

Facilitator Instructions for Ignatian Examen

[Optional] Materials:

- Pens and paper for notetaking during or after the Examen
- Participant Examen Handout: <http://isblog.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/17>

The Ignatian Examen is a prayer of reflection and commitment through which 16th century Saint Ignatius Loyola endeavored to recognize God in his daily life. Today, Christians in the Jesuit tradition continue this daily practice to develop a growing awareness of God's grace and to access the power of the Holy Spirit to change their lives.

The version of the Examen described below is the traditional version which has five steps: 1) Ask God for His Light 2) Give thanks 3) Review the day 4) Face our shortcomings 5) Look toward the day to come.

An optional breath prayer is included below to help you relax into this time of reflection.

Ignatian Examen (with centering breath prayer)

Lord, show me how You are at work in my life. Help me to see that You are involved in my every day. I invite Your light to shine so I can see You clearly. If there something specific welling up inside of me that I need to bring before You, help me to release it to Your care so You can do with it whatever You will. Now, the first step of the Examen, to seek the Peace of Christ available to all.

Breathe in the breath of God

Breathe out your cares and concerns

Breathe in the love of God

Breathe out your doubts and despairs

Breathe in the life of God

Breathe out your fears and frustrations

We sit quietly before the One who gives life and love to all creation,

We sit in awe of the One who formed us in our mother's wombs

We sit at peace surrounded by the One who fills every fiber of our being

Breathe in the breath of God

Breathe out your tensions and turmoil

Breathe in the love of God

Breathe out your haste and hurry

Breathe in the life of God

Breathe out your work and worry

We sit quietly before the One who gives life and love to all creation,

We sit in awe of the One who formed us in our mother's wombs

We sit at peace surrounded by the One who fills every fiber of our being

PAUSE

The next step -- to be grateful. If you are grateful, tell God why that is. What is it that you want to say about this gratitude? About what God is giving you? If you don't feel grateful, tell God that. Ask God to help you remember the blessings that are in your life. In your family, your work, your relationships.

PAUSE

The next step -- to review the events of the day. Reflect over the past 24 hours. Imagine as if the past 24 hours were like a movie. You're watching as an interested observer. Not as a critic. Try not to judge whatever you did or whatever was done to you. Just notice. Where was I? Who was I with? What was I doing? So I invite you now to play the tape of the past 24 hours.

PAUSE

As you played this tape in your mind, you might have noticed particular blessings or challenges that stood out. Take note of those. These are the key moments of your day. Moments where God may be trying to talk to you; to teach you; to speak to you.

Short pause

Choose one particular blessing from your day. Go back to that time. Replay it in your head. Why was that such a blessing to you? Maybe to other people it would have seemed small or ordinary. But for some reason that moment, that person or that situation really made you feel grateful. Bring that reason for gratitude before God. Why does that gift mean so much? God, what is it that You're trying to tell me through that person or situation?

PAUSE

Now consider a challenge. Was there something in the course of your day that was difficult, frustrating or confusing? Play it over in your head. Ask God to help teach you in this moment. God, why is it that this person is so difficult for me? What part of my life feels unmanageable? God, I trust that You were there in the challenges too. Help me to hear what it is that You were trying to say through these challenges.

Adapted by Cathy White from Dan Dixon's Examen: <https://youtu.be/-is-XqyCZB4>
Centering Breath Prayer: <http://godspacelight.com/2009/02/16/a-breathing-prayer/>

PAUSE

The next step -- ask God for healing and forgiveness. God greatly desires to heal us in the area of our greatest need like Jesus helped Bartimaeus the blind man (Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43). Bring before God an area of your life that needs healing -- that area of struggle that needs God's loving touch. Is it physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual? You might imagine yourself showing that area to God or perhaps He shows it to you. In being vulnerable, we are reminded that we need God. That we are in need of His mercy, His love, His compassion. Ask God, "Where in my life do I need You most?" Like he asked Bartimaeus, Jesus is asking us "What do you want me to do for you?" Be still in God's presence to contemplate those questions.

PAUSE

The last step of the Examen -- look to tomorrow. Look at the next 24 hours and ask for wisdom. What is it that excites you or makes you nervous about the day to come? What do you need from God? How will you live tomorrow consistently aware of God's presence? You might imagine God accompanying you as you do chores or enjoy nature. See Him with you as you spend time at home or work or with friends or family. Ask God for the grace you need to live the next 24 hours fully in God's presence.

PAUSE

Lord, thank you for this time of reflection and contemplation with You, my Rock and my Fortress in whom I trust. Amen.

Ignatian monks practiced this twice a day at noon and in the evening. In our busy lives, what benefit would there be to doing it daily? What time of day would work best for you?

An app is available on iTunes called *Re-imagine the Examen* so you can practice it on the go and explore other types of Examens besides this traditional approach.