

I Am

This is an excellent poem for small group work and dialogue.

Benefits of I Am

- Encourages visualization
- Fosters discussion of the story
- Creates empathy and understanding

Types of Stories for I Am

- Any story with strong characters or any character that plays a crucial role even if they are only mentioned in a verse or two: the young boy with the fish and bread at feeding 5000 or the scribes at the temple with young Jesus
- Look for stories that have characters dealing with conflicts or interesting situations
- Look for stories that have two characters in juxtaposition so that participants can create a two-voice poem.
- Suggestions: Deborah and Barak / Cain and Abel / people at the pool of Bethesda / Stephen the first martyr / Ananias who restores sight to Paul

Directions for I Am

- After telling the story, ask the large group to make a list of the characters.
- Share the sample “I Am...” poem “A Woman Healed”
- Break the class into several small groups. Each group will focus on one character in the story. Allow them to select a character or assign one.
- Give each group a set of “I Am...” cards.
- They are to respond to each card as though they are the character.
- They can skip any card that is not applicable to the character.
- They may use a card more than once.
- They may create different “I Am...” cards. For example, I celebrate, I race, I crave, etc.
- Once they have created a statement for each card, they are to arrange them as a poem.
- Look closely at the verbs and images on each card. Rewrite them to use stronger verbs or crisper images.
- Bring the groups together and share the poems.

Directions to make the I Am cards

1. Use 4 X 6 cards or cut 8 X 10 stock paper in half.
2. Write one I AM statement on each card: I want, I wonder, I fear, I hear, I see, I touch, I taste, I feel, I try, I hope, I understand, I dream, I cry, I whisper, I shout.
3. Write I am on 4 or 5 cards. The participants can use these to create any I am statement that they want to include.
4. Laminate the cards
5. Put a sticky note on each card. This is where the participants will write their responses.

Sample of completed I Am based upon Story # 195 / Matt 9:18-26 / Mark 5:21-43 / Luke 8:40-56

A Woman Healed

I am a woman - frail and sick

I want healing, strength, peace.

I have tried every remedy and medicine the doctors prescribed, but I only grow weaker.

I see massive crowds pressing around this man they call Jesus.

I wonder if I can slip through the crowds unnoticed.

I am a woman determined to find healing.

I hope to touch the fringe of his robe without anyone noticing me.

I understand that if people see me, I could be stoned for coming near the men.

I dream of a being part of a community rather than being the one they shun.

I am a woman who believes.

I touch the fringe of his clothes.

I feel immediate change.

I hear the Master ask, "Who touched me?"

I fear that his followers will punish me when they learn that I touched his robe.

I am a woman: frightened but hopeful.

I cry as I kneel before the Master.

I hear the Master call me daughter as he says, "Your faith has healed you."

I feel a total healing of my ravaged body.

I whisper, "Thank you, my Master."

I am a woman – healed.

Two-Voice Poem

The group who wrote about the woman healed joined with the group who wrote about Jairus. They selected identical I Am cards and revised as needed to create fluency and cohesion. The lines were then merged to create a two-voice poem.

I am a woman - frail and sick.
I am Jairus - ruler of the Synagogue.

I want healing, strength, peace.
I want healing for my daughter.

I see massive crowds pressing around this man they call Jesus.
I see the man Jesus and fall at his feet.

I am a woman determined to find healing.
I am Jairus, determined to save my child.

I fear that his followers will punish me when they learn that I touched his robe.
I fear that we will not reach my daughter in time.

I cry as I kneel before the Master.
I cry when my servants tell me my daughter has died.

I feel a total healing of my ravaged body.
I feel amazed when my daughter rises from her bed.

I whisper, "Thank you, Master."
I whisper, "Thank you, Master."

I am a woman – healed.
I am Jairus - a man who believes.