

# Invited By Jesus

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## *A Retreat to Begin NSO*

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Find a place where you can be alone with the One who sees you and hears you and knows your innermost thoughts. Become as free from distractions as possible. Here you can be honest and gentle with yourself, you don't have to perform or pretend. You can come as you are!

Welcome and open to God's presence—he is here, and he wants to be with you and bless you! Smile, as you would when your best friend sits down beside you. Listen to God for anything he may want to say to you.

## Begin

To begin, take a few minutes to focus on how you are physically doing coming into this space. Begin to breathe slowly and deliberately. As you do, know that God is with you, and fully attentive to you.

Then, starting from the top of your head, and working your way down to your toes, notice what is happening in each part of your body—do you notice tension, stress, fatigue, rest, peace, eagerness...? Whatever you sense, accept it, then release it into God's hands, knowing he wants to take care of you.

Take as long as you need until you feel fully present to yourself and to God.

## Looking Back

Take some time to reflect on the last few months.

- **What have been some of the more significant experiences for you?** Think of those that are positive and joyful, and those that are negative or disappointing. Share these with God like you would with a good friend who wants to listen to you.
- **What has your relationship with God been like in this season?** What adjectives would best describe it (e.g. Distant? Expectant? Mysterious? Stagnant? New? Frustrating?) Do this without judgment or guilt or shame—simply notice what your relationship is like. Tell God about this—share what you are noticing, knowing he understands.
- **How are you feeling about entering this new year of ministry?** Take some time to identify the different feelings you have. What apprehensions and hopes do you have? With each one, explore it a little more—what lies behind those feelings? Share what you notice with God.

## Listen

The following scene from John 21:1-12 takes place after Jesus' resurrection, with some of his disciples who had returned to Galilee. These disciples were unsure about their experience of Jesus' death and resurrection. They were disoriented and waiting. They didn't know their future plans. Would they follow Jesus again like before? Would he do something different? Were they still his disciples? Would things change around them? Nothing was clear.

In some ways, we're in a similar place in our ministry and calling. Every year is different, every class is unique. Programs begin and end, initiatives come and go. What does our future look like? Will things change? We don't know for sure!

Listen to or read the passage a couple of times. As you do, invite God to speak to you.

- What do you notice about the disciples' experience here?
- How does it connect with you?

### JOHN 21:1-12

*Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing." "We'll come, too," they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night. At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn't see who he was. He called out, "Fellows, have you caught any fish?" "No," they replied. Then he said, "Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you'll get some!" So they did, and they couldn't haul in the net because there were so many fish in it. Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread. "Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus said. So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn't torn. "Now come and have some breakfast!" Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish.*

## Reflect

Imagine being a disciple (especially Peter) in this story. Consider the flow of emotions from the beginning to the end.

- What is happening with your feelings as the events unfold?
- What is happening with your relationship to Jesus as the events unfold?
- How do the feelings elicited in the passage connect with some of the feelings you are experiencing now at the beginning of this school year?

Jesus receives the disciples “as they are” during their experiences. And, of all the things he could do, he invites them to come and eat a breakfast that he has fully provided for them—including some of the fish he helped them to catch!

“Come and have some breakfast.” Take some time to meditate on this invitation. Imagine Jesus inviting you to do the same thing this morning. No matter what you’ve been through, or what you are facing, Jesus invites you to be present with him and have breakfast together. Tell Jesus what this invitation means to you.

May we receive his invitation and welcome the chance to simply be with him.

## Closing Prayer

Lord, just as you came near to the disciples and met them in their uncertainty and confusion, just as you provided for them what they needed as they trusted you, may you come near to us in this time and provide for us what we need to follow you and trust you in your calling to us.