

Faith in 5
Lent: Week 6
Adults
Growing Closer to God: The Daily Examen

Lent gives us an opportunity to grow in our relationship with God. As we continue our Lenten journey towards Holy Week, let us look at a spiritual exercise that may help us with this goal: **the Daily Examen.**

The Daily Examen is a practice developed in 1522 by St. Ignatius of Loyola, to prayerfully reflect on our day while increasing our gratitude/awareness of God and His Will for us. The exercise is usually done at the end of the day but can be done at any time. It requires a modest commitment of time (10-15 minutes), and a desire to deepen our friendship with God, communicating with an open heart and mind. As you become more comfortable with this exercise, the Examen may grow to be a natural approach to your day.

There are 5 steps to the Examen:

- a. **Awareness:** Set aside time for yourself, away from distractions. Know that God is present with you. Though not specific to the Examen, it may be helpful to say the Jesus Prayer several times: “Lord Jesus Christ, son of the Most High God (as you inhale), have mercy on me a sinner” (as you exhale). It could also be as simple as repeating “Jesus, I love you” several times; whatever it takes to center your mind on God. Allow the Holy Spirit to help you look back on the day. Slow down, start from the beginning and review in your mind how the day went (or how your day is going so far).
- b. **Gratitude:** Praise is the first thing we should offer God when we spend time with Him. He is worthy of our praise because He is the source of all that is good! Think about the blessings you received or were able to provide to others because of God’s goodness. What went well? Thank God for the special ways that He brought joy to you throughout the day. What made you happy, what made you feel close to God? Was it the sunrise, a cool breeze; a call from a friend; did you pray for someone or give an encouraging word? Was it a special activity or being with loved ones? Were you able to spend time with God in prayer, recite the rosary or attend Mass? Think of all things, big and small, to praise God for!
- c. **Emotions:** What feelings did you experience today? Anger, frustration, sadness, joy? Ask yourself: Is there something I did or failed to do? Did I ignore or hurt anyone, or sin in any way? Is the Holy Spirit revealing anything to you about your behavior or actions? Do you need to forgive someone or be more careful with your words? Do you need to be more patient, humble; sensitive towards those in need or more focused in prayer? How can you do better? Make sure you allow yourself to pause in silence and listen.

- d. **Pray:** What, from today, is weighing on your heart or what overwhelms you to want to share with the Lord and seek His help? Is there a lesson to learn, is the Holy Spirit telling you something or prompting you to do something? Do you need to be more thankful, kind or giving? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what is pleasing to God and what will help your relationship with God and neighbor. Ask forgiveness for sins committed.
- e. **Looking ahead:** Ask God for guidance and grace for the next day. Are there concerns or issues you may be worried about? Give it to God and trust in Him! Be aware of God's longing to spend time with you. Take moments in your day to talk to Him. Stay in hope and love.

Conclude with the Our Father.

This is a free resource! For more information, check out www.acatholicmomslife.com