



CONTEMPLATIVE TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS

In The Ignatian Tradition

INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of the Toolkit

The toolkit is designed to help Primary Schools embrace some of the ancient wisdom of the Christian Tradition via the contemplative pathway.

The Need

As more and more young people become increasingly connected technologically, they are in danger of becoming less and less connected with themselves, their local communities, their world and their God.

Furthermore, the vast increase in screen time, and particularly the often unhelpful influence of social media, seem to be one of the main causes in the deteriorating mental health of so many young people. Indeed, many professionals and services working with young people in the UK would claim that Britain's young people are currently undergoing a mental health crisis, with schools and Young People's Mental Health Services often being stretched to their very limits in trying to meet the very real needs of the young people in their charge.

The Background

The Toolkit has emerged from a collaboration between **the Oxford Diocesan Board of Mission** team and **Board of Education** team, in order to think creatively about how school communities and church communities can cross-fertilize and grow together. It has derived wisdom from a particularly interesting model from **Townsville Diocese** in Queensland, Australia, as well as practices from *The Chemin Neuf* Community based in France, as well as many others, but is a new piece of work to support the objectives of The Oxford Diocese.

The Purpose

The Contemplative Toolkit is designed to meet a number of objectives

1. Contemplative practices have an established and recognised effect for **well-being, flourishing and good mental health**. Against a background realisation of the growing mental health pressures amongst our young people, the ancient Contemplative traditions of Christianity, like its secular and partially derivative cousin mindfulness, have a lot to offer.
2. The toolkit aims to draw on **Ignatian spiritual practices** which derive from St Ignatius of Loyola in the 16th Century, who in turn adopts and adapts practices from the Benedictine tradition, and indirectly, therefore, also the Desert Fathers. These practices are thus foundational to Christian formation over the centuries, and are distinctively Christian, but are also expressed in structures which are very porous and applicable to the non-Christian, and are therefore highly inclusive. This balance makes this particular form of Christian spiritual tradition particularly apposite for our Church Primary Schools.
3. The toolkit can also be a response to the **Growing Faith** agenda, which seeks to understand, nurture and foster the relationship between School communities, Church communities and pupil homes. The toolkit aims, therefore, to be a vehicle for sharing different forms of prayer between church communities and school communities, through collaboration of delivery and training across the church-school relationship. It is also hoped that, by creating tools which are very child-centred and easily memorable and communicable, that children might pass on an interest in some of these techniques to their parents/siblings/other family members.

4. A follow on to **BeSpace/Prayer Spaces UK**. Schools seem almost universally appreciative of Prayer Spaces coming into their schools for 3 days or a week, but are often left wondering how any of these practices could become more enculturated into school life. The toolkit is designed to be a follow-on to Bespace for the other 51 weeks of the year, thus normalising the benefits of the Prayer Space movement.

These exercises are, therefore, designed to respond to this acute need in young people. The church's distinctive response to the mental health needs of young people is to point to these most ancient pathways which have resourced, renewed and healed Christians for thousands of years, evolving over countless generations since the Desert Fathers developed these practices in the third Century AD in the Egyptian Desert.

The exercises in the toolkit are also designed to normalise the contemplative for our young people. The mindfulness movement, which has its origins in Buddhism, was developed in the 1970s by Jon Kabat-Zinn in the USA, and then found new prominence in the last decade in the UK through the work of Revd Mark Williams, Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Oxford. It has already begun to have a profound impact and effect on British society, but it does so using a secular and largely individualistic model. It seems important that the church should therefore also seek to normalise its own ancient contemplative practices and pathways for the benefit of young people's spiritual and mental health and flourishing. Whilst these are distinctively Christian techniques, unlike mindfulness, they are designed to be invitational, inclusive and useful to people of confident faith, uncertain faith, or no faith at all.

Lastly, it is worth noting that, whilst the motivation for so much of what clamours for our young people's technological attention is the building of commercial empires, the fuelling of consumptive greed and the accruing of profligate profit, the motivation to instil in young people a love of contemplative practice is nothing more and nothing less than a sincere desire to see them flourish as human beings, to find peace, hope, and to realise dreams and deep fulfilment. An experience or growth in faith may certainly be attendant upon this, and for most Christians they would say that this only leads to a deeper sense of flourishing, but it is not in itself the driving motivation for the advocacy for these practices.

The Delivery

The Toolkit has been divided into 5 separate exercises or practices, and this is designed to link in with the five days of the working school week.

The toolkit is designed to be used each day for 5 minutes within schools. There are countless stories of schools who have adopted Christian contemplative practices on a daily basis, and have found this to be transformative of the school culture and ethos as it helps children to centre and calm. The preferred slot for doing this seems to be after the lunchbreak playtime, but this is not prescriptive. Using these practices daily has the advantage of allowing them to become part of the lifeblood of the whole school community, embedding spiritual practice as a lens into a whole understanding of the self for each child, rather than being a spiritual appendage or sticking plaster. For this reason, each practice will aim to have a short 5-10 minute version, which is designed to be used daily on the same day of the week.

However, it would be naïve to think and assume that all schools will have either the time or the will to undertake such whole scale adoption, and so one might wish to consider using the 5 practices over the course of a half term, so that each of the practices would be visited and revisited 6 times each year. Alternatively, one might wish to offer a week of each term or half term in which each of the practices is used daily, a sort of high intensity spiritual week, and then use each practice once a week thereafter. The possibilities are endless, but do bear in mind that the more regularly that the exercises are practised, the more beneficial the spiritual and psychological impact will be for the pupils.

Lastly, there are also possibilities in who delivers the exercises, but generally it is intended that they should be deliverable by the classroom teacher or a Class Assistant, and/or volunteers from the local parish. To this end, the practices should be inclusive enough not to depend on the Classroom teacher having any personal faith. Equally, they

have been designed to be as user-friendly and easily deliverable as possible, so that the Classroom teacher would feel that she/he is receiving a resource, which takes very little planning or preparation, and to a certain extent runs itself. Once again the regular practice of each of the exercises would facilitate this sense of mastery and ease of use.

It is worth noting that the longer practices would offer particularly good opportunities for parish-school engagement and this is very much encouraged as a format to adopt. The 15 minute practice lends itself to a deeper exploration of each tool and would benefit from practitioners who have used them themselves for a period of time, hence potentially a member of the parish. The 30 minute practice would generally lend itself to being explored in a church context or explicitly Christian context, as part of the school's annual rhythm of church visits/parish engagement.

Design

It is proposed that the toolkit should have three modes or gears. Schools would be encouraged to adopt all three modes, particularly those schools who really wish to develop their spiritual practice, but realistically many schools might prefer to focus on just one or two of the modes.

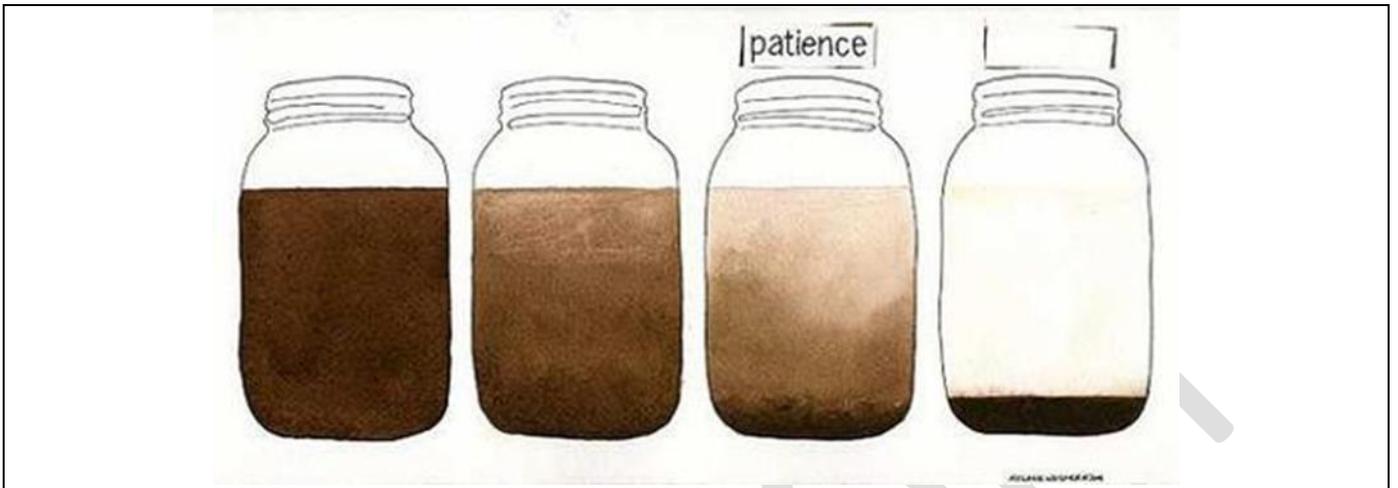
1. **A 5 minute daily practice**, which can be used every day as a calming and settling tool after a breaktime, at the start of the day before lessons begin, or at the end of the day in a summative fashion.
2. **A 10/15 minute weekly practice**, which might be used as a focus for an act of Collective Worship. This takes one of the 5 daily practices but focuses more closely and intentionally on it, in order to develop deeper understanding of its interpretative framework.
3. **A 30 minute – 45 minute version**, which might be used for a school trip to a local church, where the church community might host a simple but meaningful prayer/contemplative experience, a little like a more focused PrayerSpaces/Bespace installation. This might be more distinctively Christian than the daily practices, as the church context will lead to a deeper exploration of spiritual meaning.

Outline

The toolkit comprises 5 different tools, designed to fit within the shape of a normal 5 day school week. The practices are:

1. **Stilling** – teaching young people to adopt appropriate posture for becoming aware of surroundings and the self, with breathing techniques and the introduction of a simplified form of the examen.
2. **Noticing** – this is a cultivation of the Ignatian technique of noticing the presence and absence of God and the Good in your life. By noticing moments of 'desolation' and 'consolation' young people are encouraged to act, choose and seek consolation, that which energises and inspires.
3. **Dwelling** – this is the cultivation of the Benedictine practice of Lectio Divina (or holy reading of scripture), which was also thoroughly embedded in Ignatian spirituality. By giving young people time to dwell with short, carefully chosen and inclusive phrases from scripture, they are invited to choose words or phrases which they connect to personally. This can also be done by engaging the senses by inviting participants to enter imaginatively into a scene from scripture and drawing out personal meanings and reflections. The listening skill can then be further developed by asking each of a partner to summarise the meaningful phrase or word from his opposite number, and vice versa.
4. **Mending** – this is focused on the central Christian theme of reconciliation, which is also a prominent and pivotal feature of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and the focus here is on the cross as a symbol of both human brokenness and the power of redemptive expressions of love. Techniques may be borrowed from circle time activities/bespace stations. Currently the 'web of wool' technique is favourable
5. **Blessing** – This final tool is still being considered. Ignatius talks of the spiritual exercises leading to contemplation in action (i.e. they do not exist for their own sake, but rather to build 'the kingdom'). Consideration is therefore being given to blessing as the 5th tool. Having received blessing through the other 4 tools, how do we move forward to bless our families, homes, schools and communities...

5 MINUTE EXERCISE - STILLING



INTRODUCTION

1. Why?

We are more than our anxious thoughts, we are a complex and inter-related bundle of 'body, mind, soul, and Spirit', that list of course includes our will and emotions.

Slowing down and being present allows us to connect with ourselves, be open to each other, and for many people also to encounter God. This slowing down, being more than our sped-up thoughts and distractions benefits us as human beings enormously.

2. Teacher Instructions

Relax. This is not all down to you, in fact you are part of the receiving.

Do think about creating a space where the group can relax into this. It will probably be best to have pupils sitting on chairs where possible. If pupils are seated on chairs it would be wise to face the chair so that it is not angled towards another person, so they are not tempted to distraction. (This will be important for the children in the class.)

Encourage everyone to clear the decks, so that you create a calm and peaceful space. Make sure technology is off and out of reach for all. Breathe deeply for yourself, smile for yourself then gather the group together.

Now, gather the group...

3. Script

EITHER

a) AWARENESS EXERCISE

Smile, breathe and make eye contact with each person in the group

We are going to be practicing stillness together as it is a fantastic thing to do! It reduces our stress and our anxiety, and it opens us up to connecting with ourselves, with others, and for those who would like to it is an ancient way that people have connected with God through millenia and in different faiths. It is a deeper, happier way of being.

Please sit on a chair if possible. If not, please sit cross-legged on the floor.

We are human beings not human doings. You are special and beautiful in a way that only you can be.

PAUSE and once again, Smile, breathe and make eye contact with each person in the group

Could I invite you all to sit comfortably and in a way that is balanced and upright leaning neither forward nor backwards. Place the soles of your feet on the ground. Push your bum back in the seat. Try to hold your back straight. Release your shoulders and imagine the cares of the world sliding off them and dropping to the floor. Balance your head on your neck so that it nether drops forward nor falls backwards. This is important to stop you feeling drowsy. Place your hands in your lap, fingers lightly touching each other, or palms up on your knees. Close your eyes.

PAUSE

Start becoming aware of your breathing. Is it rapid? Is it slow? is it regular? Is it deep or shallow? As you breathe out, imagine exhaling all that feels difficult, heavy or difficult about the day. Let it go. As you breathe in, inhale the sweet air, and you might like to ask God for the gift of his Holy Spirit.

Breathe slowly: IN: 1... 2... 3... OUT: 1... 2... 3...

PAUSE

Now become aware of the noises around you in the room. What are they like? Loud or quiet, sharp or gentle. What about the noises beyond the room in the world outside? Are they man-made noises of cars, trains or voices? Are they the voice of nature: birdsong, the wind in trees?

PAUSE

What about the noise in you? Try to become aware of what you are thinking about and feeling today. What is on your mind? Are you worried or concerned? Are you relaxed and peaceful? Are you thinking about the past, or the future, or are you caught up in the present? Notice but don't judge yourself. Just let the sediment fall quietly in your mind. Be still.

PAUSE

We are human beings not human doings. You are special and beautiful in a way that only you can be.

PAUSE

Open your eyes, come back into the room, have a stretch.

[If the group can handle this then Encourage everyone to smile, and to make eye contact with the room, if not then you as the leader pause, smile and make eye contact.]

PAUSE

Thank you for participating.

AND/OR

b) THANK YOU, SORRY, PLEASE EXERCISE

Could I invite you all to sit comfortably and in a way that is balanced, leaning neither forwards nor backwards. (We create a lot of strain on ourselves when we are using muscles to support the head rather than our head being supported down through the spine).

Place your hands on your knees palms upwards.

Now Close your eyes.

We are human beings not human doings. The Bible says, "Be still and know that I am God" (pause)

Now, simply Smile and Breathe

PAUSE

Be aware of your breathing, feel the breath coming in, and your breath going out. Try and lengthen the in breath breathing not just from your chest, but from your belly. Try and lengthen the out breath too (pause) and repeat.

When you are ready, you might like to place your hands facing palms upwards on your knees. Think about the good things you have received from today, from the weekend, from the last week. You are invited to thank God for these gifts which he has placed into your hands.

KEEP SILENCE 1 minute

Next place your hands facing palms down on your knees. Imagine you are now dropping things. These might be things which feel heavy, tiring, shameful, burdensome, difficult or awkward to carry. Let go of them and you might like to ask Jesus to take them for you, to share them with you or to free you from them. Let go and let God... carry your burdens. This is a meaning of the cross.

KEEP SILENCE 1 minute

Finally turn your hands palms upwards on your knees, ready to receive. What would you like to receive in the rest of the day, or the days ahead? What do you long for in the deepest core of your being? You are invited to bring this to mind, or to offer it to God

KEEP SILENCE 1 minute

We are human beings not human doings. The Bible says, "Be still and know that I am God" (pause)

Open your eyes, come back into the room, have a stretch

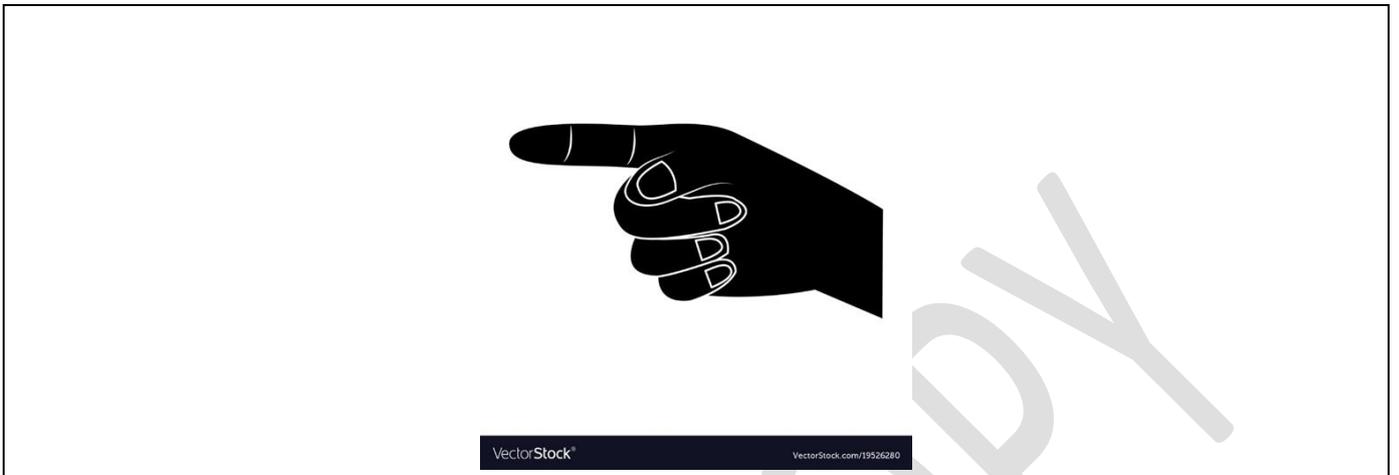
[If the group can handle this then Encourage everyone to smile, and to make eye contact with the room, if not then you as the leader pause, smile and make eye contact.]

Thank you for participating

4. To be aware of

Feel what is happening in the room, if it was too much for the group ... that is OK. If more quiet/space/time is needed That is ok, if the group need to break the tension with laughter or silliness That is also OK. Notice how you feel

THE 5 MINUTE EXERCISE - NOTICING



INTRODUCTION

THE EXAMEN

1. Why

The Examen is a technical name for one of the Spiritual Exercises developed by St Ignatius of Loyola. It is premised on noticing these apparently small and insignificant details of life, but realising that actually they are incredibly powerful signifiers of personal, spiritual and community truth.

The Examen can take different forms, but generally speaking it invites us to notice times of **consolation**, when we feel energised, alive and full of life and possibility, as well as inviting us to notice times of **desolation** when we feel empty, drained, hopeless and lacking in energy and vitality. If Jesus invites us to live life in all its fullness, then this would be Consolation, and its opposite would be Desolation.

The Examen allows us **to attend** quietly, reflectively and prayerfully on noticing these dynamics of consolation and desolation in our lives. This practice is a central tenet of Ignatian spirituality (on which much of this toolkit is built). Ignatius, when asked which of the many spiritual exercises he thought was of greatest value, answered without hesitation “the Examen!”.

2. Leader Instructions

Pay attention to space, and gather the group so they are sitting comfortably and attentively.

We will be using our fingers to symbolize each stage in doing the examen carefully and thoughtfully.

3. Script

**Smile, breathe and make eye contact with each person in the group
hold stillness for a few seconds**

1. Could I invite everyone to make the thumbs up sign

The thumb denotes the good things and **gratitude**

What do you have to be grateful for today? Where do you feel you have been blessed today? What has added joy or hope, inspiration or fulfilment, meaning or peace to your life? Who or what have you taken for granted? What might you have overlooked? What, if taken away from you would make life poorer?

Silence 1 minute

We respond with the prayer or acknowledgment, 'Thank you'

2. Could I invite everyone to point with their **index finger**

The pointing asks the question **"where?"**

Withdraw a little from the busyness of the day. Take time to step into stillness.

Where you have seen God and profound Goodness in your day.

Silence 1 minute

3. Point to your **middle finger**

We are using this tallest finger to think about **things that stand out**, things to really notice.

Rewind the day, calling to mind the people I met, the situations encountered, the things I have seen or heard. There may have been moments which felt important at the time, but which recede now. Other things might have seemed insignificant at the time but have grown in importance now. If I were to write the Headline for today what would it actually be for me and my life.

Silence 1 minute

4. Look at your **fourth finger**, known as the 'Ring finger'.

This is in many ways **the weakest** finger

Where have I been at my least or weakest today, what might I liked to have done differently today?

Where was I not at my best? If I could rewrite the script for today, what might I rewrite? Is there something I have not done, which I should have done, are there things I have done which I shouldn't, or are there things I have done which hurt others which I might not have noticed during the day?

Silence 1 minute

We say or pray simply "sorry!"

5. Take hold of your **Little Finger** – the smallest finger

What **small changes** could I make?

The little finger provides balance as well when writing, typing, playing the violin or even holding a cup! Is there anything in your life which is out of balance and needs adjusting? (**pause**) Is there anything to be put right that it is in your power to do? (**pause**)

What do you need to do, or think, or say, which will make the changes big and small, to help you grow into being the person you are called to be?

Silence 1 minute

Amen

Smile, breathe and make eye contact with each person in the group (or invite the group to do this)

4. To be aware of

Take a moment to feel how the practice has affected you?

Reflect back to the group any changes in the group you perceive.

Sharing and talking around what we are grateful for

may be a good way of developing conversation out of this practice.

DRAFT COPY

THE 5 MINUTE EXERCISE - DWELLING



INTRODUCTION

1. Why?

To begin to be comfortable with slowing down, listening to and noticing within a Scriptural text.

To grow in confidence that even in a short time frame, space can be created for profound noticing and wondering.

To begin to encounter a way of being with and in Scripture that isn't about knowing the right answer or having lots of background knowledge about the subject. Instead the emphasis is on letting individual words or phrases resonate with you and then wonder why. Christians believe that this is often how God communicates with us through the Holy Spirit. Pay attention to the words and the way you respond to them.

2. Teacher Instructions

Dwelling in 5 Minutes – How to:

You'll notice the spacing of the text which enables words to be circled or underlined with plenty of spaces to write or draw ideas, questions, thoughts and noticings about the text.

Sample texts are provided, but please feel free to choose other appropriate texts too.

3. Script

I invite you to sit up, to centre yourselves as we have done with the other practices. (pause)

Smile, breathe and make eye contact with each person in the group.

In this session we are going to practice 'Dwelling in the Word' together. Give each person a sheet with the text on and have a pen. We're going to hear a piece of Scripture read out twice. As you're listening pay attention to the word or phrase that attracts their attention. You don't need to know or analyse why your attention is drawn to that phrase but the reason could be very clear to you. Wonder about the word or phrase. What do you notice about it? Does it remind you of another story, song, Scripture or picture?

PAUSE

After a pause I'll invite you to find someone else and in your pair you're going to give each other the gift of listening. Share together what each of you noticed. Do have a conversation about it if you'd like too! Do pay attention to what your partner shares because I'll be asking you to tell the group what you heard your partner say. But first, let's gather ourselves ready to listen to the scripture.

Would anyone like to read the text out for us? We need two readers. Thank you [name], you read first, and [name] you go second after a pause. If you're not sure how long the pause should be you can count to 30 or look at me for a signal.

PAUSE then reader 1.

PAUSE for 1 minute, then reader 2.

So, I invite you to find a partner and share what you each noticed, remember to listen well, and pay attention so you can share what you hear. You can write some notes down if it would help.

Give time for each person to share in the pair

Smile, breathe and make eye contact with each person in the group

5 MINUTE EXERCISE - MENDING



1. Why

We have Stilled, we have noticed and we have listened. All of these practices help us to live more deeply, and to step into practices that enable us to live as more than our thoughts and anxieties. Today we are exploring 'mending' Helping us to forgive others, and importantly ourselves in order to be freer. Forgiveness is a central theme of Christianity, and it is a liberating and universal human need.

2. Leader Instructions

This practice is only to be used if the group are in a place where you feel this would be safe to do. Follow the script

3. Script

Forgiveness is a central theme of Christianity, rooted in the love of the God who offers forgiveness. Forgiving ourselves, being forgiven, forgiving others is a practice of deep healing for us. As we explore this practice note that there is not a pressure to forgive, it may not be possible.

It is important too that we know that forgiveness is not saying what happened was ok, or that the person who hurt you was not to blame.

It is a way of helping us not to continue to be burned by what happened.

A wise person observed that, "Being resentful, they say, is like taking poison and waiting for the other person to die". Resentment, bitterness, and hate (of others or of ourselves) all work away at our insides, robbing us of joy and stopping us from being the human being we are meant to be.

Smile, breathe and make eye contact with each person in the group PAUSE

Pick up a pebble from the bowl.

Think of someone or something which has caused you pain. It may be a small thing which you have noticed today or last week, it may have left you feeling empty or drained. It might be someone close to you, or someone you don't know well at all (to start with, maybe not the person who has hurt you most).

(Pause)

Hold onto the Pebble

As you hold your pebble visualize the time you were hurt by this person or by this situation and feel the pain you still carry. It is a bit like being hit by a stone that someone has thrown at you.

Hold tightly to your unwillingness to forgive. Now, observe what emotion is present. Is it anger, resentment, sadness? Use your body as a barometer and notice physically what you feel. Are you tense anywhere, or do you feel heavy? Next, bring awareness to your thoughts; are they hateful, spiteful, or something else?

(Pause)

Let go of the Pebble

This stone that you are holding could be used as a weapon; it was thrown at you, and you could throw it back. But would that make anything better? How might it make things worse?

Really feel the burden associated with the hurt that lives inside you, and ask yourself:

"Who is suffering?"

(pause)

Have I carried this burden long enough?

(pause)

Am I willing to forgive?"

(Longer Pause)

If the answer is no, that's OK. Some wounds need more time than others to heal.

If you are ready to let it go now, silently repeat:

"Breathing in, I acknowledge the pain.

Breathing out, I am forgiving and releasing this burden from my heart and mind."

Continue this process for as long as it feels supportive to you.

(Hold silence for a while)

Place the Pebble

You might find it helpful to place the pebble down now.

You might like to make a little pile of pebbles which show that it is better to put the pebble down than it is to throw it back at someone or the world. A pile of pebbles or stones is sometimes called a cairn, and you often find them on top of mountains. They show people where to go and what the right way is.

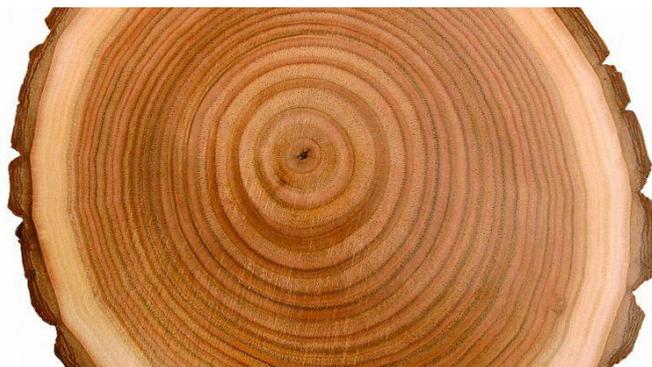
You might like instead to place your pebble at the foot of the cross. Jesus had a lot of stones thrown at him, which he didn't deserve, but he refused to stop forgiving people. Some of his last words from the cross were 'Father God, forgive them, because they don't understand what they are doing'. Jesus promises

In the Lord's Prayer that as we forgive others, so too God forgives us. I wonder if you feel the need to be forgiven too...?

We rest in the space where we are forgiven and journeying where we are able into forgiving. Amen

Smile, breathe and make eye contact with each person in the group (or encourage the group to do so)

5 MINUTE EXERCISE - BLESSING



(Smile, breathe and make eye contact with each person in the group)

Drop a stone into a glass bowl of water on top of a slice of tree trunk.

Notice how the ripples of water radiate away from the centre, like the circles of life which radiate from the centre of a tree trunk, each circle representing a small year of growth, which combine to build a tall, strong tree.

Like the pebble, or the tree trunk, we are now going to hold people in mind starting with the centre, ourselves and then radiating out further to the class, family and friends, and then even our enemies (those that we struggle to love or like) and all creation.

PAUSE

May I be well and free, safe and happy. Hold yourself in mind, your strengths and weaknesses, your successes and failures, but most of all your inner goodness. You are special and beautiful in a way that only you can be.

You might also like to experience God's blessing upon you. If so, these words are for you: May I ever experience God's grace, love and light. And may I be blessed as a beloved child of God.

(Stillness for 30 seconds)

May **you** be well and free, safe and happy. Hold each other in mind, your strengths and weaknesses, your successes and failures, but most of all your inner goodness. You are all special and beautiful in a way that only you can be.

You might also like to pray God's blessing upon those around you. If so, these words are for you: May **you** ever experience God's grace, love and light. And may **you** be blessed as beloved children of God.

(Stillness for 30 seconds)

May my **family and friends** be well and free, safe and happy. Hold them in mind, their strengths and weaknesses, their successes and failures, but most of all their inner goodness. They are special and beautiful in a way that only they can be.

You might also like to pray God's blessing upon your family and friends. If so, these words are for you: May my **family and friends** ever experience God's grace, love and light. And may my **family and friends** be blessed as beloved children of God.

(Stillness for 30 seconds)

This part is hard, but very important. If it feels too heavy, you don't have to do it.

May my **enemies** be well and free, safe and happy. Hold them in mind, their strengths and weaknesses, their successes and failures, but most of all their inner goodness. Although they might be hurtful or unkind to you, they can also be special and beautiful in a way that only they can be.

You might also like to pray God's blessing upon your enemies. If so, these words are for you: May my **enemies** ever experience God's grace, love and light. And may they be blessed as beloved children of God.

(Stillness for 30 seconds)

May **all things** be well and free, and safe, peaceful and at ease. Hold an aspect of the world, or all creation, in your mind in all its beauty and ugliness, but most of all their goodness. Creation is special and beautiful in a remarkable and powerful way.

You might also like to pray God's blessing upon the world and creation. If so, these words are for you: May **all things** ever experience God's grace, love and light. And may **all things** be blessed as God's beloved creation.

(Stillness for 30 seconds)

Amen