

# BEARING THE CROSS

# HELPING



## STATION VII: BEARING

Jesus Bears the Cross: John 19:6, [5-17]

## STATION VIII: HELPING

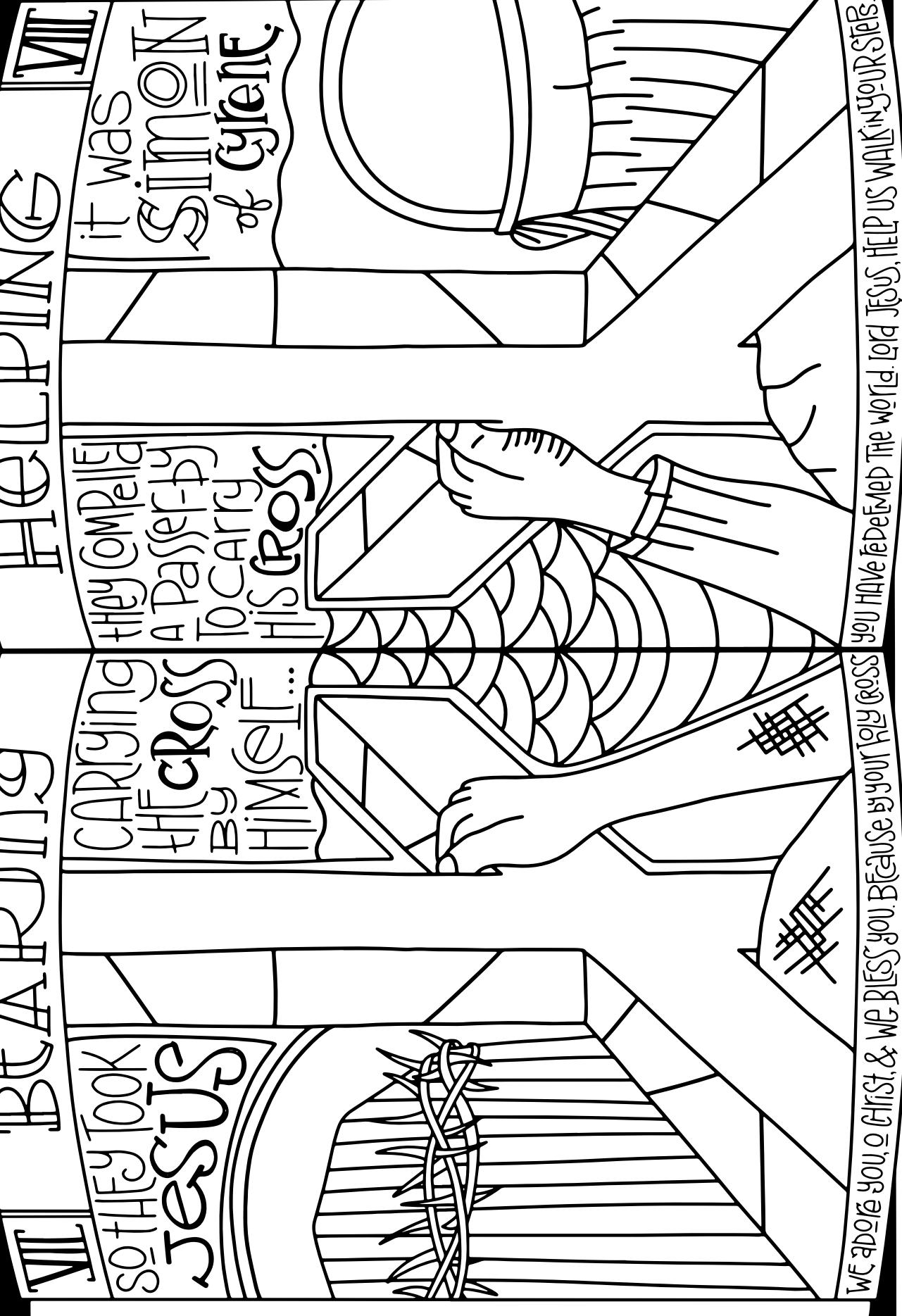
Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross: Mark 15:21

# BEARING

# HELPING

VII  
it was  
SIMON  
of Cyrene.

CARRYING THE CROSS BY HIMSELF...



WE ADORE YOU, O CHRIST, & WE BLESS YOU BECAUSE YOU HAVE DEFENDED US. YOU HAVE DEFENDED THE WORLD. LORD JESUS, HELP US WALK IN YOUR STEPS.

# STATION VII: BEARING

Jesus Bears the Cross: John 19:6, 15-17

# STATION VIII: HELPING

Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross: Mark 15:21



## Station VII: BEARING

Jesus Bears the Cross

### SCRIPTURE

*Take some time to read and reflect on this week's passage: John 19:6, 15-17.*

### REFLECTION FOR ADULTS

The permanent collection of Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) in Tacoma, Washington, houses a sculpture by Howard Dale titled *The Burden*. Crafted in bronze, the cross already has a weightiness about it as Jesus drags it behind him. But it is what is on the cross that makes it seem even heavier. Sculpted into the cross is two centuries worth of humanity, beginning with Adam and Eve at the bottom, and ending with modern-day firefighters at the top. In a very powerful way, it visually demonstrates the cosmic consequences of Jesus' decision to take up his cross, and carry it all the way to Calvary.

This seventh station seems to be a very lonely one. John puts it this way: "...and carrying the cross by himself, Jesus went out..." (John 19:17). Christians have argued for centuries over whether or not Jesus had to die. We have debated about the meaning of his death. And we have disagreed about its consequences. But what we do agree on is that somehow his solitary decision to take up the cross changed the course of history, and had eternal consequences for all of humanity.

The Orthodox tradition has long held that Adam and Eve had been waiting for centuries in their graves for the coming of the One who would rescue them from sin and death. Perhaps as Jesus dragged his cross through the city streets that day, it began to rip apart the hardened earth where Adam and Eve lay waiting for resurrection. And perhaps Jesus' decision to carry his cross right into the face of death that day is what inspires people like the firefighter in Dale's sculpture to walk into burning buildings to save others.

Take a look at the picture you are coloring. Jesus appears to be carrying his cross resolutely, with precision, to the place of salvation. There is no hesitation. He is not looking back,

because he knows that his lonely decision will save humanity, and inspire countless others to selfless acts of sacrifice.

## REFLECTION FOR CHILDREN

Jesus did not want to die. He wanted everyone to believe in God, and love each other. But many people would not listen to him. Because of that, the governor condemned Jesus to die on the cross. Jesus could have complained that people were turning against him. Instead, he picked up his cross to do what God was asking of him. Even though he didn't want to die, God was with Jesus all the way.

## DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN

- When have you been asked to do something for someone else that you thought was really difficult?
- What gave you the strength to do it?

## GOING DEEPER

- What do you think about Jesus' decision to carry the cross as having "cosmic consequences?"
- How does Jesus' decision to carry the cross inspire you to engage in acts of selfless love for others?



## Station VIII: HELPING

Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross

### SCRIPTURE

*Take some time to read and reflect on this week's passage: Mark 15:21.*

### REFLECTION FOR ADULTS

Parents are increasingly making volunteering a regular part of their routine, whether it's delivering meals to the homebound, planting vegetables in a community garden, or spending time with people at the local senior center. And when parents and children engage in these activities together, the results are overwhelming. One study looked at 47,000 children in 5th through 12th grades in public schools across the United States.<sup>3</sup> The study results indicated that children who served just one hour or more a week were less likely to be involved in at-risk behaviors than those who are not active in volunteering.

At this eighth station, we encounter Simon of Cyrene, the man whom the soldiers forced to help carry Jesus' heavy cross: "coming in from the country...was Simon...the father of Alexander and Rufus" (Mark 15:21). We don't know much about Alexander and Rufus. We don't know if they were children on the day of Jesus' journey to the cross, but imagine if they were. One tradition says they went on to become missionaries in the early Christian church. Some have even suggested that the Rufus mentioned by Paul in his letter to Rome (Romans 16:13) is Rufus, the son of Simon the Cyrene. Whatever the case, what we do know is that Rufus and his brother, Alexander, saw their father give a helping hand that day to someone in need. And that someone in need just happened to be the Son of God.

We should never underestimate the power of our own example in the lives of children. Whether we have children of our own, nephews and nieces, godchildren, or children of friends...they all look to us for examples of how to be kind and helpful to people most in need. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote that "the purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be

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<sup>3</sup> Benson, P. L. (1993). *The troubled journey: A portrait of 6th-12th grade youth*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well." Alexander and Rufus learned these traits from Simon.

Take a look at the picture you are coloring, and notice all the lines that intersect. As you color them in, imagine all the lives that have intersected with yours over the years because of your kindness. Maybe you can write some of their names on the lines in the cross.

## REFLECTION FOR CHILDREN

Jesus was very weak when the soldiers forced him to carry his own cross through the streets. As he walked toward the place where he would die, Jesus got very tired and couldn't carry his cross alone anymore. So the soldiers forced a man named Simon to help Jesus carry the cross the rest of the way. Simon's two sons, Alexander and Rufus, had to watch as their father helped Jesus.

## DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN

- How have the adults in your life given you examples of how you should care for others?
- What is one way that you could help someone today?

## GOING DEEPER

- How have you set an example of kindness for the children in your life?
- How would it change the way you helped people if every time you extended a helping hand to someone you imagined that they were Jesus?