• Perseverance• Honesty• Zest for Life
Prudence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wisdom• Curiosity• Love of Learning• Maintaining Perspective
Temperance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forgiveness• Humility• Self-Regulation
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciation of Excellence• Gratitude• Hope• Humor• Love• Kindness

Sports-Oriented Stations of the Cross



NOTES and REFLECTIONS