

A church that actively engages with children and young people

A Bible study from Sue Mitchell, Children & Families Missioner at Liverpool Diocese.

1. The Individual Child.

Starter Think of an experience in childhood of feeling “Welcome”

Discuss What made the welcome special?

Reading: Matthew 18:1-5

Study: What would your “Theology (your understanding of God’s view) of children be?”

How would this affect your view of children?

Give a copy of “The Cement & Building blocks” sheet

This sheet is designed to be seen as a series of bricks that need to be in place to support & nurture a child’s spirituality. Each brick is surrounded by further supporting bricks. The cement bags are a crucial element, cement surrounds bricks and holds them securely in place. The elements on these bags are the key issues to consider when working with children. All we do is about building foundations, with Jesus as the foundation stone

Look at the sheet:

Reflect on: What is the real cost of children in church?

What are the rewards?

Action: Write a list of your own core values for children in the church (using the blank cement & bricks sheet)

2. Church

Starter Think of an experience when you felt welcomed in church

- What made the welcome special?

Reading: Deuteronomy 6:4-9

- What would your “Theology (your understanding of Gods view) of teaching children be?”
- How does this affect the whole life of the church?

Reflect on How do you welcome children?

What are you doing as a church to teach your children?

How are you actively encouraging “teaching” faith at home for families?

Action Use the* “Children & Church” questionnaire sheet to help you review your current provision & explore how children could take more of an active part in your church & the provisions that affect them.

**Further useful material* *Child Friendly Church award* *Welcoming children into church* <http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/CFCA>

3. Community

Starter: Think of an experience of when you felt welcomed in the wider community.

What was it and why was it special?

Reading: Matthew 14: 15-21 The feeding of the five thousand.

Study: What would your Theology(understanding) of a child and community be?

How would this affect your view of community? (Your local community)

Hand out: Give out the Lollipop “mind map” communities’ sheet

Place your church in the centre circle, in the surrounding large circles list activities in which you reach into your local community , in the smaller circles write a further impact this activity may have or could have .

Looking at your mind map

Reflect: How are you engaging with C/YP & families in your community?

What difference is the church making in your wider community?

Action: Use the Communities mind map to create an action plan for your church.

Appendix What does the Bible say about Children Biblical sheet Sue Mitchell

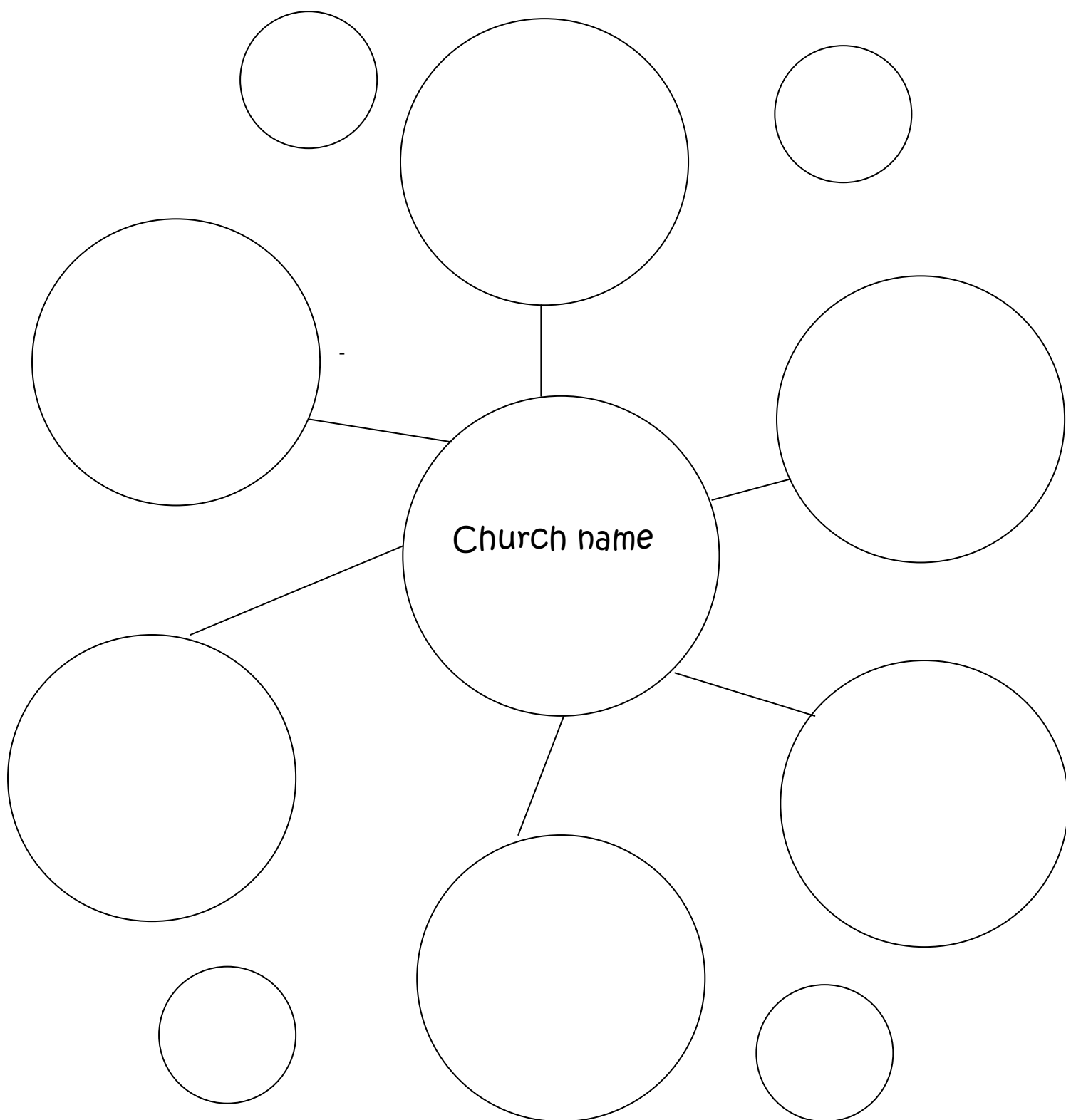
** Curbs <http://www.curbsproject.org.uk/>*

**Core Skills BRF [www.barnabas](http://www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk)inchurches .org.uk*

What does the Bible say about children?

A child is a gift from God	<i>Psalm 127:3</i>
God's love for us?	<i>Hosea 11:4</i> <i>Isaiah 66:12-13</i>
<u>Jesus – contact with children:</u>	
Bread and fish	<i>John 6:8-15</i>
Persistent mother	<i>Mark 7:24-30</i>
Boy with evil spirit	<i>Mark 9:14-32</i>
Jairus' daughter	<i>Mark 5:21-43</i>
<u>Jesus' message to adults?</u>	
To care for them	<i>Mark 10:14</i>
Welcome them	<i>Mark 9:37</i>
Change and become like a child	<i>Matthew 18:10</i>
Do not despise them	<i>Matthew 18:10</i>
Do not cause a child to lose faith	<i>Matthew 18:6</i>
Do not stop children coming to Jesus	<i>Matthew 19:14</i>
God's Kingdom belongs to those such as children	<i>Matthew 19:14</i>
Children and babies can offer perfect praise	<i>Matthew 21:16</i>
Start children off in the way they should go and even When they are old they will not turn from it.	<i>Proverbs 22:6</i>

Community mind map



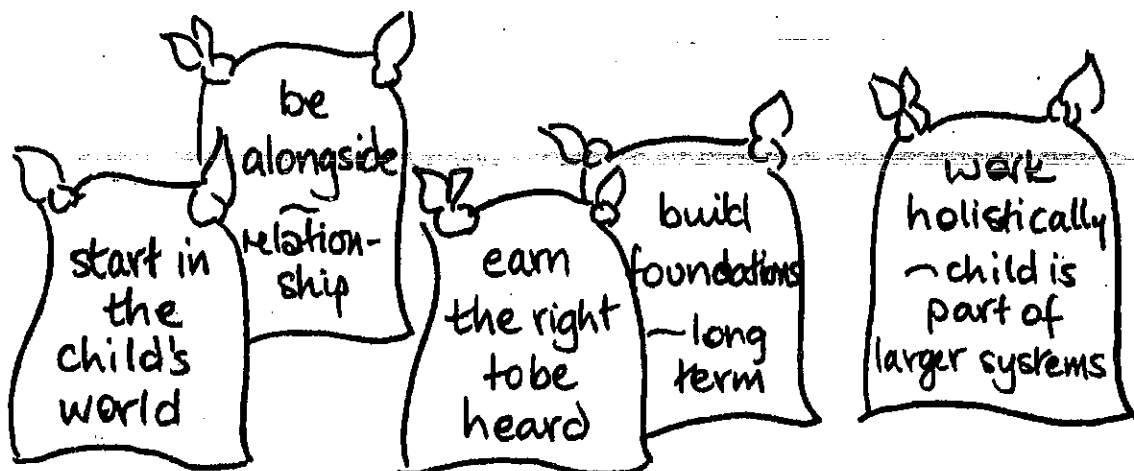
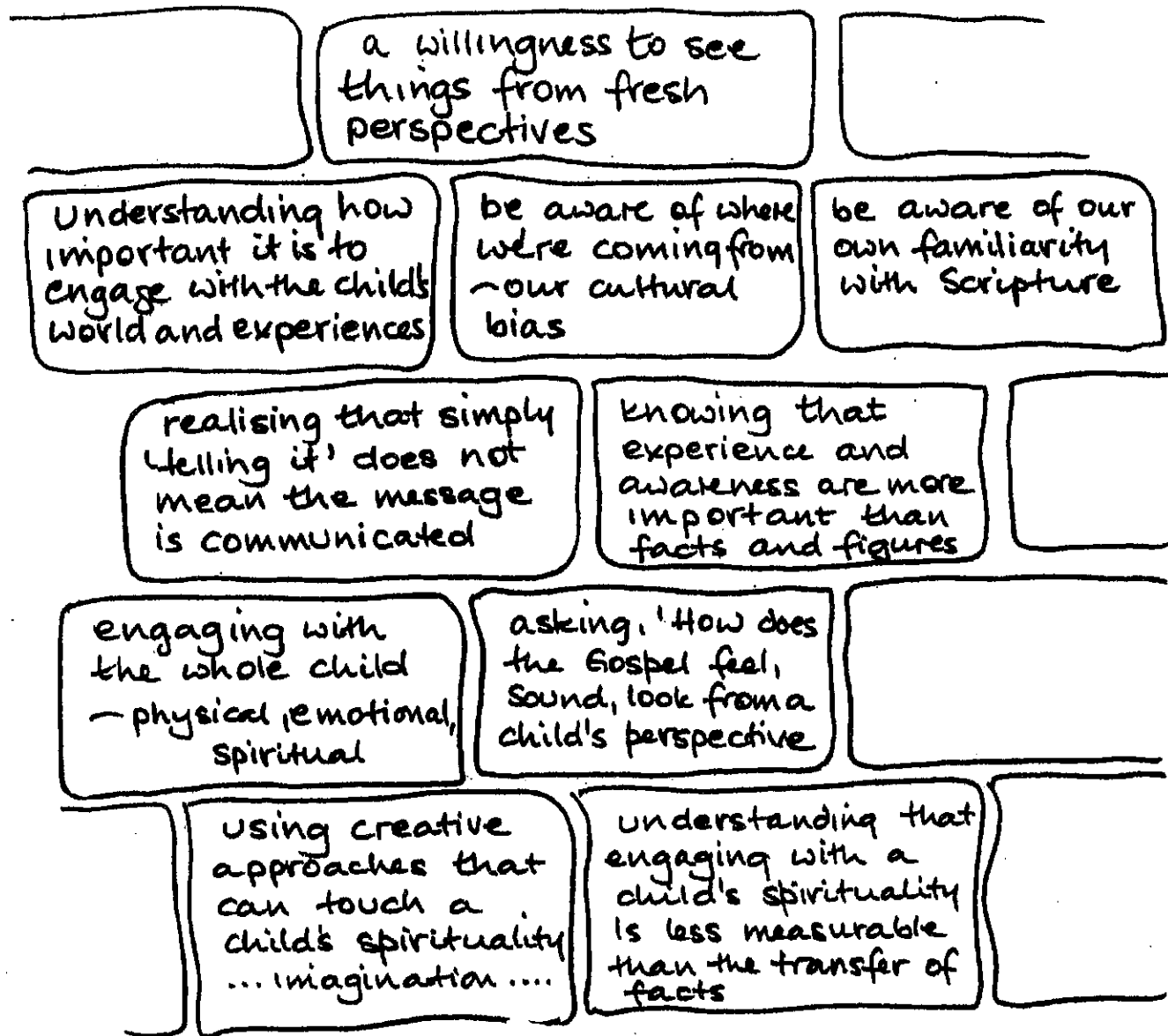
In the centre circle put your church .In the larger circles write any activities that are held for the community, in the smaller circles add how they have or could evolve further i.e. community Toddler group leading to running a parenting course .You may wish to add more circles and connecting lines .

Children and church questionnaire

Mark 0 for 'Not true at all' and 5 for 'This is clearly our church's belief and practice'.

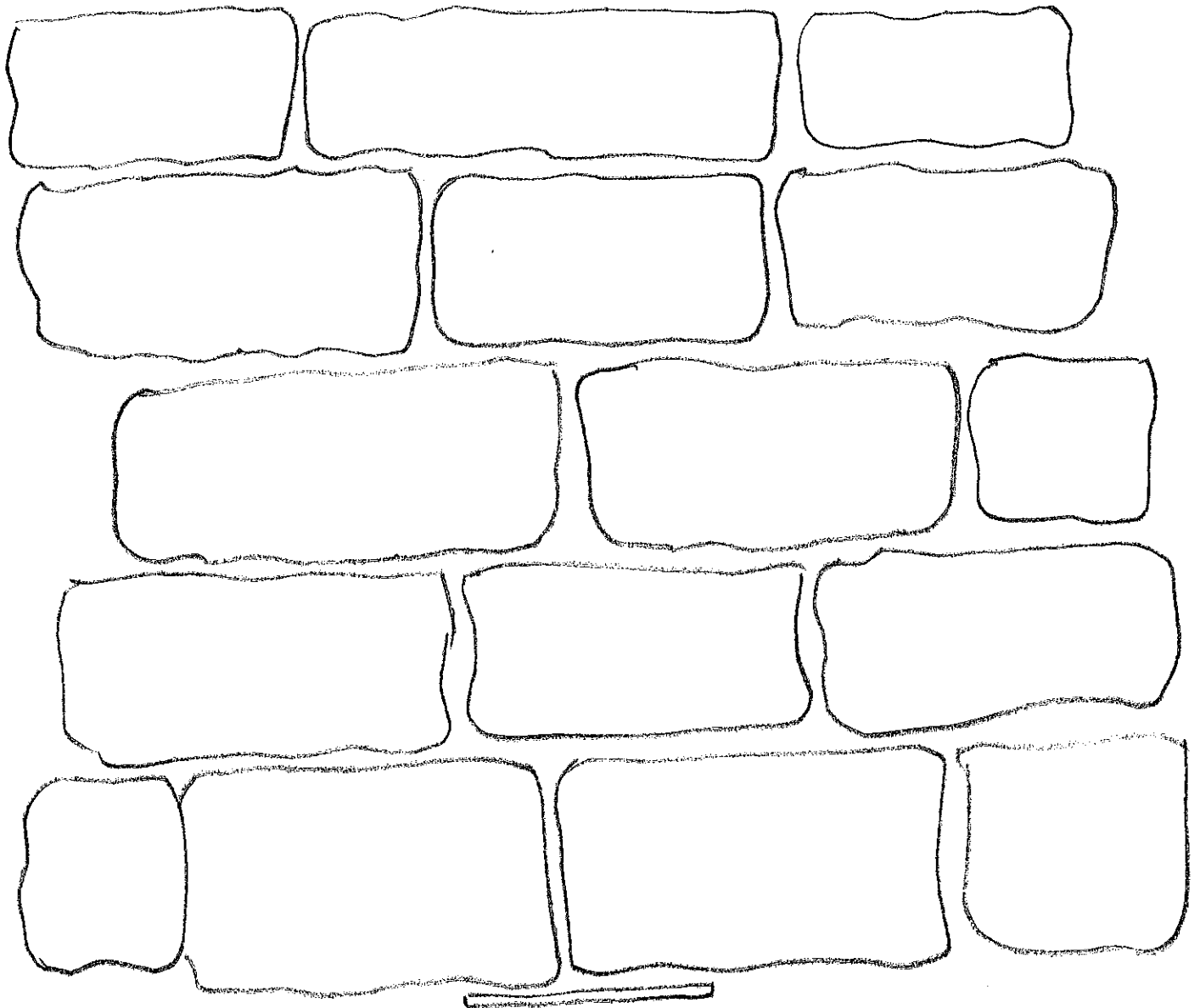
1.	Children are considered important in our church.	0 2 3 4 5
2.	People in our church feel comfortable with children.	0 2 3 4 5
3.	Children in our church are happy to be there.	0 2 3 4 5
4.	People in our church are willing to support children's work by praying.	0 2 3 4 5
5.	People in our church are keen to see children involved in worship throughout the year.	0 2 3 4 5
6.	Children are encouraged to join in with other church activities as well as worship.	0 2 3 4 5
7.	The adults in our church talk to the children and know their names.	0 2 3 4 5
8.	When the children enter the church, they are ignored, but someone greets their parents.	0 2 3 4 5
9.	We want children in our church to keep the church going in the future.	0 2 3 4 5
10.	There is evidence around the building of the children's involvement in church life.	0 2 3 4 5
11.	Our church wants our children to see that God loves them and has a purpose for their lives.	0 2 3 4 5
12.	Our church wants children to become active members of the church today.	0 2 3 4 5
13.	We want children to be able to look back, later in life, with warm affection at what church meant to them.	0 2 3 4 5

The cement and the building blocks

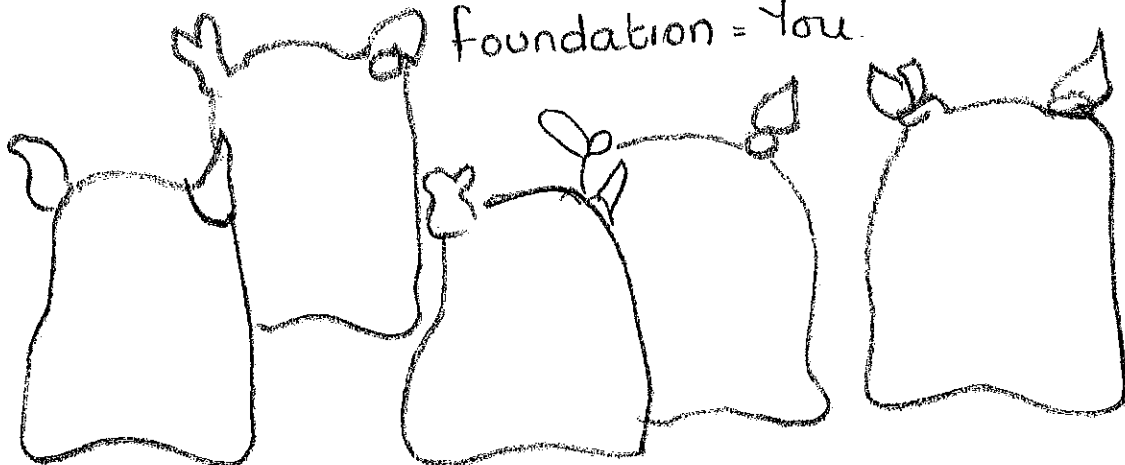


cement

The cement and Building Blocks



foundation = You



Cement