



Living Our Values in Lockdown



RECONCILING



Reconciling and reconciled churches actively foster reconciliation and healing in the name of Jesus, both in the relationship to our heavenly Father and to each other.

- › **Make a list of any individuals with whom you are experiencing some kind of tension or relationship breakdown.** Write each name down, and think of a good memory that you have which involves that person: something fun you have done together, something they do or say that makes you laugh, an act of kindness that they showed you in the past. Write this memory down under their name. You've created a visual aid of the positive impact that this person has had on your life.
- › **Take some time to reflect on the cause of the relationship breakdown,** and - here's the difficult part - reflect on anything you may have done that could have contributed to the situation. Rarely is any falling out totally one party's fault. There is often something that we could have done differently - even if it's a small thing - that might have led to a different outcome. Perhaps share your reflections with a trusted member of your Church family. They may be able to provide another perspective that you hadn't considered.
- › **Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to help you.** Ask Him to give you the strength to forgive; the humility to take responsibility for anything you may have done to hurt the other party; the courage to reach out and reconnect with them; and the patience to wait for a response. Perhaps invite people from within your Church family to pray for you. You don't have to disclose names or details for their prayers to make a difference.
- › **Send the other party a short message, simply enquiring after their wellbeing.** There is no need to mention previous events or causes of the relationship breakdown. Just keep it simple and focused on the current circumstances. For example: "Good morning, I just wanted to check if you are keeping well during this period of lockdown. I hope you've been able to stay safe and comfortable. Thinking of you." This can be the biggest and most challenging step. Give yourself credit for doing something that is difficult.

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- › **Take time to think about how you would like the relationship to be in the future.** If full reconciliation were to take place, would you want things to go back to the way they were, or would you like there to be certain boundaries in place? Would you want to revisit the factors that led to the breakdown, together with the other person? Or would you prefer to leave everything in the past? There aren't wrong or right answers here. But this will help you to shape your reconciled relationship in a healthy way.
- › **Use this experience as a lens to consider your own relationship with God.** Think about the courage and humility it required for you to take the first steps towards reconciliation. God took it upon Himself to initiate reconciliation with us, even though this was the rare occasion where the cause of the relationship breakdown was totally our fault. He extended an olive branch to us, in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. Try and respond to God's olive branch the way that you hope the other party in your relationship will respond to yours: with kindness, gratitude and a desire to be restored.

Useful links

- › www.scottishconflictresolution.org.uk – tips and ideas to help all kinds of relationships in conflict
- › www.theforgivenessproject.com – amazing and inspiring stories of people around the world who have forgiven others in very difficult circumstances
- › <https://www.theforgivenessproject.com/education-resources> – forgiveness education resources for teenagers (and others)
- › <https://www.hopechannel.com/au/learn/forgive-to-live> – An online forgiveness seminar created for the Australian Hope Channel

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