



JESUIT VOLUNTEER CORPS

FACILITATOR GUIDE (EXAMEN)

INTRODUCTION

The Examen, a reflective practice popularized by St. Ignatius, is the focal point of our prayer together. We know that for some this will be new and others may be familiar with it. The structure is relatively simple and can be adapted in various ways. Two key things about the Examen:

1. It is a way to reflect on our relationship with God; noticing when we responded to God's presence and when we may have avoided or ignored God's presence, and
2. It is ultimately about deepening our relationship with God.

St. Ignatius believed that being reflective and deepening our relationship with God would enable us to live and love as truest self. We hope that this practice resonates with you in your own prayer life. The leader will walk you through the Examen by reading prompts to guide your reflection about the day. There are five "movements," or parts, to the Examen. We will pray the full Examen, but provide focused guidance about some of the movements.

Next, we'll continue with intercessions by inviting people to name people or situations they want to lift up in prayer. Anyone is free to offer their prayer intentions aloud here; don't worry about the format or formula that you use -- speak in whatever manner is most comfortable for you.

The prayer leader concludes the intercessions by saying, "Let us pray..." and we will all recite the closing prayer together. This prayer, "God Bless the World," was written in 1962 by Jack Morris, a Jesuit who is considered to be the "original animator" of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps.

Finally, we will conclude with the sign of peace.

OPENING SONG

EXAMEN

Find a position that is both comfortable and allows you to focus. For many people, this means having your lower back and shoulders supported by a chair, wall or the floor. If you want to move to a different space in the room, please do so now.

[Pause until all are settled.]

I want to remind you to follow my prompts, insofar as you find them helpful, and pay attention to the ways the Spirit is leading *you*.

The focus of our Examen prayer will be the first two steps or movements: Attentiveness and Gratitude.

First, **attentiveness**.

In your own words, invite God to be with you in this prayer.

[Pause...]

What do you need to be fully present?

[Pause...]

St. Ignatius came to understand that in order to sustain a reflective life oriented towards God, one needs “light and strength.” The light of the Spirit to see clearly. The strength of the Spirit to actively and honestly engage all areas of my life.

Prayer is not something we do on our own. Prayer is a response to the presence of God within us.

This is not about your ability to focus; It is not a test; It is not a matter of endurance.

The Examen is not just about you; The Examen is not just about God;

The Examen is about you and God together.

Can you trust & accept that God truly wants to be w/ you in this prayer...wants to know you better?

[Pause]

In the first part of the prayer, we are invited to become more attentive and more aware.

In your own way, ask for light and strength

As you reflect on this time of transition – are there areas of your life that need illumination? Are there areas where you need strength?

[LONG PAUSE -- at least 1 minute]

We continue now with the second part of the Examen which is focused on gratitude.

Remember, follow these prompts as long as they are helpful.

Gratitude.

Gratitude is a virtue that is encouraged in most cultures and religions.

For Ignatius, gratitude is of the utmost importance, and he has harsh words about ingratitude.

Gratitude recognizes God as creator and source of all life.

All that we have comes from God.

Gratitude is expansive – it includes not just material or physical things,

But also qualities, traits, perspectives, emotions...

Gratitude is honest – sometimes it includes difficult or painful parts of our life.

Gratitude is active – it acknowledges giving and receiving.

As you continue this Examen and reflect on your experiences here...

Who or what are you especially grateful for?

[LONG PAUSE – at least 1 minute]

The 3rd movement is **review**. Take some time to review your day, or perhaps the last few days.

Were there moments when you especially noticed or felt God’s presence?

How did you respond?

Did you see any patterns about what draws you toward God or what pushes you away?

[LONG PAUSE – at least 1 minute]

The fourth movement is about **forgiveness and faithfulness**.

In the light of your review of your day, are there areas you want to ask forgiveness for...
Or are there areas you want to lift up in celebration of your faithfulness to God's presence?
[LONG PAUSE – at least 1 minute]

The fifth and final part is **renewal**.

Tomorrow is another day.

Is there anything you want to especially work on or ask God to help you with?

Take a moment or two and share your hopes, your needs or even your fears with God.

[LONG PAUSE – at least 1 minute]

I invite you now to conclude your prayer and *if necessary, invite people to return to your seats.*

INTERCESSIONS
CLOSING PRAYER
SIGN OF PEACE