

Could your faith space have a conversation about touch?

Any discussion could re-traumatise someone who has had bad experiences in the past. Give advanced warning of any discussion and be prepared to provide zero touch pastoral care if necessary.

Ezekiel 34, v4-5, v23-25
The role of shepherds.

How does this inform our responsibility of pastoral care?

Luke 8, v43-48
A woman touches Jesus' garment.

What does this say about the significance of touch?

1 Corinthians 16, v20
Greet each other with a holy kiss.

What forms of touch are culturally appropriate in our context? Are there other forms of greeting we could use?

“May I...?”



NO touch without permission

Unwanted touch can re-traumatise someone who has experienced sexual abuse.

Some people simply don't like being touched and some people with sensory processing differences may be uncomfortable with touch or find it distressing.

The most loving thing you can do is to **ask permission BEFORE** you touch anyone.

Creating safer spaces for EVERYONE

“MAY I?”

Let's talk about touch.....



... And create safer spaces for everyone

Is My Faith Space a SAFE Space?

I wanted to attend a local church but they hugged everyone at the door. I haven't been back.

I dread it in church when they share The Peace - I don't like shaking hands. I try to avoid eye contact and hope that no-one will approach me!

This person held my hand to pray for me. I didn't hear what they said, I just kept panicking about how I could get my hand away without offending them.

Someone came up behind me and put their hands on my shoulders. They were lucky I didn't lash out - I was really upset.

Stop! Think! Ask!

"May I...?"

Ask permission

"May I hug you?"

"May I hold your hand?"

Ask every time

"I may have said yes last week, but I may be in a different place today."

Ask each person

"Just because you have seen me hug another person, it does not mean you can hug me too without asking."

"But I'm a friendly person!"

You may be the reason this is not a safe place for someone, and they may stay away.

"What if I make a mistake?"

Apologise and remember for next time.

It's Okay To Say NO To Unwanted Touch

If someone is persisting in touching you without having obtained your permission, ask to speak to the safeguarding representative in your faith space.

Their information should be displayed on the noticeboard.

If you cannot find the information, ask to speak to your minister, priest, or someone you trust.

For further help, contact:

Safe Spaces

0300 303 1056

Support for people affected by church-related abuse.

Samaritans:

116 123

or email jo@samaritans.org

For further information about this leaflet, email:

notouchwithoutpermission@gmail.com



May I? No Touch Without Permission