

▲ Solitude ▲

Objectives: LEAD participants will spend some more extended time in solitude, in nature and free from distractions to reflect on who they are and anything God may be saying to them

Plan ahead:

- (Optional) Make a written invitation for each LEAD*
- Coordinate for LEADs to meet you in the division at Flex Time
- Make sure appropriate supervision has been scheduled for lunch, kick back and free time
- Ensure that the bugle will NOT be blown for the end of kickback time, and that all staff have been told about this

Before this lesson, LEADs must:

- Pack a backpack with Bible, notebook, writing utensils and anything else they may want for their solitary time

Supplies:

- Sack lunch
- Whistles for each LEAD in case of emergency
- Copies of the Worksheet, 1 per LEAD, with 3-holes punched

Accompanying documents:

- Solitude Worksheet (Page 3 of this file)

*To give this even more impact, consider making a written invitation for each LEAD with text something like this:
Dear ____, Please come and sit with me. I'd like to spend some time with just you. - God"

Instructor notes: After the introduction, you will lead the LEADs on a hike around the lake. This should be a quiet hike with no talking except as necessary. Assign each LEAD a location to sit far enough from the next LEAD that she can't see her. Spread them out as evenly as possible, with maximum space between them. When you start, hike through camp first so that when you gather the LEADs back up, you can end up in the Division and discuss the experience either in their tent or in Pooh Corner.

❖ **Get Started (hook)**

(Meet the LEADs in the Division so they can pack their backpacks. You can do the "lesson" there or elsewhere as necessary.)

(Read:) "'You have received an invitation...an invitation to sit with God for a while. This invitation is not for anything further than to sit in silence with God in order to listen to what He might be wanting to say to you in the busyness of your life that is full of distractions. He wants your undivided attention in order to speak to your soul and your spirit.'

"In order for us to become the people we are meant to be, we need the gifts that come to us in solitude. Solitude is not just a time and place where we can escape once in a while in order not to be bothered by others, or to think our own thoughts. It is not a private therapeutic place. Rather it is the place of conversion, the place where the old self dies and the true, new self is born and grows. Mark tells us that after Jesus is baptized, He is 'driven by the Spirit into the wilderness'."¹ Moses lived in the wilderness 40 years before leading the people out of Egypt². David spent

about 20 years tending sheep in solitary pastures before becoming famous because of the Goliath incident. Jesus often withdraws to desolate or solitary places.

❖ **Learn / observe (book / look)**

(Tell them what they will be doing:) We will hike around the lake and spread out far enough to not see the next person. Except for necessary instructions and questions, this will be a silent hike. Go to your assigned location, have lunch when you want. Sit or dig around. Reflect on who God has made you to be, on what He's been teaching you while you've been here, on what He might be asking you to do or change when you go back home or on something else. Talk with Him, in your head or through journaling or out loud. Sing, draw, write, read, pray. Just sit and look at the lake. Listen to what Jesus might be saying. Listen to your own thoughts when there are no distractions. This is the foundation of who you are, when it is just you and Jesus. Stop doing and just BE.

If you do fall asleep, that's okay. But try to use this rare, unique time away from technology and people as a time to listen to yourself and to God.

You will be there through lunch, kick back time and free time. Stay in your general area, away from other LEADers. Stay out of the lake, please! If you need a staff member immediately, use your whistle.

A staff member will gather you up and continue the hike around the lake. This, too, will be silent until you get back to the Explorer Division. You will debrief shortly then join the rest of camp at third activity.

❖ **Debrief**

(Hand out the Worksheet.) Fill out the evaluation sheet summarizing your experience and notes to yourself.

One small caution: It is hard to hear the quiet voice of God in the noise of our lives in today's world. When we come apart and listen and think, sometimes we may think we hear God's voice. If we do, that is a great thing! But how do we know it's His voice? God never changes. So there are at least 2 ways to make sure it's HIS voice, not your own thoughts.

First, take everything you think you hear Him say, and lay it beside your Bible. Is this something the God of the Bible would say?

Second, ask a more mature, godly person, ideally one who knows you well.

If what you think you heard God say really is Him talking, it will be a consistent message across your own mind, the Bible and the godly counselors in your life. Developing this practice of "testing everything" (1 Thess 5:21) will protect you from stray ideas, or worse, ideas the world or the devil wants you to chase after.

So go, be alone, think, listen. Then bounce your ideas off the Bible and godly counselors. Having done that, go forth in confidence.

❖ **Homework (follow up assignment)**

(None)

¹"Your Invitation Awaits," by Mickey Cox, CCCA's *Insight* magazine, Dec 16/Jan 17, p.16

²Acts 7:23-30

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What I enjoyed most about being alone and quiet for an extended time:

What was challenging about it:

What God seemed to be saying to me:

Other notes for myself when I get back home: