

30-45 MINUTE EXERCISE – Noticing

WEIGHT AND LIGHT

This exercise would best be done in church, or in an area which feels spacious and where pupils can spread themselves out to be on their own, but similarly not be too distant from others.

You will need:

- A good sound system/speaker
- A few large bowls of medium/large sized stones
- Enough electric candles for each child to have their own
- Access to music tracks on Spotify or similar medium.

- 1) Remind pupils about **the 5-finger Examen** and what each finger signifies
- 2) Use the 15 Minute Exercise, **Spacious and Creative Noticing**
- 3) Once you have completed the Spacious and Creative Noticing exercise,
 - a. Start by explaining the distinction between Weight (you might also call this Desolation or Shadow) – namely the things which feel heavy, which drain us or leave us feeling empty or disconsolate – and Light (you might call this Consolation or Energy) – namely those things which make us feel energised, hopeful, or positive about life and the world.
 - b. Invite each child to pick up a stone from one of the bowls at the front of the room/in front of the altar. They are invited to sit in the space with the stone in their lap, feeling its weight. They are invited to spend time thinking about the things in life which drain them, empty them, and make them feel desolate and less than what they might want to be and are.
 - c. There should be some reflective and soulful music on in the background. *Allegrì's Miserere Mei* (Psalm 51 in Latin) works well, but anything suitable can be used which will aid contemplation of some of the more difficult aspects of life.
 - d. After 3-5 minutes (depending on age group) invite the pupils to bring their stones up to the front or towards the altar and to lay them down thoughtfully or purposefully, as if they are lying down these burdens which drag them down.
 - e. Invite them instead to pick up a candle and carry it back to where they were previously sitting.
- 4) As pupils sit with their candle
 - a. Invite them to focus on the candlelight, watching it flicker. The flame consumes energy, just like carrying the stone, but it also gives a sense of warmth and light. Pupils are invited to spend time thinking about the things in life which bring life, joy, hope and possibility: things which make them feel consoled and more how they want to be.
 - b. The Paschal Candle (if in church) can be lit at this point, signifying that Christian consolation resides ultimately in the hope of the resurrection – God's YES in the face of the world's NO.

- c. The music in the background should again be reflective but with a more positive mood. Sigur Ros's track *Hoppipolla* works well for this, or Arvo Part's *Spiegel im Spiegel* could work well, as both are quietly uplifting.
 - d. The pupils are invited to come up and to place their candles on top of their stones, signifying that consolations are ultimately more life-giving and transformative than desolations, though both are valuable signposts in aiding us to become more fully ourselves.
- 5) End the exercise with the whole class and staff gathered around the altar or the front of the space to pray together, to receive a blessing or to spend time in thoughtful silence before leaving.