

# 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>

## **Sharing Introductions:**

Ask each person to introduce herself/himself [if necessary] and share 1-2 sentences about what led them to participate today.

## **Intro Remarks** [for 1<sup>st</sup> meeting and when newcomers are present]:

Today we are doing the Ignatian Examen. The Examen is a prayer of reflection and commitment through which 16<sup>th</sup> century Saint Ignatius Loyola endeavored to recognize God in his daily life. 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 we are following today 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.

To start, I will lead us through a breath prayer help us relax into this time with our Lord who loves us deeply. I will pause for a minute of silence after this prayer and intermittently as we go through the Examen. Let us begin with prayer...

## **Ignatian Examen**

Lord, show us how You are at work in our lives. Help us to see that You are involved in our every day. We invite Your light to shine so we can see You clearly. If there something specific welling up inside of us that we need to bring before You, help us to release it to You 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 (~1 minute)

For those who are ready, let us move on to 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 (~1 minute)

It is time for a 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 (~1 minute)

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 (~30 sec)

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? I invite you to give God the space to speak to you about what He may have to say about this blessing.

PAUSE (~1 minute)

For those of you who are ready, I now invite you to consider a challenge. 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. I invite you to give God the space to speak to you about one of the challenges in your day.

PAUSE (~1 minute)

The next step is to 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). Like Bartimaeus, bring before God an area of your life that needs healing. That area of struggle (physical, spiritual, mental, emotional) that needs God's loving touch. You might imagine yourself showing that area to God. In being vulnerable, we are reminded that we need God. That we are in need of His mercy. His love. His compassion. So I encourage you to ask God, "Where in my life do I need You most?" Like Jesus asked Bartimaeus, Jesus is asking us "What do you want me to do for you?"

PAUSE (~1 minute)

For those of you who are ready, I invite you to 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 take your children to school, go to work or appointments. Or joining you as you spend time with friends or family. Ask God for the grace you need to live the next 24 hours fully in God's presence.

PAUSE (~1 minute)

Close the Examen with short prayer of gratitude.

If in a group setting and time permits...would anyone like to share their experience?

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 Examen discernment besides the traditional approach we practiced today. Can you imagine doing this while exercising, driving or doing chores?

**Close the Group in prayer** and pray for God to lead others to the next group meeting; for His will to be done in our lives; and that we may tell others of God's power and peace when we practice stillness and listening.