

GROUP EXPERIENCE



Welcome to Foothill Vineyard Church

As you enter the main auditorium, please head to your right. You will see Station #1.

Please show respect to others who are also walking through. We ask that you talk in the courtyard or cafe and keep the main auditorium free from chatting with friends unless it is part of the station experience.

As you take this time to slow down on Good Friday to remember Christ, let go of any stress of life and engage with this process. Allow the Holy Spirit to highlight and impact you in a new way. Fully engage with each activity and try not to be bashful as you participate in each station. Please feel free to express yourself in worship as you like.

Enjoy the journey.

Station #1: Palm Sunday

Take a moment to think about the following:

A week before Jesus' resurrection He went with his disciples to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. The crowds shouted praise and admiration toward Jesus. Yet, remember...these same crowds shouted, "Crucify him!" a week later.

Have each person hold a palm branch while thinking back to the time of Passover. What would it be like to be there with Jesus as you read this scripture?

The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted,

"Praise God!

*Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the **LORD!***

Hail to the King of Israel!"

*Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said: "Don't be afraid, people of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt. **John 12:12-15***

Knowing the condition of their hearts, and the importance of God's plan...

Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. **John 12:23-24***

Before moving to the next station, think about why the people in Jerusalem were celebrating over Jesus one day, but only five days later wanted Him to be crucified.

Station #2: The Lord's Supper

Have one person in your group read aloud the following Scripture. Try to imagine what it was like to share the Passover meal with Jesus.

On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

Jesus' body was broken so that we could receive healing, and his precious blood was shed for the remission of our sins.

Before you take communion please take a moment and reflect on the cost of being a follower of Christ....100% of who you are!

Take communion as a group. Have one person serve the bread and another pass the cup. Dip the bread into the cup and partake, then move on to the next station.

Station #3: Garden of Gethsemane

Shortly after Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples, he began to feel the weight and burden of his impending death. The culmination of his life, ministry, and obedience to his Father was about to take place.

Then Jesus went with them to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, "Sit here while I go over there to pray." He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.

Matthew 26:36-39

It was here in the garden that he connected with some of our most human emotions. Jesus could have chosen an easier path, one that would have prevented his death. Yet in the face of his fear and anguish he became our example by surrendering his will to that of his Father's. His love for us compelled his obedience that made our reconciliation to God possible.

Take a few moments and reflect on what Jesus might have been feeling as he prayed in the garden that night. Consider any area(s) of your life that have not been surrendered fully to Jesus... areas that might require your obedience to God's will. You can also follow Jesus' example by saying, "Not my will, but yours be done."

Have someone hand a piece of paper to each person in the group. As a symbol of your commitment write any area(s) on a piece of paper. Then light it using the candle, and quickly leave it to burn in the concrete container around the candle. Please BE CAREFUL!

Station #4: The Crucifixion

As you take turns reading the following scriptures, consider the precious price Jesus paid for us.

*But many were amazed when they saw him [Jesus]. His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man. **Isaiah 52:14***

He [Jesus] was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. **Isaiah 53:3**

*But he [Jesus] was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all. **Isaiah 53:5-6***

Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha). There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

John 19:17-18

A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

John 19:29-30

He suffered at the hands of the people he loved and died for.

In remembrance of his pain and sorrow, take the hammer and have each person hit the nail two or three times. After each person participates continue to the next station.

Station #5: Our Guilt

A minute ago, you held the hammer that drove the nail a little deeper into the cross. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:3, *“Christ died for our sins.”*

But there is more to the story. Jesus informed his disciples...
“no man takes my life, I lay it down.” **John 10:17**

Yes, Jesus willingly laid down his life for us...to rescue us from our sins. It wasn't just the Jews or Romans who sent Him to be crucified. It was also you and I—our mistakes...our regrets...and sin.

Repeat the following phrase quietly until your heart grasps the magnitude of its truth...

“My sins nailed Jesus to the cross.”

Take the paintbrush and place some red paint on the palm of your hands as a symbol of our guilty hands in the death of Jesus.

The next morning after his death...

...taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. And since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

John 19:40, 42

After everyone has finished ... take a moment to reflect... then proceed to the next station.

Station #6: Resurrection Day

Have someone read the following passage while each of you imagine yourself being there that morning...

But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.

The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day."*

Luke 24:1-7, 12

Jesus rose from the dead and is alive today. That means He has new life and offers us new life through Him. Because of his resurrection our hands can be made clean—all we have to do is ask.

Use the red pitcher to retrieve clean water from the water fountain...Have each person rinse the hands of the person to their right...while allowing the brown/black bucket to catch the soiled water.

What a picture of what Christ does for us!

Use the towel to dry your hands before moving to the next station

Station #7: Doubting Thomas

Scripture tells us one of Jesus' disciples struggled with believing Jesus had truly risen from the grave...

One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side." Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said. Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!" ... "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed. Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.

John 20:24–29

As we see from this passage, "*Blessed are those who believe.*" Ask yourself, "do I believe...not just in the resurrection, but in God's plan for humanity...in God's plan for me?"

Have two separate people read aloud the following scriptures.

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea.

Psalm 46:1-2

*Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. **Matthew 11:28***

Are there areas in your heart where you need to trust and believe God? Have each person take a moment and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal any such area, then paint that word or a picture on the canvas. (Example: relationships, faith, future, comfort, finances, self-denial, wisdom) ...before moving to the next station.

Station #8: The Great Commission

God's glorious plan doesn't end with Jesus' death and resurrection...

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:18-20

Having an intimate relationship with Jesus is the greatest gift a person can experience, ...one worth telling others about.

You are the light of the world—like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. Don't hide your light under a basket! Instead, put it on a stand and let it shine for all. **Matthew 5:14-15**

Let's be the light of the world.

Let's live out the gospel with all of its radical claims.

Let's go and live authentic lives of faith!

As a symbol of being the light of the world, have each person light a candle and then take a minute or two and write a prayer to Jesus in the journal provided.