



# WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

Youth Group Session  
Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry  
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA 2005

Ages 13-18 – Workshop time 1.5 hours

- Objective:
1. To help your youth discover who Christ is
  2. Help our youth discover how they view themselves and how this relates to Christ
  3. Encourage our youth not to dwell on how others view us but to become comfortable with who they are as an image of God

Outline for retreat or youth group meeting:

Preparations:

1. Purchase needed items for snacks
2. Make copies of the Christ “I am” sheet

Needed items:

Thick markers - enough for one for each participant

Paper or construction paper

Scotch tape

Bibles – one for each group (you determine number of groups needed based upon participants)

“I am” worksheet

3. Opening Prayer
4. Conduct the following Ice Breaker  
**The Game** – Who are you? Who am I?

Prior to the event choose three famous people that the youth should all know. Come up with a list of facts about each famous person. Ask three participants to play act for the games. Break up the rest of the group into smaller teams. Bring out the first “famous person”. Each team gets to ask the person a question, but they cannot directly ask who they are. The questioning continues for three minutes, each team taking turns. At the end of the three minutes each team writes down their guess as to who the person may be.

Proceed with the next two “famous people” in the same manner. Once all three people have finished and all of the guesses have been written down, have each famous person step forward and let each team reveal their guess. Have the famous person confirm who they are. Each team gets a point for every correct answer.

5. At this point continue on with the lesson concerning the topic.

## **Lesson**

Have the group break up into groups of no less three and no more than six.

Pass out the bibles.

Ask them to define Jesus Christ in three sentences.

Give the team a topic related to the “I am’s” such as “The Vine”. Each team will be given a different topic.

Have them look up the various bible verses listed to guess which one fits the topic.

Once this game is completed. Discuss the different “I am’s” of Christ. What do they mean? How do these statements define who Christ is? Do these statements differ from how we would describe Christ? How do these truths about Christ affect us in our daily lives?

Have the youth read the passage from Matthew where Jesus directly asks Peter, “Who do you say I am?” Matthew 16:13-20. Discuss Peter’s answer. Discuss Jesus’ answer. Do we have the same faith as Peter? Do we believe that Jesus is truly the Christ? Allow them the time and opportunity to really explore their thoughts.

Ask them if they can think of anywhere in our prayers or services that we confirm Peter’s answer on a regular basis? There could be many possible answers – discuss them all, but for our purposes we are looking for The Creed. Ask them how this affects them in their daily lives. What does it mean for them to state each day that they ‘believe in One Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from true God begotten not created.’ Go back to the game that they played at the beginning of the session. How did the game correlate to what they are currently discussing? When do we accept Jesus as the Christ in our life?

Discuss the Ecumenical Councils that formulated the Creed and defended the two natures of Christ.

Break the group into two. Give them different points to argue concerning “who really was Jesus Christ?” Have them pretend that they are at the Ecumenical Council of Nicea and debate the nature of Christ.

Allow the debate to run for about 10 minutes. Discuss how they felt. Do they think it was hard to be an early Church Father? Be sure that there is an adult moderator to help along the debate or answer any questions about theology or heresies that may arise. Discuss prior to beginning exactly what doctrine, heresy and theology are and what they have to do with living our faith. If you are going to attempt the debate ensure that you are thoroughly prepared to discuss issues that might arise from the discussion. DO NOT conduct this particular debate without your Spiritual Father present.

The End

To close out the day you may want to have any of the following:

1. A Stump the Priest Time
2. A short synopsis of the day
3. A fun meal consisting of the top three favorite foods of the participants( you could take a poll a week or two before the event)
4. End the gathering in prayer or a service at which they would recite the Nicene Creed together to reaffirm their faith and belief in Who Christ is.

I AM snack buffet - “True” Red Vines(licorice), The Bread and dip, grape juice, animal crackers(for the Good Shepherd Animal Cracker), Milky “Way” bars

# I Am.....The Door (Change I Am on each sheet)

Which passage from the bible best fits your “I Am”?

John 10:11-15

John 14: 1 – 7

John 8:23

John 18: 33 – 37

John 10:9

John15: 1- 5

John 8:12

John 6:35

Revelations 1:8

## Master Sheet for the “I AM” Game

### John 10:11-15

“I am the **good shepherd**. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the father knows me and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

### John 14: 1 – 7

“Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life**; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him.”

### John 8:23

“He said to them, “You are from below, **I am from above**; you are of this world, I am not of this world.”

### John 18: 33 - 37

Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?” Jesus answered, “My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world.” Pilate said to him, ‘So you are a king?’ Jesus answered, **You say that I am a king**. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice.

### John 10:9

“I am **the door**; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

### John 15: 1-5 –

“I am the **true vine**, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

### John 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the **light of the world**; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

### John 6:35

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘I am the **bread of life**; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.’”

### Revelations 1:8

“I am the **Alpha and the Omega**, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty”

GUIDE FOR *Who do you say I am?* DISCUSSION  
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Who do you say I am? Who do you say I am? To us it seems like such a simple question. To us it seems like such a simple answer. But is it really so simple?

When we read in scripture Christ asking Peter, “but who do you say I am?” and Peter answering, “You are the Christ the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:15-16), it seems so simple to us, so crystal clear that Jesus is God’s Son – the Savior of the world. It seemed clear to Peter as well. But as we know, Peter, who had been granted this gift of understanding, who said he would lay down his life for Jesus; still doubted enough to deny knowing Christ three times. Why would Peter do such a thing? He lived with Jesus, he walked, ate, and spoke to Jesus daily. How could he not really believe enough that he was the Christ, the Son of the Living God?

We are all human and have our fears, our weaknesses and our doubts. We are on a journey. Peter had great faith, enough faith that when Peter answered, “You are the Christ the Son of the living God”, Jesus said, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:17-18) Jesus would build His church upon the faith of people like Peter. But Peter still had to complete his journey to fully understand who Jesus was and more importantly to fully accept who Jesus was. Peter did deny Jesus three times, as we just witnessed during Holy Week; but as Peter journeyed through confusion, fear, and doubt he had one thing to keep him on the right path...his faith!

Peter learned much after Jesus’ death and triumphant resurrection. He came full circle in his journey of establishing the truthfulness of his faith – he had to truly believe in Christ and in doing so, was given a second chance by Jesus: “Jesus said to them, ‘Come and have breakfast.’ Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. When they finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ A second time he said to him, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’...’Follow me.’(John 21:12-19).

You may have noticed that in the above passage from John that it states, “Now none of the disciples dared ask him, ‘Who are you?’ They knew it was the Lord.” At this point, following the Resurrection, those close to Jesus had two options: 1. deny what they witnessed and knew as the truth or 2. accept on faith that the Savior had fulfilled the prophecy and was among them. What of Peter? Peter denied Christ three times. Christ asked Peter three times to affirm his love for him. When Peter with his whole heart answered Jesus three times, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you’, Peter was forgiven his denial. Peter reaffirmed the faith that Jesus saw in him, the faith that was needed to be the foundation of the Church.

So how does this interaction between Jesus and Peter – between Jesus and His disciples affect us today? During our lives we will often stand before God and be asked by Him, “Who do you say I am?” What will our answer be? Will it be a logical statement of, ‘Jesus the Son of God’, because we think that is the right answer or will it be an answer of ‘Jesus the Son of God’, based on our faith like Peter, because we know that what our heart tells us about scripture is true?

We are on a journey – just like Peter. It will not always be easy. We may not always give the right answer or make the right decision. Don't become upset by this – we are human – no one is perfect except God. We must remember, that Christ has given us his infinite love and the example of His life as a road map to salvation. Listen in the silence, to your spiritual heart and it will guide you on the right path. We are continually given a 'second chance' (just like Peter), through repentance and forgiveness – a chance to say, 'Yes, Lord – I love you – have mercy on me a sinner' – a chance to answer the question, "Who do you say I am?"

Discussion questions for teenage youth group: If we truly believe that Jesus Christ is the messiah, the Son of the Living God – then how differently must we live our daily lives? How should this knowledge effect our actions? Christ says to Peter in the end, 'Follow me.' What does this mean? Can you think of another time that Jesus asks us to 'Follow him'? What does this have to do with knowing who Jesus is? How can we change our lives to strengthen our faith? What special tools and gifts has God and the Church given us to help us on our journey to salvation?