

# **Breathe**

## **Module: INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**

### **Lesson 3: SILENCE AND SOLITUDE**

#### **Objectives:**

- Students will define silence and solitude.
- Students will identify the obstacles we face in silence and solitude.
- Students will discover how we can overcome these obstacles.

#### **Materials Needed**

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pens, Markers, Pencil Crayons, Crayons
- ☐ White board and dry erase marker (optional)
- ☐ A timer (kitchen timer, cell phone, stop watch)

## **Minds On**

When students are seated, tell them you have set the timer for 3 minutes and you want silence for all three minutes. If there is noise, you will re-set the timer and start again. It may take a few tries, but hopefully you can get silence for three minutes.

**Leader's Note:** Use your discretion when to end the activity after a series of unsuccessful attempts. Even if you have some students who intentionally disrupt the silence, they will become teachable moments later in the lesson.

## **Action**

**Ask:** How did that silence feel? Was it awkward? Was it Difficult? Or was it not really that big of a deal?

Give them a few minutes to express how they felt.

**Ask:** Do you enjoy silence? Let them answer. If some responses are a quick “yes or no”, take a poll (i.e. have them vote with their left hand for “yes”, right hand for “no” or they can “vote with their feet” i.e. all the “yes” go to the right side of the room, all the “no” to the left side.)

Have a student read Mark 6:30-32

**Prompt:** Jesus had silence and solitude as an integral part of his ministry, and trained his disciples to make it a priority in their ministry as well. Silence and Solitude is about carving out time for you to spend with God, meditating on his word. What does it mean to you to carve out time for God? What do you think it means to meditate on God's Word?

Let students give a few answers, then **ask:** What are some of the benefits of silence? Give students some time to shout out answers. You can write these on a white board or newsprint to make it visual.

There are often many things that make Silence and Solitude difficult for us. Have the youth form groups of 4 (there may be a couple of groups of 3) and talk for 5 min. about some of the issues that would hinder them from spending time in silence and solitude. These may include: distractions, thinking about other things, stress and worry over your day, boredom, loneliness, etc. Remind that each person needs to know their group's answers.

In each group, give each person a letter (i.e. A, B, C, etc.). Have them group together based in their given letter and brainstorm for 5 min. different ways to overcome these obstacles. Afterwards, gather the large group and have a representative share each group's answers.

**Leader's Note:** Some suggestions could include:

- For youth who struggle with loneliness, it means having the confidence to know that solitude isn't being alone, but having faith that God is present in your life.
- For youth who have trouble focusing, meditating on a breath prayer (a one line prayer that is repeated over and over, i.e. the Jesus Prayer) may help clear the mind and help you ignore distractions. You can Google more breath prayers for other ideas.

## **Consolidate/Debrief**

End the evening in prayer. Let the group know that in this prayer they will spend three minutes in silence. If they can't focus, tell them to look up a Psalm of praise, and use it as

a breath prayer to help them focus. Then, close by praying aloud, being sure to take any prayer requests from your youth.

**Breathe in:** Throughout this coming week, challenge students to increase the minutes of silence they experience. e.g. On day 1, spend 1 min. in silence. On day 2, spend 2 min. in silence (and so on). See who can report back at next week's meeting if they reached seven minutes of silence.

**Breathe out:** Students can journal about their thoughts and prayers during this time of silence.