

# First Congregational Church of Western Springs

## Good Friday: Home Worship for Families of All Ages

*Read through the whole service once before beginning. Create a sense of sacred space by lighting a candle and clearing away any distractions. Share the leadership of the service amongst all of the readers in your family. If anything included in the service does not work for your family, simply leave it out and move on to the next section. This service is adapted from a worship service by Rev. Traci Smith, which was commissioned by Moms in Faith in 2019.*

### **Welcome and Introduction**

Today we remember Jesus. We will remember some of the important things that Jesus taught us. We will remember that Jesus taught us how to serve others. We will remember that Jesus taught us how to be peaceful. We will remember that Jesus taught us how to forgive. We will also remember the sad time when Jesus died on a cross. We will close this time together remembering to wait for the great surprise.

### **Call to Worship**

We come to worship today and we remember

**God is with us**

When it's sunny and warm

**God is with us**

When it is cold and dark

**God is with us**

When we are happy and when we are sad

**God is with us**

God, thank you for always being with us.

**Amen.**

### **Opening Prayer**

God, we come to worship today with our ears open. We are ready to hear stories from the Bible that remind us about your son Jesus. Help us to remember the important lessons Jesus taught us when he was alive on earth. Amen.

## **Lesson 1: Jesus Teaches Us to Love**

### **We Read: John 13:33-35**

*"Children, I am with you for only a short time longer. You are going to look high and low for me. But just as I told the Jews, I'm telling you: 'Where I go, you are not able to come.'*

*"Let me give you a new commandment: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other."*

## **We Remember: Loving Kindness Meditation**

Jesus told us that we are supposed to love one another. We're going to practice this by doing a special prayer called the "loving kindness meditation." Let's do it together. We close our eyes. We breathe in and out. In and out. In and out. First we think of ourselves and we say to ourselves "May I have joy and happiness. May I have peace. May I be filled with kindness." We can even say it a second time "May I have joy and happiness. May I be peaceful. May I be filled with kindness. Then, we think of someone we love and someone who loves us very much. We picture them in our mind and we say to ourselves "I share my love with someone important to me. I wish them joy and happiness. I wish them peace. I wish them kindness." We say it a second time, as we picture the person we love. I share my love with someone important to me. I wish them joy and happiness. I wish them peace. I wish them kindness." We breathe in. We breathe out. We open our eyes. Amen.

## **Lesson 2: Jesus is Betrayed**

### **We Read: Mark 14: 32-46 (The Message)**

*They came to an area called Gethsemane. Jesus told his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James, and John with him. He plunged into a sinkhole of dreadful agony. He told them, "I feel bad enough right now to die. Stay here and keep vigil with me."*

*Going a little ahead, he fell to the ground and prayed for a way out: "Papa, Father, you can—can't you?—get me out of this. Take this cup away from me. But please, not what I want—what do you want?"*

*He came back and found them sound asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, you went to sleep on me? Can't you stick it out with me a single hour? Stay alert, be in prayer, so you don't enter the danger zone without even knowing it. Don't be naive. Part of you is eager, ready for anything in God; but another part is as lazy as an old dog sleeping by the fire."*

*He then went back and prayed the same prayer. Returning, he again found them sound asleep. They simply couldn't keep their eyes open, and they didn't have a plausible excuse.*

*He came back a third time and said, "Are you going to sleep all night? No—you've slept long enough. Time's up. The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up. Let's get going. My betrayer has arrived."*

*No sooner were the words out of his mouth when Judas, the one out of the Twelve, showed up, and with him a gang of ruffians, sent by the high priests, religion scholars, and leaders, brandishing swords and clubs. The betrayer had worked out a signal with them: "The one I kiss, that's the one—seize him. Make sure he doesn't get away."*

**We Remember: we write letters to Jesus.**

## **Lesson 3: Jesus Teaches Us to Forgive**

### **We Read: Luke 23:33-43 (The Message)**

When they got to the place called Skull Hill, they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left.

Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing."

Dividing up his clothes, they threw dice for them. The people stood there staring at Jesus, and the ringleaders made faces, taunting, "He saved others. Let's see him save himself! The Messiah of God—ha! The Chosen—ha!"

The soldiers also came up and poked fun at him, making a game of it. They toasted him with sour wine: "So you're King of the Jews! Save yourself!"

Printed over him was a sign: this is the king of the jews.

One of the criminals hanging alongside cursed him: "Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! Save us!"

But the other one made him shut up: "Have you no fear of God? You're getting the same as him. We deserve this, but not him—he did nothing to deserve this."

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you enter your kingdom."

He said, "Don't worry, I will. Today you will join me in paradise."

### **We Remember: Open hands to forgive**

Soldiers punished Jesus and hurt him.. It is very sad. Jesus showed us love and courage by asking God to forgive those who hurt him. Throughout his life, Jesus chose to teach us about forgiveness and peace. Jesus did not hurt back when he was hurt. We can practice this now by practicing open hands. Here's how we do it. First, clench your fingers very, very tight, like this. This is what it feels like to be very tense and tight and angry. Now, practice opening your hands, one finger at a time, like this. This is what it feels like to be at peace, and relaxed. Jesus taught us to be at peace and we can practice this whenever we feel tense and angry.

## **Lesson 4: Jesus Dies**

### **We Read: Luke 23: 44-46 (The Message)**

*By now it was noon. The whole earth became dark, the darkness lasting three hours—a total blackout. The Temple curtain split right down the middle. Jesus called loudly, "Father, I place my life in your hands!" Then he breathed his last.*

### **We Remember: The lights turn off**

It is very sad when someone dies. We feel like the lights have been turned out, and it is very dark. Now we blow out our candles and turn off the lights, and sit in darkness.

### **Blessing**

God knows the depth of our worries.  
God knows the depth of our fears.

God knows what it is like to have a body, to live and to die.  
Yet God knows that death does not have the final word.  
God has a surprise in store for us,  
A miracle on the way.  
Now we wait and hope in darkness,  
But soon we will celebrate the Light of the World.