



'Worship at home' Good Friday March 29th 2024



As you come to worship, you might find **seven stones** to use for reflection and prayer, and lay them out in your worship space.

Hold the stones in your hand and feel their weight, heavy in your hand. Reflect on the weight of the burdens which fell upon Jesus, in the events of Easter.

Today, each of these stones will symbolise one aspect of Jesus' suffering and death.

**What burdens do you carry?
Name them before God, then place your stones down
trusting that God will carry them with you.**



As you read each of the following Scripture passages, choose a stone and hold it in your hand. Reflect on it as you pray, then place it down. Choose another stone for each Scripture.

The Stone of Betrayal: Matthew 26:20-25

When it was evening, Jesus and the twelve disciples sat down to eat. During the meal Jesus said, "I tell you, one of you will betray me." The disciples were very upset and began to ask him, one after the other, "Surely, Lord, you don't mean me?" Jesus answered, "One who dips his bread in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man

will die as the Scriptures say he will, but how terrible for that man who will betray the Son of Man! It would have been better for that man if he had never been born!" Judas, the traitor, spoke up. "Surely, Teacher, you don't mean me?" he asked. Jesus answered, "So you say."

Good News Bible

When have you felt you have let someone down, or betrayed their trust? When have you felt you let God down?



Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you ask God's forgiveness, then place your stone down knowing Christ has freed you from any guilt.

The Stone of Anguish: Matthew 26: 36-39

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. Grief and anguish came over him, and he said to them, "The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost

crushes me. Stay here and keep watch with me." He went a little farther on, threw himself face downward on the ground, and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me! Yet not what I want, but what you want." *Good News Bible*

When have you felt the weight of anguish and sorrow?

Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you name your sadness before God, then place your stone down as you pray for strength to follow God's ways for your life.



The Stone of Denial: Matthew 26:73-75

After a little while the men standing there came to Peter. "Of course you are one of them," they said. "After all, the way you speak gives you away!" Then Peter said, "I swear that I am telling the truth! May God punish me if I am not! I do not know that

man!" Just then a rooster crowed, and Peter remembered what Jesus had told him: "Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you do not know me." He went out and wept bitterly. *Good News Bible*

When have you acted out of self-interest instead of standing up for what you know to be true?

Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you consider other choices to be made, then place your stone down asking Christ to give you courage.

The Stone of Injustice: Matthew 27:19-23

While Pilate was sitting in the judgment hall, his wife sent him a message: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, because in a dream last night I suffered much on account of him." The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask Pilate to set Barabbas free and have Jesus put to death. But Pilate asked the crowd, "Which one of these

two do you want me to set free for you?" "Barabbas!" they answered. "What, then, shall I do with Jesus called the Messiah?" Pilate asked them. "Crucify him!" they all answered. But Pilate asked, "What crime has he committed?" Then they started shouting at the top of their voices: "Crucify him!"

Good News Bible

When have you taken the easy way, even if it meant being a part of injustice?

Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you reflect, then place your stone down asking Christ to help you show integrity, accountability and responsibility.



The Stone of Condemnation: Matthew 27:28-31,

They stripped off his clothes and put a scarlet robe on him. Then they made a crown out of thorny branches and placed it on his head, and put a stick in his right hand; then they knelt before him and made fun of him. "Long live the King of the Jews!" they

said. They spat on him, and took the stick and hit him over the head. When they had finished making fun of him, they took the robe off and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Good News Bible

When have you condemned or judged another for their choices or priorities?

Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you ask God to help you show mercy, then place your stone down recognising that Christ's grace covers you, and them.

The Stone of Abandonment: Psalm 22:1-2

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? I have cried desperately for help, but still it does not come. During

the day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer; I call at night, but get no rest.

Good News Bible

When have you felt alone and abandoned?

Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you give thanks for God's faithfulness, then place your stone down knowing that Christ walks with you, even when you do not feel his presence.



The Stone of Death: Luke 23:44-47

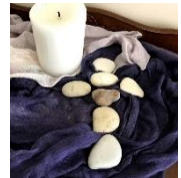
It was about twelve o'clock when the sun stopped shining and darkness covered the whole country until three o'clock; and the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two. Jesus cried out in

a loud voice, "Father! In your hands I place my spirit!" He said this and died. The army officer saw what had happened, and he praised God, saying, "Certainly he was a good man!"

Good News Bible

Allow yourself to be confronted by the reality of suffering, separation, and death in our world. Feel the weight of your stone in your hand as you pray for people and situations where there is destruction and devastation in our world.

Place your stone down with the others and arrange the seven stones into the shape of a cross. Even if they will be in your way, leave them there until Sunday, waiting...



Today we walk with Christ in the dark shadow of the cross, knowing we have weighed him down, our burdens crushed his shoulders, His suffering is for us, for us he endured death. Let us trust in God alone and move forward with courage as we walk the way of the cross together, knowing that God never abandons us or leaves us without hope.

adapted from Christine Sine <http://godspace-msa.com>