



New Community Group Launch Material - Part 2: I AM Poem

Welcome:

Give one another a quick, warm greeting.

Opening Prayer:

Have one person in the room open your time in prayer, asking God to help you know and love one another as you hear each other's "I Am" poems.

Sharing "I Am" Poems:

Last week, we assigned "I Am" poems as homework. If you weren't here and/or weren't able to write your poem, you will not share this week. Write your poem this next week and plan to share the next time your CG gets together. The poem template is attached at the end of this material.

To share, go around the room and take turns. When it is your turn, remind the group your name and then read. Take your time. As you listen to those reading, look for opportunities to feel a deep connection to each person through their poem. Listen prayerfully and reflectively. When each person finishes, thank them for sharing. Take a few seconds to pause in silence before the next person shares.

Reflecting:

When everyone is finished, reflect as a group on the following prompts:

1. What was it like to write and share your poem? What emotions did you feel?
2. What was it like to listen to each others' poems?

Unity Prayer:

Close your time together with an exercise called a Unity Prayer. This is a kind of corporate prayer exercise aimed at giving space to care for one another in a priestly way by lifting up to God the emotions and experiences which you heard expressed in your time together. Take turns praying short prayers in the format of "Lord, hear our _____." Fill in the blank with a feeling that you noticed someone else feeling. You could also fill in the blank with a desire or need that someone expressed. For example: "Lord, hear our discomfort being vulnerable with strangers," "Lord, hear our grief at losses and wounds we've experienced in our past," "Lord, hear Allison's gratitude for her family." When there is a long enough pause that it seems fit, have one person close the time of prayer.

We will do this Unity Prayer exercise often as a closing to our time together. Not only does it help us connect intimately with one another before leaving the gathering but it is also reveals how well we've really listened to others – which over time, encourages better listening and connection.

“I Am” Poem Exercise:

The following exercise is meant to help us reflect on the different parts of our story that make us who we are today and to give us an intentional and vulnerable space to hear one another’s stories.

Fill out the following template in silent reflection. You can be as detailed as you wish to be.

“I Am” Poem

I am from _____

(traditions that remind you of home),

from _____

(brands—clothing, products, labels commonly used growing up).

I am from _____

(three unique aspects of your home environment)

I am from _____

(plants/gardens that grew inside/outside your home),

from _____

(sounds, touch, scents that remind you of home)

I am from _____

(favorite childhood activities, books you remember most, toys you collected),

from _____

(family member’s names/names of people who took care of you).

I am from _____

(names of the places your parents are from),

from _____

(names of the places you've lived in)

I am from _____

(phrases you've grown up listening to, superstitions/oddities your parents/guardians always used)

I am from _____

(food you ate growing up),

from _____

(holidays and traditions you grew up celebrating)

I am from _____

(faith traditions, faith journey, spiritual discoveries),

from _____

(doubts, struggle with faith)

I am from _____

(phrases or words that remind you of a significant struggle you went through),

from _____

(phrases or words that remind you of great joys in life)

I am from _____

(great realizations you've made in life, quotes, mottos you hold dear)

I am from _____

(activities, adjectives, descriptions that you think best describe your identity today)

I am _____

(your name)