

# EXERCISE 2

## Postcards

- This exercise may be used as a stand-alone activity but the group will gain more from this if they have already done Exercise 1 in this study pack. It also builds on the basic go-round Introductions (see p.3).

### Time needed

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70–90 minutes, depending on length of final group sharing *[excluding pre-session preparation]*

### Materials needed

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- series of images, collected beforehand, sufficient to allow choice *[see explanation below]*
- flipchart paper and felt markers, or scrap paper and pens/pencils for the last part of the exercise

### Pre-session preparation

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- in advance of the session ask participants to collect a variety of images *[see explanation below]*
- before the session begins, spread the images face-up round the room (on tables if you have them, or on chairs or even on the floor, as long as people don't have difficulty bending).

### General information and instructions for facilitator

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#### How the 'postcards exercise' works:

You will need a variety of images for this exercise. You can use postcards, or you might (if you prepare far enough ahead) be able to find images from colour magazines, newspapers, greetings cards, photographs, etc. Many people who work regularly as facilitators have such a resource that they've collected over time. It's a very useful collection to assemble as it can be used in many settings.

In this situation, you might like to ask the group to help you. Starting two or three weeks before this session is to be run, ask everyone to find images and bring them.

You need varied images – representational, abstract, cartoon, photographic, 'pleasing', 'challenging'; people, plants, animals, reproductions of well-known paintings, landscapes, seascapes, buildings, still life, countryside, cityscapes... etc. You might want to include also a few that aren't an image but a very short quotation. (Not more than a couple of lines at most). You might have a few with single words on such as peace, joy, light and so forth, but this exercise is primarily about images rather than words.

You will need a large number of images for this activity – at least twice the number of cards as people in the group.

## Activity

Once the cards are laid out ask people to walk round, slowly, looking at them all, and then choose one that speaks to them of their spiritual life at present. (You might suggest that they 'let one of the cards choose you'.)

Give people time to walk around, think about it, and consider which one calls to them. If two people want the same card they can go and sit together.

Once everyone has picked a card arrange the group into either 2s or 3s (or, in a very small group, you can do this as a whole group).

Now give each person in the group some time to explain to the other people/person what it was about the card that prompted them to choose it. About 5 minutes per person is about right.

As a secondary part of the exercise you could ask people to share in the whole group some of the key words that emerged for them. A good way of doing this, which doesn't put people too much 'on the spot', is to give each pair or small group a piece of flip-chart paper and a felt pen; ask them to put the words on the sheet (allow about 5 minutes for this). The small groups can then share their flip-chart sheets in the whole group, which takes the spotlight off the individual.

At the end, you can ask in the whole group if there is anything they noticed about the process of doing the exercise that they would like to share with everyone – play the timing of this by ear.

## Close

Close with a few moments silence, and then maybe a cup of tea together to enable people to talk informally.