



The Busy Person's Retreat

Scrutiny Examen Retreat

Encounter • Entrust • Engage

February 18-March 30, 2024

The Examen Prayer

St. Ignatius of Loyola, believed that the prayer exercise called the “Examen” should be the most important quarter-of-an-hour of a person’s day, and yet today most Christians have never even heard of it. St. Ignatius insisted that members of his order, the Jesuits, pray the Daily Examen.

In the Examen, we review our recent past to find God and God’s blessings in our daily life. We also look at the moments that did not go so well, when we were hurt, or we hurt someone. We thank God for the blessings and ask for healing and forgiveness for the moments that did not go so well. Having reflected on the past, we turn to the future and ask God for his grace through our upcoming challenges and opportunities.

St. Ignatius advised that the Examen should be prayed twice a day – at lunch and at night. But for beginners he recommended that they pray the Examen once a day.

St. Ignatius provides a simple five step routine for our Daily Examen:

1. **Give Thanks** – I begin by giving God thanks for all things
2. **Pray for the Spirit** – I ask the Holy Spirit to guide my prayer
3. **Find God** – I find the presence of God in my day
4. **Anything Wrong?** – I seek forgiveness and healing
5. **What Now?** – I look forward in hope

The Scrutiny Examen Retreat

This retreat is easy. We just ask that over the next weeks you make a commitment to pray the Daily Examen each day, just once a day. Included in this packet are five versions of the Examen Prayer that you can use in praying the Examen prayer. Each day we provide a separate set of reflection questions for each of the steps of the Examen prayer that you can reflect on. As you reflect on the question in prayer, imagine yourself in dialog with Jesus Christ.

You are encouraged to write out your responses for each question. You can go back later and review your answers to further reflect on God’s presence in your life. We provided five days of reflections, one for each weekday. We encourage you on the weekend to spend a little extra time reading over your prayer responses for the week to reflect on God’s presence throughout the week. You may continue to pray the Examen Prayer over the weekend by praying with the version of the prayer you liked best.

OPTION 1 (Traditional)

Daily Examen Use this page or your own personal journal. Take 10 minutes at the end of your day for review and remember that you do not have to complete every step of the Examen. Consistency is the most important goal.

Transition: Do I recognize that I am loved by God today? _____Y _____N

Step #1: What am I grateful for today?

Step #2: Am I ready to let go of the busyness of my daily “to do” list & let the Holy Spirit lead my prayer? _____Y _____N

Step #3: Where was God today when I saw His action at work?

Where did I need God today, but did not see Him?

What was my mood in the morning? ...after lunch? ... after dinner?

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

Step #4: Who might I need to forgive today (anything large or small)? What thought/action of mine might need forgiveness (anything large or small)?

WHO

WHAT

Step #5: What good thing have I learned today about myself/about God that I can take into tomorrow?

MY GOOD-NESS

GOD’S GOOD-NESS

Transition: Close with prayer of choice (Our Father, your own words, etc.)

OPTION 2 (Freedom/Unfreedom)

Daily Examen Use this page or your own personal journal. Take 10 minutes at the end of your day for review and remember that you do not have to complete every step of the Examen. Consistency is the most important goal.

Transition: Do I recognize that I am loved by God today? _____Y _____N

Step #1: What am I grateful for today?

Step #2: Am I ready to let go of the busyness of my daily “to do” list & let the Holy Spirit lead my prayer? _____Y _____N

Step #3: What was my most “unfree” moment of the day? (When was I in a bad mood? When did I let me strong negative emotions control my thoughts & actions?)

What was my most “free” moment of the day? (When was I in a good mood? When did the most faithful, hopeful, and loving side of me run the show?)

Step #4: Who might I need to forgive today (anything large or small)? What thought/action of mine might need forgiveness (anything large or small)?

WHO

WHAT

Step #5: What good thing have I learned today about myself/about God that I can take into tomorrow?

MY GOOD-NESS

GOD’S GOOD-NESS

Transition: Close with prayer of choice (Our Father, your own words, etc.)

OPTION 3 (Cling/Avoid/Just Right)

Daily Examen Use this page or your own personal journal. Take 10 minutes at the end of your day for review and remember that you do not have to complete every step of the Examen. Consistency is the most important goal.

Transition: Do I recognize that I am loved by God today? _____Y _____N

Step #1: What am I grateful for today?

Step #2: Am I ready to let go of the busyness of my daily “to do” list & let the Holy Spirit lead my prayer? _____Y _____N

Step #3: I review my day in three separate ways... What person, place or activity do I cling to too tightly? What person, place, thing or activity am I avoiding? What person, place, thing or activity do I have just right in a balance? I don't just pick the first thing that comes to mind. I take my time and look honestly at my thoughts and actions to see these areas of balance/out of balance.

Cling

Avoid

Just Right

Step #4: Who might I need to forgive today (anything large or small)? What thought/action of mine might need forgiveness (anything large or small)?

WHO

WHAT

Step #5: What good thing have I learned today about myself/about God that I can take into tomorrow?

MY GOOD-NESS

GOD'S GOOD-NESS

Transition: Close with prayer of choice (Our Father, your own words, etc.)

OPTION 4 (God, Self & Others)

Daily Examen Use this page or your own personal journal. Take 10 minutes at the end of your day for review and remember that you do not have to complete every step of the Examen. Consistency is the most important goal.

Transition: Do I recognize that I am loved by God today? _____Y _____N

Step #1: What am I grateful for today?

Step #2: Am I ready to let go of the busyness of my daily “to do” list & let the Holy Spirit lead my prayer? _____Y _____N

Step #3: I reflect on three kinds of relationships today: my relationship with God, my relationship with myself and my relationship with others. One builds on the next and if any are out of order, they all suffer. What is my disposition toward God, myself, others? Am I kind, patient and loving? Or am I harsh critical and impatient? Which of these relationships suffers the most?

God

Self

Others

Step #4: Who might I need to forgive today (anything large or small)? What thought/action of mine might need forgiveness (anything large or small)?

WHO

WHAT

Step #5: What good thing have I learned today about myself/about God that I can take into tomorrow?

MY GOOD-NESS

GOD’S GOOD-NESS

Transition: Close with prayer of choice (Our Father, your own words, etc.)

OPTION 5 (Hole in the Fortress Wall)

Daily Examen Use this page or your own personal journal. Take 10 minutes at the end of your day for review and remember that you do not have to complete every step of the Examen. Consistency is the most important goal.

Transition: Do I recognize that I am loved by God today? _____Y _____N

Step #1: What am I grateful for today?

Step #2: Am I ready to let go of the busyness of my daily “to do” list & let the Holy Spirit lead my prayer? _____Y _____N

Step #3: I ask God to show me how a particular situation played into one of my weak spots. Which of my “buttons” was pushed today? What caused me to be oversensitive, prickly, overly emotional, neglectful, or self-deceptive? I ask God to show me how He can help me when faced with this again.

Step #4: Who might I need to forgive today (anything large or small)? What thought/action of mine might need forgiveness (anything large or small)?

WHO

WHAT

Step #5: What good thing have I learned today about myself/about God that I can take into tomorrow?

MY GOOD-NESS

GOD’S GOOD-NESS

Transition: Close with prayer of choice (Our Father, your own words, etc.)