

WHO ARE YOU?



CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES

ANSWER KEY

Cover artwork by Nickolas H., Crossroads student

ABOUT THE COVER ARTWORK

The Crossroads communications team asked current students to submit pieces of art for the curriculum expansion project in the fall of 2017. The original artwork you see on the covers of the *Who Are You?* course is a piece created by a Tier 2 student named Nickolas. The letter below is the artist's description of his work.

In his letter, Nickolas references the etymology of Adam's name. Adam is created from dirt. The word for dirt in Hebrew is "adamah" (אדמה). God made Adam from the "adamah."

Date: 11-28-17

Title of artwork: "Spirit of His Creativity"

Theme: Who Am I?

When choosing this theme, I pondered the marvelous creative nature of God and all things created by God.

In Genesis 1:26, God created mankind in His image. That image is spiritual and creative. Mankind has inherent abilities to create. Since this creative capacity is part of the inherent image of God in us, exploring and exercising our creativity can be a means of better knowing ourselves and God.

Instead of showing the moment when God forms Adam's body out of dirt, "Spirit of His Creativity" shows God giving Adam the final touch of life, which will awaken his inner creative being, making him more fully human.

So, when asked, "Who am I?" . . .

I'm Adam, the material out of which God fashioned me.

I'm human, created as a creative being with God's touch of life that has awakened my inner creativity and made me even more human.

I am the "Spirit of His Creativity."

Sincerely,



Nickolas



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Some content and ideas within this course have been excerpted from Ray Pritchard's book *An Anchor for the Soul: Bible Study*. Crossroads is deeply thankful to Dr. Pritchard for his generosity in granting Crossroads permission to use his materials for this course and to use his book *An Anchor for the Soul* (available at www.keepbelieving.com) as a source of inspiration for the course itself.

INTRODUCTION

Who Are You? explores the big questions that all people have about life: **Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?** We all look for answers to these questions. We search for them in many places. The Bible offers answers to those questions. It also offers hope for a new and better life. And it tells us that the first step toward discovering that life is knowing God.

This course is written with two goals in mind: to introduce students to a God who loves them and cares deeply about them and to create an opportunity for mentors and students to learn about each other's lives while learning about God together.

We challenge you to share openly with your students. When possible, provide examples from your life. Find ways to connect with them through shared experiences, expectations, hopes and dreams. Most of the questions are open-ended and have been written with the intention of encouraging students to share their personal thoughts, which will also help you to better understand where each student is on their faith journey. The questions will also give you opportunities to share Christ's love with students. Through these lessons, we want to help students learn how God sees them: men and women made in His image and worthy of His love.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To help students discover their need for God
- To help students understand God's desire for a relationship with each of us
- To help students recognize the importance of knowing Jesus as their Savior

Study Tools

Throughout this course, students will be provided the tools listed below to assist them in their studies. These tools provide ways that you can interact with students.



CONVERSATION BOXES: We have included some spaces throughout the lessons that we call **conversation boxes**. These conversation boxes are for students to use to write questions and thoughts they have about the lesson or about life. You can also respond to a student in any space that the student has not filled.



ACTION STEPS: There is a challenge at the end of each lesson called an **action step**. It asks the student to apply what they have learned. If they feel that they need help or encouragement to complete it, they may simply write down what they plan to do. You can follow up with the student to see if they've completed it.



ROADMAPS: Each lesson comes with a corresponding insert called a **Roadmap**. The Roadmap is for the student to use while they are waiting for their next lesson. It gives them five days' worth of activities. It lets them think more about the topics and ideas in the lesson.

Glossary of Terms

Each lesson contains Bible names, terms and ideas that may be new to students. We will do our best to provide definitions that are easy to understand. The list below includes all of the terms found in this course.

Contentment – A feeling of being happy and satisfied. In the Bible, it is a supernatural peace that comes from knowing and obeying God.

Ecclesiastes – A book in the Bible. It is found in the Old Testament (see “**Old Testament**” below). It was likely written by Solomon (see “**Solomon**” below).

Faith – Trust in something or someone that cannot be seen.

Forgiven – A word used to describe a person after God has removed the sin from their life (see “**sin**” below). When God forgives us, He no longer blames us for our past and He cancels any debt we owed Him for sins we committed.

God-Shaped Hole – A concept talked about by theologians (see “**theologian**” below). It refers to a deep longing. It is a sense that you lack something meaningful in your life.

Gospel – The good news about Jesus Christ found in the Bible. The word can also be used to describe the first four books of the New Testament in the Bible, which are written about Jesus’ life and ministry.

Israel – The name of the kingdom that God established for His people. It was located approximately where the nation of Israel is located today in the Middle East region of Asia.

Old Testament – The first part of the Christian Bible. It contains the law, prophecy, history and wisdom literature of the people of Israel. It tells the stories of God’s people before Jesus Christ was born.

Prodigal – Someone who wastes a lot of money and time and does not value what they have.

Scripture – Another way to refer to the words in the Bible. All Scripture was given to us by God and written down by men.

Shame – A result of sin (see “**sin**” below); closely related to guilt. It is an awareness that we will never live up to God’s expectations.

Sin – An action, thought or spoken word that goes against God’s divine plan. When we commit sins, we do things that are wrong and break God’s laws. Sins are the things that we do—or fail to do—that make us less than perfect. Sins keep us from growing closer to Jesus.

Solomon – A king of Israel. He was the most powerful king in the Bible. He had great riches. God gave him the gift of wisdom.

Theologian – Someone who studies who God is. They study the Bible, the nature of God and other elements of the Christian faith. Theologians often write books about God and faith.

LESSON 1

Lesson focus: God wants us to know Him.

Answers

1. Students will choose a variety of answers. Their responses will give you your first glance into their lives and backgrounds on a very basic level.
2. You may read that people get involved in gangs, relationships or drugs; become a shop guy (black-market salesman); seek to control others; take classes; spend all their time exercising or read the Bible all day long. Some answers you read may be shocking. Do not shy away from what the student has written. We are trying to meet students where they are, not demand they clean up their lives or language before learning about Jesus or beginning to follow Him in earnest.
3. Students' answers may include: we all need food and shelter; we experience pain and loss; we want to be loved; we want to belong; we have feelings, hopes and desires; we want there to be more to life than our present circumstances. If the student mentions only tangible or superficial things, suggest to them that we all need love and we all long for a purpose and meaning for our lives.
4. Please share your own answers to these questions in response to the student's answers. You can respond in the lesson or in your letter.
5. If you are comfortable, share your own answer to this question with your student.
6. Solomon chased after material things and experiences but discovered that none of those things brought true meaning and purpose to his life. He realized he needed to look somewhere else.
7. If the student answers yes, they may write about searching for meaning in relationships, money, drugs, etc. Some students may say that they are still struggling with a particular issue. If so, please indicate your sympathy for their situation and encourage them to believe that change is possible.
8. This question is designed to help you understand your student's faith. They may be a Christian, or they may have just begun their search for God. They also might be Muslim, agnostic, Jehovah's Witness, etc. No matter what their faith is, it is great that they are taking the course. Please keep in mind that it is not our job to convince the student to follow Christ—that is the Holy Spirit's job.
9. Many students will answer yes, but it is okay if they answer no. Some people may not be fully aware of the longing or pain that exists in their lives. If the student answers no, read the rest of their lesson to get a better sense of where they are on their spiritual journey. Then, if you are comfortable doing so, share reflections about your own life and ask questions that might lead them to think more deeply about the idea of their need for God.
10. If the student answers yes, encourage them to continue to rely on God's love for them. If they answer no, acknowledge their doubt and let them know that God loves them regardless (John 3:16–17, John 10:10, Ephesians 2:4–5).
11. The student's answer will reflect their understanding of who God is and may also reveal how they feel about themselves.
12. Students may write that God did not destroy them or that God went looking for them. Remind them that God also comes looking for us (Luke 19:10).
13. Students' answers may include: God loved the world; God gave His only Son; God sent His Son to save the world, not to judge it.
14. Some students may say that God loves them. Others may not make this connection. Do your best to encourage them to continue studying to learn more about who God is and how much He loves them. Affirm their worth in God's eyes.

LESSON 2

Lesson focus: When we know who we are in God's eyes, we find purpose and meaning for our lives.

Answers

1. Students may share many personal details, or they may share very little. Both extremes are possible when people in prison are asked to share information about themselves. They are rarely asked for personal responses; they may write a lengthy response out of excitement, or they may be suspicious of such requests and reluctant to be vulnerable.
2. This may be the most positive answer you read from your student, or it might reflect a broken relationship or the view of someone who knows all the worst things the student has ever done. Be sure to respond gently if they share a negative image of themselves.
3. Even if a student does not write anything here, they will have thought about the question. Please do not push them to answer it if they have left it blank. People in prison have varying relationships with their family members. Some have contact with loved ones on the outside, but many have not heard from friends or family for years. They may be ashamed or may not be ready to deal with broken relationships. Family can be a difficult subject, but we want students to think about it because our relationships with our family often have a dramatic effect on who we become.
4. The passage indicates that the son saw himself as a sinner, no longer worthy of being called a son, only worthy of working as his father's servant. Students may quote the story: "Father, I have sinned against heaven. And I have sinned against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants" (Luke 15:18–19).
5. Some students may include the entire last paragraph of the story, but the part we want them to focus on is the last four sentences: "This son of mine was dead. And now he is alive again. He was lost. And now he is found." The father was overjoyed to have his son home—he was entirely focused on his son's return, not where he had been or what he had done. Jesus tells us that this is God's reaction to us when we choose to follow Him.
6. This answer will reflect the student's perception and understanding of God, and it may also reveal the way they view themselves on a deeper level. If a student circles "useless" or "lost," share an encouraging Scripture passage (for example: Romans 8:38–39, 1 John 4:9, Ephesians 2:10).
7. Students will most likely list Tairone's crimes and reference his lifestyle. Be careful of commenting on Tairone's past, as students may be able to identify with Tairone and his choices. If you have a similar past, this may be a great place for you to share your experiences and how God has impacted your life since that time.
8. Students may answer factually and talk about Tairone's participation in his church's van ministry. If they do, point them back to his larger purpose of reaching youth with the Gospel and sharing his story in order to change their futures, so that they do not make the same mistakes he made.
9. The student's answer will help you learn more about their interests. The student may also have chosen the answer because they identify with that biblical character or story in some way. Share with the student which character interests you the most and the reason for your answer.
10. Answers will vary. If the student answers yes, encourage them to think of ways to impact others right now. If they answer no, recognize that they may not yet trust that God wants to use them, or they may not even believe in God. In those instances, encourage them to keep studying and let them know that God loves them and sees potential in them.

LESSON 3

Lesson focus: Jesus makes it possible for our lives to change completely.

Answers

1. Students may list physical desires like better food, or they may say that they want to get out of prison or to fix broken relationships with friends or family members. If they mention family, encourage them to write a letter to a family member, even if they are not able to send it. Advise them to write things that they love or miss about their family member.
2. Students may say they wish they could change their past, their current situation or broken relationships. Students might also respond by saying they are on a good path right now and do not need to change. In either case, share something you are working to change in your life. Consider sharing Philippians 3:13–14.
3. Students may respond that they tried to quit drinking or doing drugs or that they tried to address things like anger issues. Acknowledge that it can be frustrating to fail. Encourage them not to berate themselves, but to learn from the past. If you can, give an example of a time you tried to change but did not succeed. Remind them that even Paul struggled to change (see Romans 7:15).
4. When we follow Jesus, we begin to see the world and the people in it differently. We find purpose for our lives. We understand that everything that happens is part of God’s larger plan—even difficult things. We desire to help people. We find peace about death. Our fear is minimized as we realize that God is in control. Our joy expands as we begin to produce the fruits of the Spirit in our lives. All of these things help us live life to the fullest.
5. The factual answer is that she was facing death by stoning, but students may also reflect on possible events leading up to that situation—being judged, being shamed, etc.
6. Some students may identify with the woman in the story and her situation, so any additional words they write may be very personal. If they share something personal, point them to God’s grace that Jesus shows in the story.
7. The people in the crowd walked away because they knew they were not perfect. None of them could claim they had not sinned, just like none of us can. It is important for students to realize that they are not alone in their guilt. The whole crowd walked away; all of us would have as well. Romans 3:23 is a good passage to share in response to this question.
8. The question is intended for the student’s personal reflection. Let them know how you would answer the question as well.
9. Students may respond with considerable emotion. Students who are Christians often have a deep understanding of their need to be forgiven (Luke 7:47). They also comprehend more completely the freedom that forgiveness provides. Be careful not to comment on a student’s crime, even if they mention it in passing.
10. Encourage students to pursue the life they have described and to take steps toward that future. Remind them that the place they live does not determine their purpose if God is in control of their lives. God used Paul to write the Epistles from prison. God chose Timothy from a tiny village in the middle of nowhere. John wrote the books of 1 John, 2 John and 3 John during his exile on Patmos. These individuals had a huge impact on all Christians.
11. Answers will range from “God has completely changed my life” to “I’m not interested.” Others may say they are Christians but that they are not seeing a lot of change in their lives. If their life has changed, celebrate that with them. If they are still seeking or struggling, try to answer any questions they have written, share how knowing God has impacted your life and encourage them to keep reading and studying.



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