

## PRACTICE 4: MENDING

### 15 MINUTE EXERCISE - MENDING

#### The Web of Relationship

All children are to be seated in a big circle if possible. If not possible, then it might work with children sitting on table groups of 8 or so.

#### Introduction

Introduce the task by saying: A central part of what it means to flourish and live deeply as a human being, is being in good relationships with others. It might be with one particular special friend or friends, or it might be with a bigger group, it might be with one member of your family, or a larger family group.

Sometimes good relationships are easy. I wonder if you remember a time, recently or a while ago, when a friend/s, classmates or family and you were all playing happily together. Close your eyes and call that to mind now. How did you feel? How do you think others felt and why?

#### PAUSE

Sometimes good relationships are not easy. I wonder if you remember a time, recently or a while ago, when relationships between you and a friend/s, classmates or family were not so good. Close your eyes and call that to mind now. How did you feel? How do you think others felt and why?

#### PAUSE

What, if anything, made the situation better?

#### PAUSE

We are now going to create a visual image of our relationships network. The ball of wool is going to be passed (gently) from person to person round the circle.

The string represents our relationships. Don't throw the string only to best friends, because we have relationships with everybody in the class, even those we find it harder to get along with and those we don't play with.

A web of relationships can be very positive, because it holds everyone together and can make us feel safe. If I throw a cuddly toy or an inflatable ball into this web, do you think it would be able to hold them?

Our networks of relationships can hold each other in hard times too; they can make us feel safe and loved. They can also be great in times of celebration as we all do things together. We can try a Mexican wave with the string.

#### ACTION

But at other times the web of relationships can come under real strain. I wonder what sorts of things might put pressure on the network?

#### PAUSE

I wonder what happens if somebody leaves the group?

**PAUSE**

What if we all feel under pressure? Take half a step back. I wonder whether it would be easier to break the web now?

**ACTION**

What if we all feel sad for some reason? Take a step forward. I wonder, how does the web feel now?

**ACTION**

What if one person treats another person unkindly? One person takes two steps backwards. I wonder how this might affect the whole group?

**ACTION**

What if one person excludes another person?

**ACTION: Cut the string.**

I wonder how that might feel for the person who is excluded? I wonder, how the person who cut the string might feel? I wonder, how the rest of us might feel?

**PAUSE**

Can anything be done to make things better?

**PAUSE and let the class think....**

I wonder whether we could mend the string and the relationship?

**PAUSE**

I wonder, what sort of things you might need to do to mend the relationship? Would saying sorry help?

**PAUSE**

Would mending things and trying to make things better work?

**PAUSE**

Would including the person work?

**PAUSE**

Could we tie these two bits of string together again work? Would it mend the string?

**PAUSE**

Jesus was known as a healer and mender of relationships that were broken, between individual humans and groups of humans. He believed that relationships could always be mended, even when things had gone badly wrong. He also believed that we harm the relationship between ourselves and God when we harm each other.

The cross was the place where God experienced the harm humans cause each other and the harm we cause him most deeply.

But it was also the place where God promised to keep on fixing those relationships when he said from the cross: "Father forgive them for they don't know what they're doing."

No break in relationship is unmendable for God, and Jesus wants us to believe the same. We can always mend our relationship with God – the vertical line of the cross – and we can always mend our relationships with each other if we both want to and try to – the horizontal line of the cross.

As a reminder of the fact that we are 'in this together' and that every relationship in the class affects everyone, and as an expression that we all try to include and support each other, we will now cut the wool into friendship bands which we can wear round our wrists. If you would rather not do this, then you could tie it somewhere else instead.