



Leave What You Find: “Before and After”

Audience: All ages. Groups of any size.

Time: 20 to 40 minutes.

Materials: A collection of objects to be used as artifacts. You can also use a small puzzle or photograph of artifacts that has been cut up into puzzle pieces.

Leave No Trace Objective: To explore the impacts of taking cultural artifacts from a site.

Directions: Set up the site by taking your objects or puzzle pieces and scattering them around the area. When your group arrives, tell them that they will be going on an archeological expedition and will have to deduce what the culture that used to be in the area was like by looking at the artifacts.

Then, split your group up into two smaller groups. Have the first group travel through the site and take inventory of what artifacts are there and piece together a story of what their society might have been like. Once they are done, go into the site and take a bunch of the artifacts or puzzle pieces away. Then send the second group into the site and have them do the same thing as the first group. Get the two groups together and have them share their findings and discuss the difference between the two groups stories.

Debrief: This activity debriefs well by having a large group discussion on how removing historically important pieces from an area can impact the history of an area and prevent specialists from being able to uncover the full story of past societies.