

Axiom Fall Retreat 2019

John: 10:27

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me

Day 1 – Friday

A bus and two vans filled with 52 students and 18 leaders leave Rockpointe at 6 p.m., heading to Michindoh, a Christian Conference Center in Hillsdale, Michigan. Arriving after a two-and-a-half-hour drive, the trailer unloads and the piles of suitcases, sleeping bags, and backpacks go to their respective cabins. The students, a bit tired from the drive, a bit unsure of what to expect file into their seats for orientation and the first session. After a quick welcome from the Michindoh staff and some ground rules for the weekend from Justin, the session kicks off with worship. Our speaker for the weekend is Ryan Hall, who comes to us from Tennessee and is part of Messenger Fellowship, an organization Rockpointe has been in partnership with for 30 years. As he begins, it is clear Ryan brings an infectious energy and passionate love for Jesus. The overall theme is the Daily Pursuit of God. What is our daily rhythm with God? Do we have one? Do we visit him once a week in church or is He in our everyday? Do we talk to Him? How does He talk to us? After the session, the students dive into what they've been waiting for – pizza, games, basketball...until lights out (for most) at midnight.

Day 2 – Saturday

Morning

A brisk 15-minute walk across the camp to the lodge for breakfast at 8 a.m. and some pretty impressive camp food starts our day. The morning session begins at 9:15 a.m. We discuss Mary of Bethany (of Mary and Martha fame) who sat at the feet of Jesus, listening to what He said. How can we get to that place in our world of distractions and noise? How do we hear the still small voice of God? Ryan provided some very practical instruction and took us through the practice of *lectio divina* (that's Latin) for divine reading, which sounds fancy but really means contemplative reading of scripture. We read Psalm 139 to ourselves, out loud in a group, and then shared what caught us about the passage and why. Everyone shared. The group discussion was thoughtful and insightful and these teenagers spent 30 minutes of quiet poring over God's Word. They explored what He had for them in the passage. They heard from Him.

Afternoon

Two words: Archery Battle! It's a dodge-ball-style game but instead of balls, you get to shoot your opponent with a bow and arrow (good clean Christian fun 😊). Not to worry, the arrow tip is covered with a foam pad and masks are worn. It was a hit. In addition to archery battle, students rotated through a series of timed games to burn off energy and earn points for their squads.

Evening

Psalm 40:3 He put a new song in my mouth — Praise to our God.

Saturday night was about worship, and not just how we usually define it as the band leading us in a song. We did that, but we learned there is a bit more to it. Worship is ultimately about being in community with God. And He is a God who wants to hear from us. We are new creations. We are all singers. We sing out to God because He is singing over us. He rejoices over us and we reflect it back. This session opened with worship and it closed in worship as well. And by the time we closed it, the atmosphere had changed. The students that started this weekend tentatively were replaced with a group that was at ease, that was eager, that was bold. They gathered at the front of the room and lifted their voices lifted in praise. They stood with hands raised, confident in who they were before God and with the belief that the God they sought was responding to them.

Day 3 – Sunday

By Sunday morning, the thoroughly tired group lingers over breakfast — everyone satisfied just to be together. This highly dedicated group of Axiom leaders, who may have gotten just a few hours of sleep all weekend, are still smiling. Justin leads the morning session of unplugged worship and together we take communion. It's a time of quiet reflection before God.

Retreat takeaways:

- “God is so faithful.”
- “God is rejoicing and singing over me.”
- “He is the light in the darkness.”
- “Some of the girls that I didn’t know sat down and talked to me. It was cool I got to know new people.”
- “Archery battle was awesome!”
- “I really liked the practical tips Ryan gave us to hear from God.”
- “I am a singer!”

We load up and head for home. We are closer as a ministry. We are stronger as believers.

2 Cor. 3:18 (MSG)

Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of His face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we become like him.