



RECOVERY SPACES

Creating a Space for People to Process their Experiences



Guideline for Creating a Space

The recovery phase may well be a timely opportunity to revitalise the use of your school corridors, prayer corners and grounds as spaces for personal reflection.

Recovery is a process and will take time, so encouraging people to return to ponder or pray over a number of occasions will be a good thing.

It will take some work, imagination, prayer and commitment to use some of the ideas here and to keep them sorted and stocked up, or maybe use one each week for a while. However, they may well be transformative. These ideas could be something to work on with your school ethos or prayer teams, allowing the young people to take the lead. Alternatively, your local church might be keen to come and support you with hosting and leading prayer spaces.

Obviously, everything will need to be done in a COVID safe way according to the guidelines at the time. Make sure there are clear instructions for how to use each space safely if this is not obvious.

These are only starter ideas and may well prompt things that are much more appropriate to your school community, so use them as you will. Just a few pointers:

1. The prayer stations will each need a clearly visible poster to guide participants through.
2. If you provide the props, set them out in such a way that people only need touch one of each thing. With pens, ask them to pick one up at the start and use throughout the experience, and then put in a box at the end for sanitising for the next day/ quarantining – or bring their own. If you are doing multiple prayer stations, one safe way to do this might be to provide a pack for people to pick up at the start of the journey through with everything they need for all the activities to touch or hold. This would work well for outdoor prayer stations if you are setting this up for use by the families.
3. If you are setting up a series of reflective spaces outside, you might consider advertising to parents the opportunity to participate in a 'restoration walk' (or whatever you call it). You might want to consider the possibility of signing up to slots, or offering it on different days to different year groups, so you can manage the flow of people and keep it COVID-secure. It will depend on your outdoor space and the size of your school community.

Please do send us your ideas so that we can update this guide with others ways of using our spaces to provide people with a place to process their experience of the pandemic.



With the likelihood of a mental health 'tsunami' after lockdown, there will be considerable scope and need for schools – often such a focal point for the local community – to provide space for reflection and recovery. They can play an important part in helping people process their experience of the pandemic.



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LEAD ON



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PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PASS ON TO OTHERS

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Ideas for Stations

These ideas have been organised under the familiar progression, common throughout these resources, of: remember, reflect, recuperate. You may have one space that you refresh from week-to-week, slowly progressing from a few remember activities on to reflect and closing with recuperate. Or, it might be that you set up a series of prayer stations where pupils can journey between these stages more fluidly.

[Prayer Spaces in Schools](#) (PSiS) have got a huge wealth of ideas that are tried and tested. Where we are signposting to their ideas, we have simply given the title and a one line description, linking (click on the underlined word) to their website for further details. In order to access this, you may need to first log on and [register for free](#) with them.



Remember

These activities have been selected to help participants to reflect on thanksgiving and lament. Try and include both elements.

THANKSGIVING WALL

Use long strips of wallpaper (wrong side out) stuck to a wall as a graffiti wall, some low enough for children and others high enough for adults. Invite them to write or draw their thanksgivings on post-its from their pack and then add them to the graffiti wall. On the instruction sheet, include some verses about giving thanks.

UNDER MY UMBRELLA (PSiS)

An [umbrella](#) covers and protects us. This activity encourages participants to ponder when they have felt vulnerable and where protection has come from.

LIFELINE (PSiS)

When a mountaineer falls or someone is drowning, they may be thrown [a lifeline](#). This space uses this imagery to help people reflect on others who have been a lifeline to them – both people and God – and to give thanks.

REMEMBRANCE TREE/BOARD

Many schools have a remembrance tree or area where you can hang objects that remind you of a deceased friend or relative. Other schools have created a remembrance book or make use of a display board in the school entrance. Offer people a way of participating with this e.g. a slip of paper to draw or write about a loved one who has passed away. Provide place for people to lay flowers or light candles, if you can do that safely. Have a laminated prayer in this area that

people can say for themselves. You might be able to partner with the local church and offer to have these people remembered at a bereavement service, if the church is hosting one.

TORN CLOTHES (PSiS)

In the Bible people [tore their clothes](#) as a sign of anguish or grief. Use strips of torn cloth or paper in this prayer space as a way to reflect on grief. Could be used for any grief, not just the bereavement of a friend or family member.

EMPTY CHAIR (PSiS)

Set out an [empty chair](#) to represent the empty space in our lives, left by a dead person. See link for an activity writing luggage labels to acknowledge the pain that this empty space has left.

HURTING GLOBE

Set out a globe and around it have images from around the world of how coronavirus has been experienced elsewhere. Invite pupils to fill in a piece of paper cut into a tear drop with a reflection of what might have been the hard experiences that others have endured elsewhere.

Reflect

FORGIVENESS

There will be things that we all regret and are sorry for in this past year – times when we have not been the best versions of ourselves. Have some stones and a bowl of water. People can pick one, hold it as they say sorry to God, then put it in the water as a sign of receiving God's forgiveness.

AUTMN LEAVES (PSiS)

Helping participants use the seasons to recognise that there is a [season for change](#) – which can feel hard, or good. Add to the online PSiS activity by inviting people to take a leaf (could be a paper left cut out) and think about what they want to do differently this next year in the light of what they have learned during the pandemic. Then take the leaf home to remind them.

THE CAGE (PSiS)

Sometimes we can feel [trapped](#) – by our feelings or circumstances. This prayer space helps pupils to process this.

WHERE IS THE LOVE? (PSiS)

This activity will need a bit of adapting. It creates a space to think about where the helpers and the kindness has been during COVID. Write your A4 poster to accompany this poster to encourage people to [think beyond](#) the obvious key workers. Can participants also broaden their thinking and ponder how kindness has been reflected around the world between nations.

BE THE LIGHT (PSiS)

A scratch paper activity that encourages reflection on where we can [be the light](#) for others.

Recuperate

This section may feel quiet self-orientated. But having completed a season of 'recovery', there will then come a time of 're-imagining' when we consider what are the big lessons of COVID and how do we want to reshape things moving forwards. There will be other resources in the near future to support this. In the meantime, the purpose of this section is to enable schools to close off the 'recovery' season strongly and not move on too soon.

WHAT FUN!

Arrange a display that evokes ideas of lovely things we'd all enjoy – a table and chair with coffee mugs and cake, several pairs of walking boots, sports equipment, a football shirt and scarf, some pictures of beautiful scenery, film magazine or theatre programmes on the table, suitcases to one side and so on. Give people a luggage label and encourage them to fill it with ideas of things they are going to do to restore a sense of well-being. Luggage labels can then be tied on to add to the scene so that the ideas can be shared.

VERSES OF HOPE

Display laminated sheets of card with Bible verses on of hope and encouragement. Invite people to take a photo of one that means something to them and read it often. Younger pupils (without phones) could select a card to take home with them.

TRANSFORMING BUTTERFLIES (PSIS)

Change is not always easy, but this [butterfly activity](#) will help to cast it in a positive light.

