



## I AM SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

I AM\_, like life, is a journey better taken TOGETHER.

Our small group resources are designed for groups (from informal friend groups, to parish groups, to men's groups, to youth and campus ministries) to touch base once per week on specific days during their I AM\_ journey, giving people space to share how they're growing, and to encourage one another as they engage the challenges of the week.

Starting a group is as simple as inviting people to do this journey with you, using our easy to navigate leader's guide, and sharing the participant's guide with your group members.

Small groups can happen face to face, or via Zoom.

NOW, more than ever, we need a Church of deep, personal connections, prayerful support, and a forum where people feel heard. NOW is the time to BE the Church!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Chris Stefanick'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Chris Stefanick

# The Most Important Conversation Ever

*Using this Leader Guide is simple. Everything next to the green lines is just for you, the group leader. Everything else, your participants also have on their Participant Guide. Feel free to go “off script.” The goal is simply to create a space where honesty, true friendship, and spiritual support can thrive.*

## Welcome

*Introduce yourself and have participants introduce themselves. You can use the following questions to help guide your introductions:*

1. *What led you to join this group?*
2. *What’s one way you’d like to grow throughout this journey together?*
3. *How can we help you to stay accountable?*

## Opening Prayer

Holy Spirit, we ask you to enter into our hearts as we enter into your Holy Word. Give us your grace and protection for this journey. We want to live in the full freedom of your children, and in the joy of your love. Help us to claim our true identity in you. We say YES to all that you have in store for us. Amen.

## Small Group Overview

*Explain the ground rules for a small group in these words, or your own, but be sure to hit these essential points:*

**Community:** *God didn’t save us as individuals, but as a big family. He never intended for us to walk to heaven alone. That’s because he made us in his image and likeness, and God is Love—a Trinity of persons! We’ll get so much more out of this coaching process (and life) together than alone.*

### **Ground Rules:**

1. *Being in this group means we’re going to pray for each other. Every day.*
2. *We’re going to have time to share with each other each week. We ask that you stay committed to the journey, show up each time, and come ready to share how God is moving in your life.*
3. *When someone else is sharing, let’s all listen with our whole heart and mind (not advising, just listening)—and remember, nothing said in this group leaves this group.*

## I AM Coaching Program Overview

*Using the outline below, give an overview of the program, the daily routine, and the weekly gathering.*

### Program Overview

1. The program is divided into nine “chapters,” each with multiple lessons. There is one lesson per day. The first chapter lays the groundwork for the program, the 7 following chapters help you conquer lies we all tend to believe about ourselves, and the last chapter helps you form lifelong habits to live out your true identity in Christ.
2. You will get a daily email prompting you to complete the day’s lesson. You can go back and re-watch any previous videos as many times as you wish.
3. Do not jump ahead. Only do one lesson per day.

### Daily Routine

1. Each daily lesson will take about 10 minutes.
2. Each day has a challenge to help you live the lesson. Be sure to do it!
3. Take a few minutes to journal about your progress.

### Weekly gatherings consist of:

1. Prayer and scripture reflection.
2. Check in on previous week’s challenges.

*Each week I will ask how you did with your challenges, and if you notice a change of attitude, action, word or emotion for the week. We will discuss how you are growing. And we will keep track of these amazing changes, so that, as a group we can celebrate your new found I AM!*

3. Re-watch and discuss today’s lesson.



## Today's Lesson

*Watch the video for Day 1. Then have a group member read the written reflection, stopping before today's challenge. After reading, discuss today's lesson with the questions below.*

*With each gathering, feel free to use just one or two questions. You don't have to "get through" them all. They're simply guides to help you facilitate discussion as a leader. And if you want to do them all, or even create your own questions, that's fine too!*

### Discussion Questions

1. How did you do with the 60 seconds of silence?
2. What does silence look like in your life right now? Is just being, resting, and receiving love difficult for you? Why?
3. What words are at the foundation of your life? How have these words shaped your self-perception? *(It's okay if you don't know yet! We'll get there together.)*
4. What are some circumstances, experiences, or relationships in your life that have "taught you who you are" (for better or worse)?
5. What struggles do you anticipate when it comes to "rewiring" self-defeating self-talk as you go through this journey?
6. Have you ever had an experience of faith that not only helped you see God differently, but helped you see yourself differently?
7. What is your concrete plan for making this 30-day journey fruitful? Exactly when and where will you make time in your day for your daily reflection?

*Now, have a participant read today's challenge, and ask:*

*Do you think this challenge will be a tough one for you, or easy? Why? (If they say tough, ask "How we can help you accomplish it?")*

### Closing Prayer

*Ask for intentions and write them down so you can pray for them during the week - and be sure to really do it!*

Lord, thank you for loving me. Your Word doesn't only reveal who you are, but who I am. Help me to see myself through your eyes. Amen.

Our Father...

# You Are Not Your Flaws

## Opening Prayer

Lord God, your Word tells us to take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ. Help us to rise up, engage the battle in our minds, and to be victorious, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

## Scripture: Luke 15:11-24

*Say: We're going to start each meeting by letting God speak to us through his Word. As I read this scripture, let your imagination engage the story. Put yourself there. Picture everything from the sound of voices to the facial expressions. What is each person feeling? Pay attention to what words or images strike you. That's God speaking to you. Feel free to underline, highlight, or take notes on your page.*

(Jesus) said, "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers."' So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began."

*Invite participants to share their insights, or simply what images and words struck them.*

## Check In

*Say: We're going to check in on how we did over the past week. Then review last week's challenges. You can read them aloud, or just give them a minute to glance at them on their Participant Guide before diving into the discussion questions below.*

### Review Last Week's Challenges

- 60 seconds in silence before each lesson (Day 1)
- Written notes for each session (Day 2)
- Who is the person you will share with daily? (Day 2)
- Not complaining about yourself (Day 2)
- Morning "gratefals" (Day 3)
- Praising when you're annoyed (Day 3)
- Examine your worst moment in the day, how did it impact your disposition, facial expression, and mood? (Day 4)
- Refusing to dwell on times you've been wronged (Day 5)
- Prayer saying "yes" to Jesus. Did you print it out and put it somewhere prominent? (Day 6)
- Make a plan for confession. Add it to your calendar (Day 7)

### Discuss

*Now, have each person report on how they did over the past week. Tell them "We'll be using these same questions each week to track our progress." And of course, as the leader, don't pressure yourself to get through them all. Let the conversation flow as it will!*

1. What lesson struck you the most this week (from the reflection on blessings we overlook, to ways we blame our happiness on our circumstances, to John Simone, to the challenge for you to start thinking about what you're thinking), and what about that lesson most moved you?
2. Of the challenges, what was the easiest?
3. What has been the most challenging? Maybe even fell off the radar?
4. What is your plan to get back on track?
5. Any notice in change of attitude, action, word, or emotion this week? How are you growing?

*NOTE: As leader, be sure to note progress, call it out, and celebrate it each week.*

## Today's Lesson

*Re-watch today's video (Day 8). Read the written reflection as a group, stopping before today's challenge. Then discuss, using the questions below as a guide.*

### Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be fearfully and wonderfully made? (Psalm 139:14)
2. What are the struggles that you find yourself constantly battling? What kind of self-talk do you think is at the root of these struggles?
3. How can your trials and struggles help make you strong?
4. How does reframing “*I am this struggle,*” to “*This struggle is something I deal with,*” help you to overcome your struggles more effectively?
5. How can your current struggles turn into blessings for others?
6. How have your struggles already blessed others by who they've made you?
7. How does God reveal his glory through your struggles?

*Now, have a participant read today's challenge, and ask:*

*Do you think this challenge will be a tough one for you, or easy? Why? (If they say tough, ask “How we can help you accomplish it?”)*

### Closing Prayer

*Ask for intentions and write them down so you can pray for them during the week - and be sure to really do it!*

Thank you, Jesus, for all the things I struggle with! Thank you for how they've made me who I am. Amen.

Our Father...

# How Tragedy Lies to You

## Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, you walked the path of life and death and, of joy and pain before us, so that we'd know we're never alone. You are with us. You love us. And love is your only motive as you act in our lives. Let this truth transform our hearts and minds so that, as St. Paul said, we would be "more than conquerors" in you, in everything we face, every day. Amen.

## Scripture: John 11:17-28, 32-44

*Say: As I read this scripture, let your imagination engage the story. Put yourself there. Picture everything from the sound of voices to the facial expressions. What is each person feeling? Pay attention to what words or images strike you. That's God speaking to you through His Word. Feel free to underline, highlight, or take notes on your page.*

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The teacher is here and is asking for you."...

When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became deeply moved and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Come and see, Lord." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?"

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been



dead for four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me.” And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

*Invite participants to share their insights, or simply what images and words struck them.*

## Check In

*Say: We’re going to check in on how we did over the past week. Then review last week’s challenges. You can read them aloud, or just give them a minute to glance at them on their Participant Guide before diving into the discussion questions below.*

### Review Last Week’s Challenges

- Write down your struggles and how they have blessed you. (Day 8)
- Spend time dreaming...and share with a friend. (Day 9)
- Reflect on those who have built you up and call them. Thank them. (Day 10)
- Make a plan for your health (day and time, where, and what). (Day 11)
- Acknowledge the abuses of your past, and, if you need help letting go, find it. (Day 12)
- Reflect on God’s presence in you. You are a LIVING temple of the living God. (Day 13)
- Honor someone today in front of someone else. (Day 14)

### Discuss

*Now, have each person report on how they did over the past week. You can use any, or all, of the questions below to help guide this time together.*

1. What lesson struck you the most this week (from the reflections on Chris’ daughter, dreaming, the Nazi soldier, exercising, Natalie’s story, being a sacred temple, honoring one another), and what about that lesson most moved you?
2. Of the challenges, what was the easiest?
3. What has been the most challenging? Maybe even fell off the radar?
4. What is your plan to get back on track?
5. Any notice in change of attitude, action, word, or emotion this week? How are you growing?

## Today's Lesson

*Re-watch today's video (Day 15). Read the written reflection as a group, stopping before today's challenge. Then discuss, using the questions below as a guide.*

### Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever told yourself that you or your family was cursed?
2. What virtues can hard times give you that easy times can't?
3. In what ways do your trials (big or small) tend to bring out the worst in you?
4. What do you need to learn to imitate most from the way Jesus suffered?
5. What's one way that God has revealed Himself in your suffering?
6. What is the difference between wasting your suffering and redemptive suffering?
7. What's one trial that's helped you grow the most? How has it helped you?

*Now, have a participant read today's challenge, and ask:*

*Do you think this challenge will be a tough one for you, or easy? Why? (If they say tough, ask "How we can help you accomplish it?")*

### Closing Prayer

*Ask for intentions and write them down so you can pray for them during the week - and be sure to really do it!*

Lord Jesus, you didn't suffer so we wouldn't have to. You suffered so we'd know how to, and show us that you're with us through all our crosses in life. It's easy to lose faith in your presence in times of pain. But faith is a gift, and so I ask you, as the man did in scripture when he was begging you to heal his son, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). Amen.

Our Father...

# You Are Beloved Beyond Measure

## Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, so many voices compete to tell us who we are and what we're worth. Help us to listen to you. On the cross, you tell us our value in the eyes of God the Father, that in some mystical sense, we are "worth" your life, oh God the Son—though who could be worthy of such divine love?!

"Thank you" seems so small a thing to say in the light of what you did for us. Help us to show you our thanks by believing in your love and rejecting any lie that belittles us. Amen.

## Scripture: Matthew 27:45-56

*Say: For the next three weeks we're going to dive even deeper into God's Word with an ancient monastic practice called "Lectio Divina" or "Divine Reading." We're going to read the Gospel three times, and each time, we'll let the Word sink in more deeply as we allow God to speak to us.*

*The first time we read, simply familiarize yourself with the story. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. And listen.*

From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"\* which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "This one is calling for Elijah." Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. But the rest said, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him." But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many. The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and they said, "Truly, this was the Son of God!" There were many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. Among them were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

*Say: As I read a second time, pay attention to what questions surface or what words strike you. Underline, highlight, or take notes on your page.*

*Read the passage again.*

*Pause for a moment in silence.*

*Say: Now, as I read this for a final time, I ask you to very intentionally invite the Holy Spirit to help you understand **why** a particular word, phrase, or perspective stood out to you.*

*Let's pray, "Holy Spirit, inspire in each of us the message you have for us in this particular reading for this particular day."*

*Read the passage a final time.*

*Pause for a moment in silence.*

*Now invite participants to share their insights, or simply what images and words struck them.*

## Check In

*Say: We're going to check in on how we did over the past week. Then review last week's challenges. You can read them aloud, or just give them a minute to glance at them on their Participant Guide before diving into the discussion questions below.*

### Review Last Week's Challenges

- Do something to show a suffering or sick friend that you are thinking of them. (Day 15)
- Look at the low points in your life—times you didn't think you would overcome. Listen to the song and imagine all the ways God has and is going to finish your story. (Day 16)
- When someone asks you how you're doing, answer, "I am blessed! How are you?" Watch their responses. (Day 17)
- Envision the YOU you dream of being. (Day 18)
- Choose a personality test and take one. Chris' personal favorite is [Myers-Briggs](#), while others prefer [Big 5](#) or the classic [The Four Temperaments](#). (Day 19)
- What are the qualities you lack? Thank God for them. Think about the people who have qualities you admire who fill in for your lack. Call them and thank them. (Day 19)
- Create phone black out times. Let people know you can't be reached during those times. Limit your social media "scrolling" time or web surfing time to 60 minutes a day. (Day 20)
- Think of someone who excels past you in a given area. Now, instead of comparing, celebrate what you admire in that person. Call that person to tell them. (Day 21)
- What are the small things you do every day that you tend to overlook. How are they your "slingshots"? (Day 21)

**Discuss**

*Now, have each person report on how they did over the past week. You can use any, or all, of the questions below to help guide this time together.*

1. What lesson struck you the most this week (from the reflections on JP II, Mia's Story, Moses' Story, Sharing the Mission, Internet Validation, Insignificance), and what about that lesson most moved you?
2. Of the challenges, what was the easiest?
3. What has been the most challenging? Maybe even fell off the radar?
4. What is your plan to get back on track?
5. Any notice in change of attitude, action, word, or emotion this week? How are you growing?

**Today's Lesson**

*Re-watch today's video (Day 22). Read the written reflection as a group, stopping before today's challenge. Then discuss, using the questions below as a guide.*

**Discussion Questions**

1. What are some of the wrong ways you've looked for a sense of worth and value?
2. God loves ALL of you. What parts of you don't you believe that about? (I'm not talking about your sins. Your sins aren't *you*, after all.)
3. How does it impact relationships when we don't have the sense that we are loved by God—and when we aren't resting in that Love that no human relationship could give?
4. If you truly believed God found you worth dying for, how would that knowledge change the way you live your everyday life? How would it impact how you carry yourself, feel, and think?
5. Have you ever mistakenly thought of Christianity as your climb toward God, by your own strength, rather than his saving you? Do you now? (That's a heresy called "Pelagianism.") How does it impact your spirit when you fall into that thinking? (We all do sometimes.)
6. Ironically, the Saints, who are the surest of God's love and know that they don't have to earn it, end up doing the most good in the world. Why do you think that is?
7. Is there a person in your life who needs to be reminded of their worth? What's one thing you can do about that?



*Now, have a participant read today's challenge, and ask:*

*Do you think this challenge will be a tough one for you, or easy? Why? (If they say tough, ask "How we can help you accomplish it?")*

## **Closing Prayer**

*Ask for intentions and write them down so you can pray for them during the week - and be sure to really do it!*

Lord, no one who left Calvary walked away the same. As I go forward from our gathering, help me to be more present to your love for me. Help me to pray, not just with words, but recognizing your gaze of love on me. Help me to be changed by it, and to fix my eyes on you. You are the only one who shows me who I truly am. Thank you for redeeming me. Amen.

Our Father...

# Worship the Great I AM

## Opening Prayer

Jesus, King of kings, and Lord of all, we marvel at who you have made us, and the glory to which you have called us. It is a glory that breaks into our lives here and now. We are not defeated. We are not small. We are not defined by the passing events of life. We are defined by the infinite love you have for us. We claim your truth and choose to live in your power, for you have conquered death, and you have made us your own. Alleluia is our song! Amen.

## Scripture: Revelation 4:1-3, 5-11

*Say: Now it's time for our Lectio Divina. Again, we're going to read the Gospel three times, asking God to speak to our hearts more deeply with each reading.*

*The first time we read, simply familiarize yourself with the story. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. And listen.*

After this I had a vision of an open door to heaven, and I heard the trumpetlike voice that had spoken to me before, saying, "Come up here and I will show you what must happen afterwards." At once I was caught up in spirit. A throne was there in heaven, and on the throne sat one whose appearance sparkled like jasper and ruby. Around the throne was a halo as brilliant as an emerald...From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder. Seven flaming torches burned in front of the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. In front of the throne was something that looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center and around the throne, there were four living creatures...The first creature resembled a lion, the second was like a calf, the third had a face like that of a human being, and the fourth looked like an eagle in flight.... Day and night they do not stop exclaiming:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,  
who was, and who is, and who is to come."

Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before the one who sits on the throne and worship him, who lives forever and ever. They throw down their crowns before the throne, exclaiming:

"Worthy are you, Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power,

for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

*Say: As I read a second time, pay attention to what questions surface or what words strike you. Underline, highlight, or take notes on your page.*

*Read the passage again.*

*Pause for a moment in silence.*

*Say: Now, as I read this for a final time, I ask you to very intentionally invite the Holy Spirit to help you understand **why** a particular word, phrase, or perspective stood out to you.*

*Let's pray, "Holy Spirit, inspire in each of us the message you have for us in this particular reading for this particular day."*

*Read the passage a final time.*

*Pause for a moment in silence.*

*Now invite participants to share their insights, or simply what images and words struck them.*

## Check In

*Say: We're going to check in on how we did over the past week. Then review last week's challenges. You can read them aloud, or just give them a minute to glance at them on their Participant Guide before diving into the discussion questions below.*

### Review Last Week's Challenges

- Just rest, fully awake. Lay down if you can. Know that you don't have to do or perform or achieve to be loved. You simply ARE loved, by a love so potent it created the universe. Think about that, and deliberately rest in love. (Day 22)
- Look in the mirror for a minute. Stand as if you were royalty. Dignified. Noble. Strong. Say out loud: I AM a king/queen. (Day 23)
- If you were royalty, what's one thing you think you would deserve to be treated to today? Now that you identified it, what are you waiting for? Honor and treat yourself! (Day 24)
- Write down a few ways you ought to care for yourself—something that makes you feel healthy and alive. Now, write down WHEN and WHERE you're going to do it. (Day 25)
- Go somewhere quiet and read Psalm 139 slowly today. And think of the glory and the beauty that is you. (Day 26)
- If you're angry at someone and want to take your freedom to the next level, apologize to them for any way you might have hurt or offended them. (Day 27)

1. Tell someone your new I AM. And 2. Commit to looking in the mirror and speaking that I AM, out loud, to yourself, every morning. (Day 28)

### Discuss

*Now, have each person report on how they did over the past week. You can use any, or all, of the questions below to help guide this time together.*

1. What lesson struck you the most this week (from the reflections on royalty, Ricky's Story, Caring for Yourself, The Prodigal Son, Giving Thanks for *You*, Saint Bahkita, Claiming Your Name), and what about that lesson most moved you?
2. Of the challenges, what was the easiest?
3. What has been the most challenging? Maybe even fell off the radar?
4. What is your plan to get back on track?
5. Any notice in change of attitude, action, word, or emotion this week? How are you growing?

## Today's Lesson

*Re-watch today's video (Day 29). Read the written reflection as a group, stopping before today's challenge. Then discuss, using the questions below as a guide.*

### Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe worship as a form of prayer?
2. What role does worshipping and adoring God play in your prayer life?
3. What role does worship play in your everyday life, mood, and outlook?
4. How can worship make life better when things are really hard (in other words: when we tend to think about worshipping, praising, and thanking God the least)?
5. In those times when God isn't on the "throne of your heart," what is? (Something always is...)
6. When the wrong thing is the object of our worship—how does that give us the wrong identity?
7. What are you going to do to make sure your prayer life is more life-giving and filled with worship, thanks, and praise?

*Now, have a participant read today's challenge, and ask:*

*Do you think this challenge will be a tough one for you, or easy? Why? (If they say tough, ask "How we can help you accomplish it?")*

## Closing Prayer

*Ask for intentions and write them down so you can pray for them during the week - and be sure to really do it!*

*Let us give God glory and praise with a litany of his names as found in Scripture. I will say a title of God, and you will say as a group "Praise you Jesus."*

Lord Jesus, you are:

The Great I AM

Our Father Forever

The Beginning

The End

Anointed One

The Way

The Truth

The Life

Author of Life

God of Peace

Gift

Advocate

Bright Morning Star

Root and Offspring of David

Word Made Flesh

The True Light

Wonderful Counselor

Mighty God

Everlasting Father

Prince of Peace

The Ancient of Days

The Christ Child

Good Shepherd

King of kings

Lord of lords

The God Who Heals Me

Bread of Life

My Shield

Eternal

Immortal

He who began a good work in me

Love

Called JESUS, because you save your people, and you save me!

Mary, you lived a life of perfect praise. Pray for us, that we would live with our eyes set on him, and our hearts rejoicing in him as yours did, even when your life was hard. Amen.

Hail Mary...



## Gathering 6

# Wrap Up

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, you promised to be with us always, even to the end of time. You have called us on a new journey, but you haven't sent us forth alone. You are with us in so many ways. And you are with us through one another. Thank you for your presence. We pray that we'd continue to follow you on this path of freedom, of fellowship, and of joy!

Thank you, Jesus, for everything. Amen.

### Scripture: Matthew 16:13-19

*Say: Now it's time for our Lectio Divina. Again, we're going to read the Gospel three times, asking God to speak to our hearts more deeply with each reading.*

*The first time we read, simply familiarize yourself with the story. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. And listen.*

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

*Say: As I read a second time, pay attention to what questions surface or what words strike you. Underline, highlight, or take notes on your page.*

*Read the passage again.*

*Pause for a moment in silence.*

*Say: Now, as I read this for a final time, I ask you to very intentionally invite the Holy Spirit to help you understand **why** a particular word, phrase, or perspective stood out to you.*

*Let's pray, "Holy Spirit, inspire in each of us the message you have for us in this particular reading for this particular day."*

*Read the passage a final time.*

*Pause for a moment in silence.*

*Now invite participants to share their insights, or simply what images and words struck them.*

## Check In

*Say: We're going to check in on how we did over the past week. Then review last week's challenges. You can read them aloud, or just give them a minute to glance at them on their Participant Guide before diving into the discussion questions below.*

### Review Last Week's Challenges

- Focus on the worship of God in your prayer. (Day 29)
- Ask how you can be a blessing to others? How can you inspire others to find their "I AM" as you have been inspired to? Incorporate it into your daily and weekly routine. (Day 30)
- Think about what you need to say NO to in order for you to say YES to the new life God has for you. Make a list. Begin to say "no" one at a time as you're able. (Day 31)

### Discuss

*Now, have each person report on how they did over the past week. You can use any, or all, of the questions below to help guide this time together.*

1. What lesson struck you the most this week (from the reflection on Annie Sullivan, to Keep Preaching the Truth to Yourself), and what about that lesson most moved you?
2. Of the challenges, what was the easiest?
3. What has been the most challenging? Maybe even fell off the radar?
4. What is your plan to get back on track?
5. Any notice in change of attitude, action, word, or emotion this week? How are you growing?

## Lessons Learned

*Say: Usually at this time we dive into today's lesson. This week we're going to look back at the whole journey we've taken together.*

1. What has been the biggest lesson you've learned during this program?
2. How has Scripture been opened to you over the last 30 days?
3. How has your attitude shifted over the last 30 days? Do you see a difference?
4. Are there any lessons you feel you need to "redo?"
5. What primary lie did you need to reject?
6. What is your new I AM?
7. What concrete changes does that new I AM make in your life?
8. Now that you have a new I AM, what daily habit do you need to form most to reinforce it?
9. How will you share this message with others?
10. Who are you going to share this message with, and how? (Change a life! Consider inviting that person to go through the I AM program with you!)

*For mature groups, where you'd trust participants to become leaders add the question: Would you be willing to lead a small group of individuals through the I AM program? (Be sure to follow up with whoever was willing, get this leader's guide in their hands, and encourage them to invite people to be a part of a group with them. It's not rocket science to change the world!)*

## Closing Prayer

*We'll close today by renewing our baptismal promises. These promises are powerful. They don't only remind us of who God is, but who we are—his sons and daughters, redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, and victorious over death and darkness because he rose from the dead. I will ask a series of questions – and you'll respond to each with a loud "I DO."*

### The Renewal of Baptismal Promises

*Leader: Do you renounce Satan?*

All: I do.

*L: And all his empty promises?*

All: I do.

*L: Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?*

All: I do.

*L: Do you renounce the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you?*

All: I do.

*L: Do you renounce Satan, the author and prince of sin?*

All: I do.

*L: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?*

All: I do.

*L: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?*

All: I do.

*L: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?*

All: I do.

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death and resurrection, you have shown us who you are, and who we are. We now celebrate the new life and the new identity we find in YOU. Help us to live out our Christian dignity, and to carry it into eternity, where we will praise you forever.

And thank you Lord, for my new brothers and sisters who made this journey with me! Amen.

*If you were able to meet with your group face to face, tonight would be a good time to celebrate in some way.*

*Be sure to make a note in your calendar to follow up with your group participants every month, even if it's with a simple text message that says, "How are you doing at living out your new I AM? I'm praying for you." Little connections like that go a long way.*

*Well done, group leader! THANK YOU for all you do for God and his people. YOU ARE a blessing.*