

Carrying the Cross

By Rich Nelson



At times, burdens are placed upon us that we do not ask for nor deserve. In this activity, learn about Simon of Cyrene and ponder how to know when to carry a cross and when to lay it down.

For

Teen Family

Season

Spring

Needed

Bible, Reflection Page worksheet (see last page), pens or fine-tipped markers



 by [Dominic's pics](#)

Prepare in Advance

Make a copy of the Reflection Page worksheet (see last page) for each person.

Activity Plan

1. Sit together and pray aloud:

Holy God, at times we are asked to shoulder more than our fair share of burdens. Help us to know when it is our time to carry these burdens and when it is our time to lay them down. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

2. Give each person a copy of the Reflection Page worksheet. Have two people read aloud Luke 23:26-32, alternating verses. Comment on how the people in power “seized” Simon and forced him to carry Jesus’ cross. Explain that Simon was from Cyrene, a city in northern Africa in what is now Libya. So Simon was likely a pilgrim to Jerusalem, a stranger in a strange land made to do a strange thing for Jesus, who may have been a stranger to him.
3. Discuss: When are we asked to carry the burden for other people? What is it like to carry the burden for someone who is a friend or loved one? What is it like to carry the burden for a stranger in need of a helping hand? In what ways can carrying a burden for someone be an important part of living as Jesus’ disciple?
4. Together, ponder this story some more: Do you think Simon knew what was going to happen to Jesus? Why or why not? Do you think Simon stayed to witness Jesus’ crucifixion? If so, what do you think he thought about this event?
5. Consider how some crosses need to be carried and other crosses need to be laid down as they are not our own. It can be difficult to tell the difference between the crosses that are ours to bear, at least for a little while, and those that are meant for someone else to bear. Use the space on the Reflection Page worksheet to write or draw about a burden you are bearing today—is it time to carry it or to lay it down?
6. Tell one another about what you have drawn or written. Assure each other that one of God’s great gifts to us is to never have to bear our crosses alone. Christ bears them with us. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s presence and ask Christ to help you bear your burdens.



Reflection Page

Luke 23:26-33

²⁶ And as they led him [Jesus] away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. ²⁸ But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ ³¹ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

³² Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

In the space below, write or draw about a burden you are bearing today—is it time to carry it or to lay it down?

