

The Daily Examen

The Daily Examen is a Jesuit model for daily reflection to promote mindfulness that can be used as a structure for guiding students in reflective activities in an online course as well. While the original intent is for reflection through prayer, this process has been adapted to appeal to all participants in an online environment. Reflection is one of the guiding principles of an Ignatian-based, Jesuit education and this process provides a structure to guide faculty and students in focusing that process to maximize the usefulness of reflection in the learning process.

Step 1:

Ignatian Examen: Become aware of God's presence. Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you—a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

e-Learner Examen: Become Aware of the Big Picture: Consider the most recent set of experiences you have had in this course in light of your own lived experiences and the critical awareness you have of the issues surrounding these experiences or the ways in which they interact with other systems. Indicate the areas that have caused you confusion, raised critical issues, or added clarity to some other piece of information either in your personal experience or the course.

Step 2:

Ignatian Examen: Review the day with gratitude. Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.

e-Learner Examen: Review Daily Takeaways: What have you learned from these experiences? What are the positive takeaways from the process? By interacting with people or course experiences how have you gained new insights into your own thinking and the issues being discussed in your class?

Step 3:

Ignatian Examen: Pay attention to your emotions. One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

e-Learner Examen: Identify Underlying Emotion or Bias: How have the experiences you have had in this class made you feel? Critically examine the emotions that you have experienced and attempt to critically reflect on the underlying causes of these. In this way you may begin to exposes inherent biases that you have in order to move beyond them towards a broader world view.

Step 4:

Ignatian Examen: Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

e-Learner Examen: Choose Your Focus: Focus in on one aspect of your experiences or your reflection on those experiences that you think is important either for your learning or personal growth. Take a deeper look at that event, thought, action, or emotion and begin to research additional information either online or through discussions that provide you with greater insight into some aspect of it. Write about that insight.

Step 5:

Ignatian Examen: Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

e-Learner Examen: Imagine Next Steps: Describe the next steps that you will need to take to reach a greater understanding of the experience, learning it prompted, or emotion it caused. How will you use this to spark further learning and growth?

Step 6:

Ignatian Examen: Conversation with Jesus: St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Our Father.

e-Learner Examen: Seek Guidance and Connections: Turn to a friend, mentor, classmate, expert, or online community to seek their insight into the issue you are wrestling with. What stands out to you from the insight of others?

<http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/how-can-i-pray>