

## 5 MINUTE EXERCISE - MENDING

### 1. Why

We have Stilled, we have noticed, and we have listened. All 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 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.”

**Hold silence for a while**

### **Place the Pebble**

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

Make a small pile of pebbles to 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 they are often found on top of mountains. They show people where to go and what the right way is.

Perhaps you don’t feel able to forgive yet, and if that is the case then that is OK; the path to forgiveness can often be a long and difficult one, and some say that forgiveness of painful hurts is an ongoing struggle.

If you are not able to forgive or let go of your hurt at the moment, then why not place your pebble back in the bowl. Sometimes it takes more courage to say: “I can’t forgive this yet” than pretending that we can and burying the hurt deep down inside us.

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 journey 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).**