

The 'I AM' statements of Jesus. Six drafts of youth Bible discussions and group plans. (to spark ideas for your group).

In this document pack you will find rough outlines for sessions on the below topics. They will need updating and editing to fit your online or offline context and COVID safety guidance but if you are looking for last minute ideas they may help.

Christian

Session 1. I am the light of the world
Session 2. I am the true vine
Session 3. I am the way
Session 4. I am the good shepherd and gate
Session 5. I am the bread of life
Session 6. Before Abraham was, I Am
Extra Session. I am the resurrection
Verse cards for double-sided printing

The I AM statements of Jesus

Session 1

I am the light of the world

Spend some time catching up and welcoming people as they arrive.

Ask the young people to ask each other about how they are feeling about being back at school, what they are most and least looking forward to.

Game slot 1: Predingo (prediction bingo)

Ask one person to go out the room and prepare to speak about their summer for as long as possible. Meanwhile the rest of the group will write down 5 things they think the speaker might talk about. Invite the person back into the room and to start talking. The rest of the group tick off (bingo style) when their words/subjects/activities are mentioned. First person to tick off all 5 says 'predingo' and wins.

Introduce the Topic

SAY: Explain that Jesus is clear about who he is and how we can relate to him each day. Most people have heard of Jesus, they may even know some of the things he did, but not many have taken the time to think about what He said and how, amazingly, He can change our lives.

We are going to take a look at a few short but key statements that Jesus says, recorded in the Bible. All these statements begin with the phrase "I AM"

If you were to start a sentence with the phrase "I AM..." what would you say? Turn to the person next to you.

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(give group a few minutes to discuss, then ask groups to share to the rest of the group if appropriate).

If we are honest, most of us would finish that phrase negatively. We are very good at putting ourselves down "I am soo rubbish at maths"

It can be really difficult for us to be honest about who we are to others. Jesus shares who He is to His friends, the crowds and people who hated Him. He shares who he is to us and invites us to respond.

Quickly go through each I AM or see if the group know any already.

Game slot 2: blindfolded charades

Reason: Everyone can build their lives around the rock that is Jesus. It's no good just listening to someone talking about Him though. He wants you to hear Him for yourself! take a moment to pray.

Video clip option Jesus Memo video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjFEPObXvOM>

Group discussion intro:

Reading John 8: 1-11

Either read this passage together or watch a film clip depicting it or get a leader to tell the story in their own words.

(The woman caught in adultery)

Groups Bible reading and discussion

Read John 8:12

What strikes you from this short verse?

Why do you think this verse is so important to many Christians?

Why does it sometimes feel like the world is in darkness?

The Bible doesn't record that Jesus glowed in the dark, so what might he mean by being light?

How would you describe things for you at the moment if 1 was absolute darkness and 10 was as bright as the sun? Why?

We turn on lights to help us see, how might Jesus help us to see the world differently?

Seen anyone get publicly picked on? or has it happened to you?

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Should Jesus have let the woman go (who was caught cheating on her husband)?

How did Jesus light help the accusers see differently? (why did they drop the stones?)

How was Jesus light to the woman caught in adultery

Is it easier to point out someone else's faults than your own?

What did Jesus say to the woman? Why is it so amazing?

Finish

Get the group back together.

Explain that we are going to pray, and want this time to be focussed and quiet (so stand away from someone who may distract you).

Say: the world is in need of the light of Jesus, there is so much darkness. We can invite the light of Jesus into any room with our prayers

Turn off some lights to darken the room and light a candle and pray a prayer.

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I am the true vine

I AM week 2

Main theme:

(John 15) Abide in my love – what does it mean to abide in the love of God? How does what we do and focus on affect our connection to God?

Invitation: “Walk with me” for life... for peace... always in connection to the God of the universe

Games

Option 1– volleyball (prep: volley ball, court/net if possible – a row of chairs works well)

(player must find a position and then stand still) – take a step and you’re out
first to 5 then swap ends and go again (best out of three)

Option 2: rock paper scissors battle (prep: fake money)

Ask each person in the group to create their own currency on note sized paper.

Play rock paper scissors or similar. When someone loses, they give one of their notes to the winner – carry on for a while and then when you stop, the winner is the one with most ‘money’

Mention: then talk about generosity for god so loved...that he GAVE...

god is generous and so should we be.

Intro:

Film clip option (massive spoiler!) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWB31WFomz4>

Film clip (no spoiler but skip the first minute) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRIUhO4MdGU>

Play the clip and ask the group if they remember what the theme is.

SAY: Why is it so important to read and think about these things Jesus says? Libraries of books have been written about Jesus, people constantly debate him, most people know something about him many think he is a myth or legend and 2.4 billion people say they believe in him. Who he says he is is really important, even life changing.

what you thought about last week (I am the light of the world). This is big news, bigger than Iron man or even Thanos and very different to both of them! He is not a normal famous person!

Let’s discover more today...

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Group Discussion:

Bible Reading for small groups

John 15:1-4 or 1-17

Print out the passage and read it together, asking young people to highlight any phrases or parts that stand out to them.

ASK: what strikes you from this passage?

What do you think it means?

What does the word 'abiding' mean? Ask someone to look up the word on their phone.

Prayer: Write down one thing you really want, get everyone to write something then pray about it.

Do you think what we want in life would change when we abide in God's love?

Activity: Come up with 5 things we do every day that take us away from 'abiding' in God.

Come up with 5 things we could do each week to connect with God and 'abide in His Love'.

Think together how you can creatively share your ideas to the rest of the group to explain to them how to abide and stay connected to God.

It could be a drama, rap, game or something else.

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Alternative Discussion Questions

I am the vine

(John 15) Abide in my love – what does it mean to abide in the love of God?

Read the passage together then discuss these questions.

Discussion

Do you feel/know that you are chosen by God?

Is it normal to be generous with everyone you meet?

How is generosity supernatural? (because it isn't normal, giving to someone who hasn't earned it)

How can you be more generous this week?

keep it simple:

Go around the room and ask each person to sum up their week. Then get people to pray for each other.

What do you want more than anything else? Jesus wants you to live connected to Him, he says life is simple, stay connected to me and everything else will be sorted.

Extra questions for older yps

- 1) Think of 5 actions that help you remain in God's love
- 2) Think of 5 beliefs that take you out of living in God's Love
i.e. Believing 'I'm no good'
or believing 'I'm better than him or her'
- 3) Think of 5 actions that take you out of living in God's love
i.e. taking revenge

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Extra exercise (I am the true vine)

So what is your job? – to stay connected to perfect love.

On a sheet of card, draw a circle with you in the middle to represent abiding in Jesus love.

Read each statement and decide if it will help to pull you deeper into God's love, or pull you out of living in his love.

Will these things take you deeper or pull you away? (it will be different for everyone)

Write a few of these on not paper and fold up and put in a bowl, then in small groups, youth people can pull out a statement and discuss it together.

You could also leave some of the pieces of paper blank and ask the group to come up with their own ideas based on their habits.

- Believing you are a bad person and have no future
- Thinking God doesn't like me or is angry with me
- Taking 10mins to pray before you go to sleep
- comparing yourself to others
- Taking ages to get the perfect selfie, then waiting for the good comments to roll in
- spending time with friends
- worrying about exams
- staying up late on YouTube
- arguing with teachers
- not going to church
- believing that you need money to be secure in this life
- Asking God what He is thinking about.
- Spending more time looking for compliments off other people than what God is saying to you.

- Making a bully look stupid in front of everyone
- forming a secret WhatsApp group behind someone's back
- Asking for a friend to pray for you
- Getting a mentor
- shouting/arguing/being a pain to your parents
- Having doubts about God but taking them to God
- Your friends thinking you weird because you are so generous.

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scribble, doodle and note down your thoughts on this sheet

Let's start at the end of the passage.

Read John 15:16

Do you feel/know/think you are chosen by God?

If not, what can you do to discover His chosenness of you.....

What does God choose us to do?

Read John 15:17

What does this mean?.....

How do you connect to God?.....

Read John 15:3-4

What does it mean to be clean?.....

What is the key to living out God's power?

Read John 15:5

(Thoughts go
in the box)

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I am the way

I AM statements Session 3

John 14:1-7

Intro game: paper airplane contest

Activity: Treasure maps

Give out something that can be easily hidden in the church/hall along with pens and paper.

Put the group in pairs then ask the group to draw treasure maps, to the location of their hidden item. Then swap maps with person they are paired with and see if they can find the hidden item.

Ask young people to be creative with their map designs, don't make it too easy or too hard, it is meant to be a fun challenge for the other person.

Theme Intro: Welcome the group, give any notices and remind the group of the theme and why you have chosen it.

extra activity if time

SAY: Our I AM statement today comes from an amazing moment, a meal Jesus has with His friends right before HE is arrested, tortured, killed and then the big one, He rises. So before we read the I AM verse, let's read some of what else Jesus says in this last evening with His friends.

DO: Give out short sections from last supper passage from John, ask youth in groups to read the passage and write one sentence to sum up what Jesus was saying, to get an overview of the message Jesus gives.

He loves you to the end 13:1

- 13:2-11
- 13:18-30,
- 13:31-38
- 14:11-14
- 14:25-27

Read them all back together.

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Group Bible discussion

Break into small groups, assign a leader and go through the sheet below.

Prayer

Begin by asking how things are going this week. What are our biggest challenges, issues and problems?

Share then pray together.

Read together

SAY: Our I AM statement this evening is shared by Jesus in the context of a meal with his friends, His last meal with His friends. John describes this meal and what happens, let's just read the first thing he says about it:

READ: John 13:1

ASK: If you could hold a dinner party and invite any guests (alive or dead) who would you invite? And what would you ask them?

READ: John 14:1-7

ASK: What stands out to you from this passage?

What would your big question be for Jesus?

Do you ever worry about where you are going in life? How does this statement change how we think about the future?

What do you think Jesus is the way to?

Why does Jesus say He is 'the truth'?

What does it mean for Jesus to be 'the life'?

How can we know that way and truth and life?

End/Response (gathered back together or in groups)

SAY: Jesus knew what each person at that meal was like, even so He trusted to them the words, the truth, the power to change the world.

"Jesus is the way" is not just what people in crocs and socks say to make themselves feel better about the world.

It's THE WAY. The way of life that is totally opposed to the normal way of the world. It's true peace healing purpose and power and love.

Let's pray that this room will be like that room, that we would say yes to Jesus being the way in our lives. And to be people will go out into the world in power, to heal and transform and create.

Invite young people to make Jesus the way, like the treasures maps, make him our guide and way we decide where to go in life. Perhaps invite them to the next weekend trip and evening service.

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I am the good shepherd (and gate)

I AM statements

Session 4

Intro Game: Simon Says

Group Time (break into groups with access to Bibles and work sheet)

Read John 10-1-10

What does this passage show us about who Jesus is?

Have you ever believed a rumour that turned out to be totally untrue? (maybe a sibling told you something you believed for ages until you said it at school and got weird looks ie if you eat an apple seed it will grow in your stomach).

If someone has a Bible app on their phone, ask them to read out verse 10 in different translations (NIV, Message, NLT)

What would most people say life to the full/abundant life/overflowing life looks like?

In lockdown, did you feel under pressure to 'live your best life' and exercise, do art, start a charity etc? Why was there so much pressure?

Sometimes people look like they are having a life to the full (on their social media accounts)... but why might it not tell the whole picture?

If Jesus is like a gateway, what do you think life is like if we step through?

Finish with a prayer.

Altogether – gather everyone back together for the final activity.

Read out John 10:14-16

Activity

Make origami sheep together, use instructions or a YouTube video

Before you make the sheep, write the names of friends and family who are struggling at the moment, or you feel need the love and care of Jesus as their shepherd and gateway to God.

(ask the yps to do this on their own –and not share and discuss who they are writing about.)

Make the sheep then put them in the middle of the group and pray together for all the people represented.

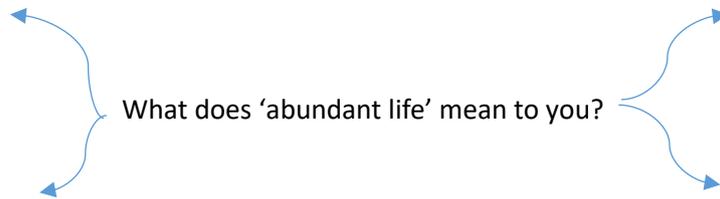
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Doodle Sheet

John 10:10

'The thief comes only to kill and destroy, I came that they may have life and have it **ABUNDANTLY**'

...but what does that mean?



What 'abundant life' does Jesus offer you?



Is it just having great stuff, doing fun things, being popular, talented, and clever... or something else?

Jesus says He is a gateway, would you walk through?

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I am the bread of life

I AM Statements

Session 5

Activity:

Games (human skittles and spoon on chair game?)

Intro video clip https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2u2fuFpY_c

Passage: John 6

Talk:

(Share with the group the background to today's I AM. Mentioning the below:

Story background (John 6) Starts with feeding of 5 thousand

- the crowds come back, maybe because of the food. However what Jesus says next turns many people away. – His fan base crumbles!

-why, because he starts telling them to 'feed on me' and 'drink from me'

Disciples start moaning at him – "don't say that, you're losing people" but they didn't get it

If Jesus came to start a grass roots campaign of a political uprising, he would have multiplied bread everywhere he went and maybe adding olives and salmon and a barbeque.

Jesus says, it's not about all that. (popularity, celebrity, being seen to be great),

not about just having a nice lunch and going home,

like going to church and just seeing some nice windows or listening to a nice song.

Groups

Read John 6:32-40

if it's not about a free lunch what is it all about?

What do you think about this I AM statement? Which has been your favourite so far?

Leaders may want to steer group to think about...

- it's about the giver of the bread, not the bread itself
- seeing spiritual reality of Jesus, behind our wants and needs
- bread is vital to life – Jesus is vital to our lives
- how we get distracted by stuff
- how is this good news?

If time

Worship – ask each group to come up with a short worship activity for whole group to join in with.

Give 5mins to prep then gather everyone together and do each worship activity together.

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Before Abraham was... I AM

I AM statements

Session 6

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOQCIGNRoPc> from 1:10 Bono (what or who was Jesus?)

Quiz – edited from <http://www.breakfreeyouthministry.com/>

Intro Bible passage, (if time)

Group Bible study

Begin by reading John 8:31-37

what's going on in this passage?

Ask everyone how their week has been.

What's been some of the biggest moments of this year for you? What stands out?

Today we are going to read that Jesus wasn't just a good guy who said nice things

Small Group Bible reading and discussion

read John 8:54-58

ASK: Where is the I AM statement in this passage?

SAY: It doesn't seem to make sense at first does it (no spoilers if you know it!)?

ASK: The people are so angry at what Jesus says, they pick up stones to kill Him. Why though?

SAY: Jesus says before Abraham was, 'I AM' The words we translate to I AM in English were of huge significance to the people.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYW-lmfk2Y> (play this clip)

SAY: Did you notice the I AM? It's God's personal name for himself, which he gives to Moses. The word 'God' is generic, it can mean lots of things, football is God to some people. But this name made the God Moses found in the desert, personal and different. Many Jewish communities wouldn't say the word in Hebrew, or write it, because it was so important to them.

In this passage, Jesus says, I am God but not just god, The God of Moses and Abraham and David and Jonah, The God who created everything and invented time.

This changes everything and it's the basis of what we call The Good News.

ACTIVITY: print out (laminates if possible) multiple business card sized copies of each of the I AM statements. Ask the yps to share which one stands out to them. Ask everyone to pick one, then pray for each person, using the chosen I AMs as the basis of the prayer.

Tell the group to take home their card and keep it somewhere to remind them of who Jesus is.

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The I AM statements of Jesus

Extra/intro session.

I am the resurrection and the life.

Catch-up: Allow time for group to catch-up and sharing how they are doing.

Game: Counting Game or One Word Story

Counting: Explain to the group that we are going to count out loud from 1 to 10 (20 for a bigger group). No one can say more than one number at a time and if two people speak at the same time, we go back to 0 and start again.

Story: Go round the circle with each person taking it in turns to say one word to build a random story. The first person begins with 'Once' second person might say 'upon', third 'a' and so on. See how far your story will get before someone decides it's 'the' 'end'.

Intro: Explain how the sessions will work this term. Explain what opportunities there are to invite friends to church events, mentioning that in this tough time, our friends may benefit from spending time with God and in community.

Explain what the group is for and why we meet together (ie what is church)

Prayer and reflect activity: Explain that we will now have a time of prayer together.

Say: The book of Psalms is a big collection of prayer-poems, where people are really honest about what they are feeling and going through. They put their feelings into prayers, not focussing just on themselves and their problems but looking to God, trying to focus on Him, with the faith that God won't just hear them but help them and be with them.

Ask everyone to write single words on scraps of paper to describe how they are feeling about...

School

The world

Home and family

The future

Then stick/pin/lay out all the words so everyone can see them.

Extra: If you are able to split into groups, ask the young people to write a short Psalm/prayer poem that incorporates how we are feeling, with some of the words that stand out to them from the list.

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Pray as a group using the collection of words as a focus point, with one of more of these methods:

- Ask the whole group to pray out loud, at the same time, with a short prayer that uses some of the words listed.
- Ask the whole group to next pray a silent prayer for each other, using the words.
- Finally, ask one young person or a leaders to pray for the group.

Bible discussion

If possible, split into small groups to read and discuss the passage.

Read together John 11:25-26 or John 11:17-37 (this can be done from phones or from Bibles if young people have brought their own.

Intro: Ask everyone to name one good and one bad thing about lockdown

Explain: This statement comes as Jesus arrives at the house of good friend, who has died. What do you think Jesus means when He says these words?

Ask: Do you think Mary understands what He is saying?

Lots of us have lost loved ones this year, it can feel like a very dark time when you lose someone close to you. Does anyone have any experience of this that they wouldn't mind sharing?

Do you think it helps to know that God went through something similar situations to us?

Where do you think God has been, during the pandemic?

What do you think it means to believe in Jesus?

In their exchange, Mary says she believes in life after death. Jesus say's 'you're looking at him'...Jesus's response, in one sense, is to say that rather than a notion or feeling, a life unlike anything else (overflowing and even beating death) is real and accessed in Him.

Final Activity:

Altogether.

Ask one person to rearrange the words on the scraps of paper from the previous activity, into the shape of a cross. Overlap the pieces so that no gaps are showing.

Read Psalm 23:1-4 and pray a final prayer that we would know Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life, walking with us this term and that He would bring new life in us and through us even if we are walking through the darkest valley.

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The 'I AM' statements of Jesus. Six drafts of youth Bible discussions and group plans. (to spark ideas for your group).

20:30 These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

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I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies. (John 11:25)

I am the vine and you are the branches, whoever abides in me and I in him shall bear much fruit. (John15:5)

I am the Good Shepherd, The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John10:11)

I am the light of the world; he who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life (John8:12)

I am the bread of Life, he who comes to me shall not hunger. (John 6:35)

I am the way, the truth and the life (John14:6)

I am the vine and you are the branches, whoever abides in me and I in him shall bear much fruit. (John15:5)

I am the Good Shepherd, The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John10:11)

I am the gate, if anyone enters through me he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture (John 10:9)

I am the light of the world; he who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life (John8:12)