

Hands-On Activities for Good Friday

(Engaging All Ages in a Tangible Reflection on the Cross)

1. Nail the Burdens to the Cross

- **Setup:** Place a wooden cross at the front of the church with nails and slips of paper.
 - **Activity:** Participants write down sins, struggles, or burdens and hammer them onto the cross.
 - **Alternative:** Instead of hammering, tape or pin them for a quieter reflection.
-

2. Stations of the Cross Walk (Interactive Prayer Stations)

- **Setup:** Create 7-14 stations with images, scriptures, and tactile elements.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Washing of Hands (Pilate's Decision)** – A bowl of water for washing hands.
 - **Crown of Thorns (Mocking of Jesus)** – A real or replica thorn branch to touch.
 - **Carrying the Cross (Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus)** – Have participants carry a wooden beam briefly.
 - **Torn Veil (Jesus' Death)** – A fabric curtain participants can tear a piece from.
-

3. Darkness to Light Candle Ritual

- **Setup:** Dim the sanctuary with several candles.
- **Activity:**
 - Start with all candles lit.
 - As scriptures are read about Jesus' suffering, extinguish a candle one by one.
 - The last candle (representing Christ) is extinguished at the reading of His last breath.

- Everyone leaves in silence.
-

4. Holding the Weight of the Cross (Stone Reflection)

- **Setup:** Provide small stones with "forgiven," "grace," or "It is finished" written on them.
 - **Activity:**
 - Hold a heavy rock while reflecting on the weight of sin Jesus bore.
 - Place the rock at the foot of the cross, symbolizing surrender.
 - Take a smaller, smooth stone home as a reminder of redemption.
-

5. Tearing the Veil

- **Setup:** Hang a large cloth (muslin, burlap) in a doorway or across an altar.
 - **Activity:**
 - After hearing "the veil of the temple was torn" (Matthew 27:51), allow participants to **tear the fabric** symbolizing access to God.
 - Use pieces later in Easter art or as bookmarks for Easter Sunday.
-

6. Red Handprints on the Cross

- **Setup:** Provide a wooden cross, red paint, and cloths for cleanup.
 - **Activity:**
 - Dip hands in red paint and press onto the cross, representing both sin and Christ's blood covering us.
 - Wipe hands clean as a symbol of grace.
-

7. Foot Washing (Servanthood & Humility)

- **Setup:** Bowls of warm water, towels, and chairs for participants.
 - **Activity:**
 - Participants can wash each other's feet as a reminder of Jesus' humility and love.
 - Alternatively, they can wash hands if foot-washing is uncomfortable.
-

8. Confession & Burned Paper Symbolism

- **Setup:** Provide paper and a fire pit or metal container for safe burning.
 - **Activity:**
 - Write sins or burdens on paper.
 - Burn them as a symbol of Christ taking our sins away.
-

9. The Torn & Mended Cloth (Brokenness & Redemption)

- **Setup:** Provide strips of cloth and a large cross.
 - **Activity:**
 - Each person **tears a strip of fabric**, symbolizing sin and separation.
 - On Easter Sunday, reattach or weave them together on a communal tapestry, symbolizing redemption.
-

10. Silence & Sound (The Last Words of Christ)

- **Setup:** A room with a **bell** or **drum** and an empty chair.
- **Activity:**
 - Each person sits in the chair, listens to the final words of Jesus, then rings a bell or taps the drum once before leaving in silence.