

# “I Am From” Poem: Facilitation Guide

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## Contemplatives In Action Curriculum

**Time:** 30 - 45 minutes

**Group:** Any number, then broken into small groups of 5-6

**Materials:** [“I Am From” Word Doc](#) (virtual), printed “I Am From” documents and pens (in person)

**Outcomes:** Students will reflect on their lived experiences.  
Students will recognize their story as unique in relation to their peers.

**Contemplatives In Action relation (bolded):**      **Self / Group / Community**  
Experience / **Reflection** / Action

**Summary:**

**Instructions** (5 minutes)  
**Individual Poem Writing** (20 minutes)  
**Small Group Sharing** (20 minutes)

*Facilitators: when applicable, suggested scripts will be written in italics.*

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**Virtual Tips:** Students may also use pen and paper when at home. Use the Individual Poem Writing time to create your small group breakouts in Teams.

**In-Person Tips:** Consider having writing music ready to play, such as classical music without words.

**Instructions** (5 minutes)

- Introduce the activity by sharing instructions and reading through an example.
- *Script: We are going to spend time in reflection, writing about our own stories. It is important that we think about our journey to find wisdom in our experiences. Don't worry – you do not need to be a poet to succeed! There is no right or wrong way to complete this activity. We will take the next 20 minutes to each write our own “I am From” poem, and then we'll share our poems in small groups.*
- Ask for a volunteer (or call on a student) to read over the original example poem by George Ella Lyons.
  - If virtual, screen share the [“I Am From” Word Doc](#) for all to view.

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### Individual Poem Writing (20 minutes)

*Outcome: Students will reflect on their lived experiences.*

- Allow 20 minutes for students to write their poems. If you're able, remain flexible with the time to let everyone finish their poems.
    - If virtual, use this time to create your small group breakouts in Microsoft Teams!
  - If you'd like, play some calm music or encourage students to play music in their own space (if virtual).
  - Provide time updates at 10 minutes remaining and 5 minutes remaining.
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### Small Group Sharing (20 minutes)

*Outcome: Students will recognize their story as unique in relation to their peers.*

- Break students into small groups of 5-6 to share their poems. Remind students to respect one another's time by only taking about 3 minutes each.
    - If virtual, pre-set your breakout rooms while students are writing their poems.
  - If students are done early, let them stay in their small groups anyways! They just learned a lot about each other and can spend time casually talking.
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If you have continued contact with this group of students, these poems are fun to come back to later and re-read. You can collect them or ask students to hold on to them for another date.