

# LEADERS' GUIDE

**Thanks for being willing to lead a group!** Small group leaders, Sunday school class leaders and mentors are on the front line of pastoral care.

Pastoral care is essential: “to equip His [God’s] people for works of service, so that the body of Christ [the Church] may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:12-13).

## Spiritual Formation (Transformation)

The *Who Am I Becoming?* meeting format is designed to encourage spiritual formation (transformation). As you go through the series, you might think of your role as pastoral care, or leader or facilitator (not necessarily as teacher).

One of the primary goals of the meeting is to encourage everyone to participate, especially on the first section “Sharing About Exercises” and the section toward the end of each session “Spiritual Formation Exercises.” Sharing about exercises happens at the beginning of each meeting for Sessions 2-7 and is related to the exercise each person picked the week before. If you don’t get anything else done in the meeting, the “Sharing About Exercises” and “Spiritual Formation Exercises” sections are the most critical pieces.

One principle at work here is that you are helping people move from the “lecture” to the “workshop.” Consider an analogy:

You are in woodworking class in high school where you listen to the instructor explain how to make a coffee table. You take a written test on the subject and pass the test with flying colors. A year later, after you are out of high school, you decide to build a coffee table on your own. Unfortunately, it occurs to you that you don’t know how to operate the saw or the lathe or the spray paint gun. So ... you give up because you are not equipped. You had great head knowledge, but no real-world practical knowledge or experience.

Now imagine an alternative scenario, where in high school you actually build a coffee table in the workshop. Your instructor explains how to build the table and guides you every step of the way. You make mistakes along the way, and he helps you correct them as you go. You learn from your mistakes. You also observe others making coffee tables. A year later, after you are out of school, you decide to build an end table to accompany your coffee table. Although you have never built one before, you have the baseline skills to make a piece of furniture. You build it, and it turns out pretty well because you were equipped! In addition to great head knowledge, you had real-world practical knowledge and experience.

In similar fashion, in a spiritual sense, we as leaders are helping people move from the lecture to the workshop. The lecture being the curriculum that we present in the meeting. The workshop is analogous to each member doing an exercise outside the meeting that relates to the concepts they are learning about in the meeting. Additionally, hearing others share about their experiences regarding their exercises reinforces understanding of the principles and encourages the group members to keep plugging away.

Having the “Sharing About Exercises” section at the first part of the meeting has the potential of transforming your meeting into a time where people are talking about how Jesus is at work transforming their lives, in contrast, for example, to how their favorite sports team is doing. And while talking about sports can be a way of building relationships, we are aiming at intentional discipleship, not merely fellowship. Our goal is to provide a context in which people can grow in their faith and be transformed.

So, in this context, your role is keeping the meeting on track, encouraging everyone to participate and being empathetic and caring to members of the group. The teaching, if you will, ends up coming from the members of the group as much as from the material itself.

## Nuts & Bolts

Each week at the meeting, encourage group members to go to [whoamibecoming.org](http://whoamibecoming.org) to check out the “Online Resources for this Session” at the end of the *Meeting Handout*.

It is important to review each session’s *Meeting Handout* before the session. Consider how much time you

have to devote to the curriculum and adjust accordingly. The *Meeting Handouts* have suggested times for each part of the meeting; the first time listed in the meeting handout for each section is for a 90-minute format and the second time is for a 60-minute format.

In order to allow for everyone to participate, it is important to consider group size. Small group research shows that twelve people is the upper limit for group size if you want to optimize interactions. Eight people is probably ideal. So, if you have a Sunday School class or small group with more than twelve people, it's probably best to split up into smaller groups for this series. Additionally, this provides an opportunity for others to lead.

We encourage you to have group members take turns reading out loud the material in the *Series Overview* and the *Meeting Handouts*. It breaks things up to share in the reading, and it also gives everyone a chance to participate. Regarding the *Series Overview*, take time to discuss the various sections as you read through it.

At the beginning of each meeting (for Sessions 2-7), unapologetically go around the room and ask each group member how their exercise from the previous week went. This is loving accountability.

At the end of each meeting, when group members are picking an exercise, unapologetically go around the room and give each person a chance to pick an exercise or pass. There may be times when life is just too hard for a given group member to pick an exercise, knowing they will not be able to do it. This is an opportunity to be gracious.

At the end of the meeting, point people to the website which has many resources for going deeper. The first week, you might consider having everyone in the group bring up the website on their smartphones and navigate through the website with them.

Thanks again for being willing to lead your group through the *Who Am I Becoming?* curriculum!

### **The *Who Am I Becoming?* Team**