

Marriage Encounter Presentation: Stations of the Cross

This presentation starts with fourteen lit candles. As each station is read, one candle is put out. After the Twelfth station everyone kneels and prays silently. After the fourteenth station, the candles are rekindled. Couples take turns reading the sections. There are three parts for each section: (1) an explanation of the station, (2) dialogue questions, and (3) prayer intentions.

First Station: Jesus Is Condemned

This first station is about hypocrisy, not living up to what we believe. Remember, Jesus was condemned to death for being what He was meant to be. We condemn ourselves when we cannot accept and believe in ourselves as good and loveable .. God does not make junk.

What do I hate about myself? HDIFAMA?
HDIF when we judge each other harshly?
HDIF Knowing that God loves me unconditionally?

****[Response: *Lord Hear Our Prayer*]**

For all couples that they may refrain from making rash judgments about each other, let us pray. * *
For the sensitivity to see each other's gifts and reflect Your goodness. Let us pray. **

Second Station: Jesus Accepts His Cross

This station challenges us to accept suffering as Christ did. We know that He helps us carry our cross and never lets our burdens grow one ounce too heavy for our strength.

What is something we have suffered together? HDIFAT?
How have we come closer to Jesus through suffering? HDIFAT?

That husbands and wives will embrace their common life with courage,
supporting each other in joy and sorrow, let us pray. * *
That trials and tribulations will not discourage us, let us pray. **

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

Perseverance is the key to this station. When we make mistakes, fail, or get discouraged, we need to pick ourselves up again with Christ's strength. He understands and will help us.

What mistakes or disappointments about myself most discourage me now? HDIF sharing this with you?
HDIFA asking you to help me when I fail?

For the ability to accept our limitations, let us pray. **
For the courage to rise from our failures, let us pray. * *

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

Mary sees Her Son beaten, kicked, and driven like a beast. She counts His every wound. Her soul cries out in sorrow. As Son and Mother meet, no pain or sorrow is hidden from each other's eyes.

HDIF when you share with me your hurts, disappointments, fears, and failures?
HDIF sharing my whole self with you?

For trust in one another, let us pray. **
For the courage to reach out even more, let us pray. **

Fifth Station: Simon Helps Jesus

Here in this fifth station, we are dealing with service. When the cross gets too heavy to bear, the Father gives us grace and sometimes other people to help us.

HDIFA letting other couples help us when we are hurting?
Can we go to others when we see them hurting? HDIFAMA?

That troubled couples will find the assistance they need, let us pray. **
That we will be open to the love and caring of others, let us pray. **

Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Compassion and caring touch Jesus in this station, just as Jesus had compassion for others. Whenever we are thoughtful of another, even in the smallest way, we are carrying on the work of Jesus.

What are some things others have done to me which have made me happy and brought me joy? Describe this joy lovingly to your spouse.
What have I done to bring joy to someone else? HDIFAMA?

That we may be more aware of the needs of others and respond generously with love, let us pray. **
That families everywhere may have example and encouragement for their faith and peace and love within their home, let us pray. **

Seventh Station: Jesus Falls Again

So many times we fall short and we are burdened by guilt, worry, and fear. We must remember that Christ has forgiven us, we must forgive each other and ourselves.

What are some stumbling blocks in our relationship that cause us to often fall short of our goal of being lovers?
HDIFAMA?
Am I honest enough to recognize ways in which I have hurt you? HDIF sharing this with you?

That failures to love will not conquer couples, let us pray. **
That we might generously use the grace of healing in our marriage, let us pray. **

Eighth Station: Jesus Consols the Women

The message here is comfort. It's such a little thing to ask another how they're doing, or just how their day went, to listen, to give comfort and support. It's such a little thing, yet so difficult to do at times.

How can I imitate Christ in comforting you? HDIFAMA?

How would I like to be comforted? HDIFAMA?

That families will support each member in time of need, let us pray. **

That couples might bring Your comfort and compassion to each other, Lord, let us pray. **

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time

This station asks courage of us. God gave us life, so we must do the best with every minute of every day. Jesus loves us. Jesus fell and picked up our burdens. He doesn't want us to get discouraged.

What is the best help you can give me when I am discouraged? HDIFAT?

HDIF when I see you are discouraged?

For the grace of perseverance in the bond of marriage, let us pray. **

That troubled couples will ask for the grace of the Lord in their difficulties, let us pray. **

Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

Jesus, Our King, stands stripped before us. Yet who has ever been so rich? Possessing nothing, He owns all. **If** we, too, would be rich in God's love, we need not be solicitous about our food, our clothes, our life.

What material things do I worry about most? HDIFAMA?

HDIFA trusting in our Father's care for us?

That we may strip ourselves of selfishness, fear, worry, competitiveness,
and all else that keeps us from pure loving trust, let us pray. * *

That our trust in the Father's unceasing love will strengthen us, let us pray. **

Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the Cross

We are so precious in God's eyes that Jesus endured even this crucifixion to let us know of His Father's love, Jesus even loved those who hurt Him. Is our love as universal?

How have I caused you to suffer? HDIFAMA?

How have I nailed others to a cross by my actions or judgements? HDIFAT?

That the refusal to give might give way to generosity, let us pray. **

That the Church, the Family of God's People, may demonstrate to all the Father's message of love and hope, let us pray.

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Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies

Jesus died being what He was meant to be. He loved... not hated. He brought peace... not destruction. He forgave... not held a grudge. He healed... not harmed. He brought life... not death.

HDIF knowing Jesus died for us? HDIFA my death?

HDIFA your death?

That we might reflect the love of Jesus by our lives, let us pray. **

That the gift of our lives together and our special matrimonial love might enrich this world, let us pray. **

(PAUSE FOR A MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER)

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is Taken Down From the Cross

This station asks us to accept the sorrows of our life, to love and yet let go, to accept the partings that come as friends move away, children grow up, and our dear ones are called home to the Father.

Our children will be grown and gone, probably too soon. HDIFAMA?

HDIF growing older with you?

That those who depart from us will always find joy in Your Love, Lord, let us pray. * *

For the faith to see beyond pain to the fullness of love, let us pray. * *

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is Buried

Jesus' cold and battered body is laid tenderly within the tomb and the stone is rolled in place. His friends leave AU is darkness.

When do I feel most alone? Describe this feeling in loving detail.

When do I find it most difficult to experience and believe in God's Love for me? HDIFAT?

That we might draw from the graces of our marriage to support each other when we are sad or discouraged, let us pray.

* *

That we might help make God's love real to each other, let us pray. **

RELIGHT ALL OF THE CANDLES

Fifteenth Station: Christ is Risen

Our salvation ... our new life. Now we can see all our struggles are meant to be grown out of, so that we can be of life in Christ and become what the Father is calling each of us to be. Jesus' mortal life is over, but now another life begins-- Christ's work within and through His Church. He is depending on us to be I-Es Apostles, to transform the world with His Love as it lives in us.

How can we begin to bring new life into our relationship? HDIFAMA?

How can we bring Jesus' love alive to the couples in our community? HDIFAMA?

How can we support and help others in our parish to grow in Christ? HDIFAMA?

That the love of couples will help transform our world, let us pray. * *

That all couples will realize their stake in each other. Let us pray. **

Sharing Question: How can I/we bring Jesus' love alive within our relationship and/or our family?

Dialogue Questions

1. What do I hate about myself HDIFAMA
2. HDIF when we judge each other harshly?
3. HDIF Knowing that God loves me unconditionally?
4. What is something we have suffered together? HDIFAT?
5. How have we come closer to Jesus through suffering? HDIFAT?
6. What mistakes or disappointments about myself most discourage me now? HDIF sharing this with you?
7. HDIFA asking you to help me when I fail?
8. HDIF when you share with me your hurts, disappointments, fears, and failures?
9. HDIF sharing my whole self with you?
10. HDIFA letting other couples help us when we are hurting?
11. Can we go to others when we see them hurting? HMIFAMA?
12. What are some things others have done to me which have made me happy and brought me joy? Describe this joy lovingly to your spouse.
13. What have I done to bring joy to someone else? HDIFAMA?
14. What are some stumbling blocks in our relationship that cause us to often fall short of our goal of being lovers? HDIFAMA?
15. Am I honest enough to recognize ways in which I have hurt you? HDIF sharing this with you?
16. How can I imitate Christ in comforting you? HDIFAMA?
17. How would I like to be comforted? HDIFAMA?
18. HDIF when I see you are discouraged?
19. What material things do I worry about most? HDIFAMA?
20. HDIFA trusting in our Father's care for us?
21. How have I caused you to suffer? HDIFAMA?
22. How have I nailed others to a cross by my actions or judgements? HDIFAT?
23. HDIF knowing Jesus died for us?
24. HDIFA my death?
25. HDTFFA your death?
26. Our children will be grown and gone, probably too soon. HDIFAMA?
27. HDIF growing older with you?
28. When do I feel most alone? Describe this feeling in loving detail.
29. When do I find it most difficult to experience and believe in God's Love for me? HDIFAT?
30. How can we begin to bring new life into our relationship? HDIFAMA?
31. How can we bring Jesus' love alive to the couples in our community? HDIFAMA?
32. How can we support and help others in our parish to grow in Christ? HDIFAMA?
33. How can we begin to bring new life into our relationship? HDIFAMA?
34. How can I/we bring Jesus' love alive within our relationship and/or our family?