

Students reflect on, reenact Stations of the Cross

BY ROSEMARY MARTINEZ

During the weeks before Easter, many Christians reflect on the life of Jesus Christ through Stations of the Cross, a devotion that depicts 14 specific events that took place in the final hours before the crucifixion.

At Mary Immaculate, a Catholic school in Farmers Branch that draws students from Carrollton, Coppell, Irving and northward, the students engage in a spiritual journey during Lent with unique observances of Stations of the Cross.

Far from a dry reading of prayer and scripture, the students spend Wednesday mornings during Lent walking in Christ's footsteps through presentations of drama, song and interpretive movement mixed with scripture readings and spiritual reflections.

Leading the presentations are the seventh-grade drama students, who work with their speech and drama teacher, Debby King, and their music teacher, Vivian Marino, to learn and practice their parts in four days. The drama students select five scripts from a group of possibilities and work with King on customizing them to their talents, so the productions vary each year.

Other seventh-graders are invited to join the drama students in making the presentations.

"The students see their parts as service to the Lord," King said. "It requires commitment from the students and they take their parts very seriously. They understand that any misbehaving or fidgeting could distract the audience from keeping their minds on Christ."

Each of the five weekly presentations is different. The first



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Students at Mary Immaculate School in Farmers Branch perform an interpretation of Stations of the Cross.

MORE INFO

Mary Immaculate Catholic School is a kindergarten through eighth-grade elementary school within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas.

For more information, visit mischool.org.

in this year's series focuses on the symbols of Easter through a dramatization that includes students depicting Pontius Pilate, Judas and Roman soldiers and is entitled "At the Foot of the Cross."

The second presentation, "Mary's Heart," uses storytelling and interpretive movement to the song "Mary's Song" to tell of the stations using the voice of Jesus' mother.

"Watch the Lamb" is the third presentation, which uses song and pantomime to reflect upon the stations with a point of view from Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus carry his cross. The most traditional observance is done during the fourth week, when Father Michael Forge, the pastor of Mary Immaculate Parish, walks through each sta-

tion with the students. Scripture readings and a reenactment of the Last Supper is included in this presentation, which is entitled "The Passover."

The final presentation, "Living Stations," involves one student as Jesus Christ, who carries a large wooden cross upon his back from station to station. Other students re-enact each station, then freeze into a snapshot as further explanation of the station is read. This presentation ends with a dramatization of Christ's death on the cross and burial. The students who watch the presentations connect visually with the scripture teachings.

Seventh-grade student Glenn Williams was initially hesitant to take on the emotionally heavy role of Christ, but realized the opportunity to grow in his faith.

"I am grateful to carry the cross like Jesus did for us," Williams said, "and I will do it with pride and thankfulness in my heart."

Rosemary Martinez contributes to neighborsgo.com on behalf of Mary Immaculate Catholic School.