

2019 Florida/Georgia District Middle School Youth Gathering

I am: Greater than All

Pre-Gathering Bible Study

“I Am ...”

(Adult leaders: I suggest you allow your students to use their phones to look up Bible verses for this study. I would also encourage you to have students download a Bible app if they don't have one. My favorite is You Version Bible App + Audio, Daily verses, from Google Play or Play store.)

(Open your study time in prayer)

I Am ...

We hear this statement quite often in our lives. I am better than you, I can do anything better than you can, and back in the 1960s and '70s there was the heavyweight boxing champion of the world Muhammed Ali, who quite often said of himself, “I am the greatest of all time!”

Two other I Am statements have become very popular in the last two years. The first I Am statement comes from a guy named Thanos (please tell me everyone has seen Avengers Infinity Wars and Avengers Endgame). Thanos said ***I am Inevitable***, snapped his fingers, and half of all life in the universe disappeared.

Who knows what the other I Am statement is? That's right; it comes from Tony Stark at the end of the first Iron Man movie, and the last words he says before, he snaps his fingers, bringing all of those lost to Thanos' snap and dies. ***I AM Ironman.***

All of the I Am statements we just talked about are either self-proclaimed by man or come from a fantasy world. Here's something to remember if you ever get conceited and make this type of I Am statement. There's always someone bigger, stronger, smarter, or faster than us. Case in point, it was believed no one would ever beat the time of running a marathon in less than two hours. Here's the headline from October 11, 2019.

*Eliud Kipchoge went through the **marathon** finish line in just one hour, 59 minutes and 40 seconds.*

Eliud might now say, I AM the fastest man alive. That may be true until someone beats your time Eliud.

You may have noticed the theme of this year's Middle school gathering, "I AM: Greater than All."

Who do you think that I Am statement is referring to?

Look up 1 John 4:4 (Have someone read aloud)

So the I Am statement is referring to God (Christ), the one who is in you, and He (Jesus) is higher than the one who is in the world.

Who is in the world? (Satan)

The Bible has many I Am statements made by God the Father and Son. Today let's key in on two I am statements, as you prepare yourselves for the Gathering in a few weeks and what the speakers will be discussing with you.

Let's begin in the book of Exodus. Look up Exodus 3:14-15. (Have someone read aloud)

Here's the scene: Moses looks up on the mountain and sees a burning bush, he hikes up to the bush, is told by the voice of God to take off his shoes. Moses asks what He should call Him, **God says, "I am who I am."**

What does that statement mean to you?

God is saying, "I am everything." In the book of Revelation, God says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega." God is the beginning and the end. He always has been and always will be. God is I. He is a personal being, not some mystical power like some people believe. God is saying, "This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation."

Let's move forward to the New Testament and the Gospel of John. **Look up John 14:5-7** (Have someone read aloud)

The, I AM statement in verse six is perhaps the most potent statement Jesus ever made to His disciples.

“Jesus answered, **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**”

This is our Christian Faith statement!

Let’s break it down into four parts:

“I am the way.”

What does that statement mean to you?

(“I am the way.” As Jesus had just said to the disciples, we must keep on trusting in Him. We approach the Father through Jesus.)

“I am the truth.”

Same question. What does this statement mean to you?

(“I am the truth.” We can trust Jesus because all that is real and true is found in Him. He is God the Word, and through His Word He reveals His salvation.)

“I am the life.”

Once again. Based on what you’ve learned about the first two statements, what does this one mean to you?

(“I am the life.” Jesus is the source of physical and spiritual life. Whoever believes in Him has eternal life (John 3:16))

“No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Perhaps a bit more obvious, but let’s see what you think. What does this statement mean to you?

(There are many popular religions and beliefs that say, all religions reach God, they just take different paths. **Not true.** No one comes to the Father, God, except through faith in Jesus. Only one way leads us to the safety of God’s loving arms, Jesus.)

I am the greatest, I am number one, I am inevitable, and of course, I am Ironman. All I am statements, all not necessarily true.

One thing is for sure. When God or Jesus say, "I AM," we know it to be accurate because He is "The way, the truth, and the life."

He is with you always!

Amen

Close in Prayer

Resources:

The Bible NIV; ESV

Peoples Bible Commentary, Exodus, by Ernst H. Wendland

Peoples Bible Commentary, John, by Gary P. Baumler