

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*

Sample Messages for Virtual Sessions

About these messages

What follows are sample messages for *The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen*. Please edit to meet your needs. These messages have been set up with 1.5 line spacing so that they may be copied directly into your browser. However, it is always a good idea to send a test message to yourself to check how it will appear on the various devices, (i.e., computer, phone, tablet) on which it may be read.

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The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*

Sample Messages for Virtual Sessions

Enrollment Acknowledgment – Virtual

Send upon enrollment

SUBJECT: Welcome to The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen at St. Peter! – Action Requested

Thank you for enrolling in The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen. Our first session will meet [Sunday, October 11 at 10 – 11:15 am/ Wednesday, October 14 at 6 – 7:15 pm]. Your facilitators for this session are [C.J. Staub Lawling, Bea /James Reichard, Anne Browning].

Although we wish we could be meeting in person, past participants have expressed high satisfaction with this small-group virtual approach. Given these circumstances, there are a couple of things that you will need to do to prepare for the first session.

Determine how you would like to get your meeting materials.

OPTION 1: Program materials (i.e., Participant Guide, Reimagining the Ignatian Examen book, weekly reading handouts, blank journal) will be available for pickup at St. Peter starting the weekend of October 3. Materials will be placed in the cabinet closest to the stairs in the Narthex of the church. Request help from an usher if you need help.

OPTION 2: If you cannot pick up program materials in person:

1. **Order** the book “Reimagining the Ignatian Examen” by Mark Thibodeaux, SJ. from [Loyola Press](#) or [Amazon](#).
2. **Print out** pages 1-6 of the [Participant Guide](#). If you do not have access to a printer, you may choose to read the assigned Guide pages from your device. One caveat is that it is tricky to read the Guide while engaging in the Zoom meeting. The ideal approach is to have the Guide available on a second device.
3. Have a **journal**. A simple lined composition book is sufficient.

Prepare your device to join by Zoom

You will be able to join the meeting by using any camera enabled smart phone, tablet or computer. If you have not used Zoom previously, you will be prompted to download Zoom software to your camera enabled device when you click on the link. This may take a few minutes so it's a good idea to either join the meeting 10-15 minutes early or download Zoom at any time by going to <https://zoom.us/> and clicking on the “Sign Up” button.

Let me know if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you on [day].

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*

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First Reminder

Send 5-7 days before first session.

SUBJECT: The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen at St. Peter – Meeting Reminder & Zoom Link

This is a reminder that *The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day* at St. Peter Catholic church meets on **[Sunday, October 11 at 10 am/Wednesday, October 14 at 6 pm]**.

IMPORTANT: Determine how you will get your program materials:

- OPTION 1: Pick up program materials in person. Materials are available for pick-up this weekend in the Narthex of the church. They will be in the cabinet closest to the stairs.
- OPTION 2: If you cannot pick up meeting materials in person:
 - Order the book “Reimagining the Ignatian Examen” by Mark Thibodeaux, SJ. from [Loyola Press](#) or [Amazon](#).**
 - Print out pages 1-6 of the [Participant Guide](#). If you do not have access to a printer, you may choose to read the assigned Guide pages from your device. One caveat is that it is tricky to toggle between the live Zoom session and the on-line guide. One option is to reference the Participant Guide from a second device.**
 - Have a journal.** A simple lined composition book is sufficient If you do not already have one.

Prepare your device to join by Zoom

You will be able to join the meeting by using any camera enabled smart phone, tablet or computer. If you have not used Zoom previously, you will be prompted to download Zoom software to your camera enabled device when you click on the link. This may take a few minutes so it’s a good idea to either join the meeting 10-15 minutes early or download Zoom at any time by going to <https://zoom.us/> and clicking on the “Sign Up” button.

Let me know if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you on [day].

on the link. This may take a few minutes so it’s a good idea to either join the meeting 10-15 minutes early or download Zoom at any time by going to <https://zoom.us/> and clicking on the “Sign Up” button.

Meeting link:

ADD LINK

Let me know if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you on [day].

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*

Sample Messages for Virtual Sessions

Reminder Letter - Day Before First Session

Send 1 day before first session.

SUBJECT: Reminder – The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen at St. Peter starts tomorrow!

We're looking forward to seeing you tomorrow at the first session of The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day.

Meeting link:

[ADD LINK](#)

Let me know if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you on [day].

Mid-Week Messages

What follows are sample mid-week messages for The Ignatian Prayer of the Ignatian Examen. Receiving a message during the week is a nice encouragement and gentle reminder that helps participants stay on track with their prayer and assignments. The message may also be used to make any needed announcements. A couple of best practices are to include the name of the retreat in the subject line (i.e., The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen) and to send messages BCC to avoid that annoying and possibly confusing “reply-all” storm.

As a reminder, these messages have been formatted to be easily readable on a computer or a handheld device. When copying and pasting into your device, you will need to add paragraph spaces. Before distributing always send a test message to yourself and read it on both your computer and your handheld to ensure it will be easy to read.

Week 1 – Send mid-week after session 1

Note: *If you did not show the St. Ignatius video in the first session, include the YouTube link to the video with this first message:* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4ZLuk_X8u0&t=264s&index=4&list=PLvsxMtG0b2mks20Ho3Ms7gW47Nel_gux9

SUBJECT: The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: **Gratitude is the Echo of Grace**

*Help me to journey beyond the familiar and into the unknown.
Give me the faith to leave old ways and break fresh ground with You.*

-St. Brendan

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*

Sample Messages for Virtual Sessions

Hopefully you are praying the Examen daily and briefly journaling about your experience. Have you written your letter to God? Please have your journal handy when we meet.

An important objective of this first week of the Examen retreat is to find a time and place conducive to your prayer. Research on habits tells us that doing something at the same time each day and with an event trigger helps form a habit by moving the activity from the point of conscious thought to routine.

Do you automatically and without great effort of will brush your teeth each night at bedtime? Likewise, find a time of day and a circumstance that best supports your new (or renewed) Examen habit. For many, the trigger is immediately on rising in the morning with a cup of coffee in hand. For others, the trigger may be immediately after dinner at 7 pm, before one's favorite TV show and end-of-the day lethargy set in. Experiment and discover what works best for you.

The reading this week from *The Examen Prayer* by Fr. Tim Gallagher, is on the Gratitude first step.

Here we touch on one of the secrets of the spiritual life that also is one of the laws of happiness. The more we cultivate gratitude and thanksgiving, the more open our hearts are to God's action, so that we can receive life from God and be transformed and enlarged.

"The Way of Trust and Love," Fr. Jacques Philippe

Meeting link:

[ADD LINK](#)

Blessings!

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*

Sample Messages for Virtual Sessions

Week 2 – Send mid- week after Session 2

SUBJECT: The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: Finding God in All Things

How is the “God Sighting Map” exercise going?

A distinctive characteristic of Ignatian Spirituality is its answer to the question “Where do I find God?” The answer is “look around you”. The Jesuit poet, Gerard Manly Hopkins wrote: “Christ plays in ten thousand places, Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his.” The Catholic writer, theologian and mystic Thomas Merton once remarked, “The Gate of Heaven is everywhere”

This is the Ignatian perspective - we can find God in all things because God is everywhere.

Did Ignatius mean that God can be found in **everything**? Indeed, he did. He said that we can find God in all things - for example, in conversing with someone, in walking, looking, tasting, hearing, thinking and in everything that we do. For it is true that his Divine majesty is in all these things, in his power & essence.

That’s a bold statement and a bit counterintuitive. We think of God as big, so we look for God in the big things - great miracles, peak moments in life, visions and sweeping events that stir our hearts. But Ignatian Spirituality teaches that the sacred is also present in everyday life. That’s where Jesus did his work. He did great deeds, but most often he was present to his friends in quiet, ordinary ways, in acts of compassion, in conversation, in parables, in dealing with suffering, in bringing joy. God’s presence is so deeply woven into everyday life that it is not always obvious.

In what ordinary places do you see God today?

adapted from: “Finding God in All Things”, Ignatian spirituality.com

Meeting link:

[ADD LINK](#)

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*

Sample Messages for Virtual Sessions

Week 3 – Send mid-week after Session 3

SUBJECT: The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen – Listening Hand

This week we are exploring significant relationships that have been a channel of God's grace in our lives. This exercise challenges us to see with new eyes and to recognize that what seems ordinary and everyday is actually evidence of the hand of God in our lives.

The Examen of relationships asks that you grow conscious of a reality we take so much for granted that we do not think about it at all. How often do you note that the sun rose this morning? How much do you value the water that comes from your tap? We treat our relationships rather like that. They are just there. They do not take thinking about except perhaps in special circumstances like an argument or a celebration. But each relation is a gift greater than today's sun, and each person given to you to love and be loved by is as indispensable as the pure water you thoughtlessly drink. -Joseph Tetlow, SJ

Meeting link:

[ADD LINK](#)

Have a blessed week!

Week 4 – After closing session

SUBJECT: The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen – Additional Resources for the Journey

I wanted to share some resources to help you continue to make the Examen a part of your daily prayer. Have you checked out the *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen* app that is available on the App Store for Apple devices or Google Play for Android? All the Examens that are in the Thibodeaux book are easily accessible here.

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If you enjoy a more “on-the-go” experience, there are a couple of good options. Fr. James Martin, SJ editor-at-large of America magazine, produces a daily **podcast** that features a new reflection each week and guides the listener through the traditional Examen. Access [on-line](#) or subscribe to “The Examen” for free on Apple Podcasts or Google Play for Android.

Another option is Pray-As-You-Go which is produced by the Jesuits in England and features several beautifully produced versions of the Examen. It is available [on-line](#) or on the SoundCloud **app**. Download SoundCloud at the App Store or Google Play for Android.

Here is a beautiful prayer to start your day from the [2016 Jesuit General Congregation](#):

Come, You Spirit of Quiet

Guide me into your Stillness that I might hear in myself the Word you speak...

Come You Spirit of Breath, breathe your breath into my thoughts, into my feelings.

Come and take your place in me.

My Lord and my God, take from me everything that distances me from you.

My Lord and my God, give me everything that brings me closer to you.

Blessings!

Missed Session 1

If a participant misses the first session, it is important to quickly follow-up regarding the content missed. Session 1 is foundational as it introduces participants to their daily prayer assignments. The optimum solution for an individual missing the first session is that they start fresh the next time the retreat is offered. One option is if you have another session 1 scheduled for later in the week, the individual could attend this session and then continue with their originally selected day/time.

Subject: Response Requested - The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen

Hi [names(s)]

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*

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You were missed yesterday at the first session of *The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen* at St. Peter.

It looks to be a great group! Our opening agenda provided some “getting to know you” and a lot of background information on the Examen—how we will proceed, how to use the *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen* book and the Participant Guide. We also went over the assignments for the week, and we shared two group experiences — a meditation on relationship and a group experience of the Examen. All of this will provide a foundation for next week’s material and our “holy listening” which makes up the greater part of the next 3 meetings.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed with the next three weeks.

One option is for you to begin fresh in the next session that will be held a few months from now [if this first session was via Zoom, you might consider sharing the recording of that session].

[Add your name & additional contact information to the close.]

6-Weeks After Last session

The purpose of the 6-week message is to provide a boost to the Examen habit of the participants. You can also use this message as a reminder about upcoming offerings or to suggest new resources. What follows are a couple of sample messages. Don't worry about repeating information as we may need to see a message multiple times for it to resonate. (Think about how advertisers use repetition to help us remember their product.) Also consider that any message is better received at that unpredictable convergence of need and opportunity and you never know when you might be helping someone make an important connection.

Sample 1

Subject: The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen – Resources to Up Your Examen Game!

Happy Easter!

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*

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It's been [insert time] since your 4-week retreat at St. Peter with *The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*. How are you are doing with your daily Examen of consciousness practice?

The Examen is such a valuable practice for discerning God's will for us. God speaks to us every day through our emotions, feelings and the events of the day and the Examen enhances our awareness of that "voice." I would like to offer you a couple of Examen resources that many have found helpful.

This is such a busy time of year and this daily practice, though short (it shouldn't take more than 10-15 minutes) can suffer. One way to make a habit stick, is to find a time of day that works best for you and to do it daily. Habits that we do a few times a week are harder to maintain than those that we do every day (think about the challenge of weekly exercise vs. the habit of brushing your teeth).

So if you are looking to boost your Examen game, you may want to check out [The Examen with Fr. James Martin](#) podcast produced by America Media. You can play the Examen on your computer at this page or find instructions for subscribing on your Apple or Android device.

If you like the audio version of the Examen, another good resource is [Pray-As-You-Go](#) which is produced by the Jesuits of Great Britain. If you open this link on your phone, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the picture of either the Apple or the Android device to download the app to your phone.

As Fr. Martin says, have a wonderful day and "keep noticing".

Sample 2

Subject: The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen – Patterns in your Examen

It's been [insert time] since your 4-week retreat at St. Peter with *The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*. How are you are doing with your daily Examen of consciousness practice?

The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: *Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day*

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A great resource is a podcast produced by America Media - The Examen with Fr. James Martin. This daily podcast starts with a brief reflection and then leads the listener through the Examen in about 15 minutes. You can listen to the podcast on your computer or find instructions for subscribing on your Apple or Android device at [this](#) page.

Following is the text from one of these reflections about finding patterns on your Examen that you may find relevant.

Considering Patterns in Your Examen

If you have been praying the Daily Examen for some time you may have noticed something surprising – patterns. Things that you notice over and over in your Examen. You may notice for example in the gratitude part of the Examen, you are continually calling to mind someone who is helpful to you - a relative, a friend a co-worker, even someone that you see only from time to time like the checkout person at your supermarket or the receptionist at a doctor's office or the janitor at your school.

So, a pattern develops. In that case it might be time to thank this person explicitly for who they are in your life. Of course, it may surprise them to hear, "You come up in my prayer frequently". So instead you might just say, "I've been thinking a lot about how generous you are, and I just wanted to say 'thanks'". Usually people are grateful to hear that.

Another pattern in prayer is feeling consistently bad about something you do repeatedly. Let's say you gossip too much, and it comes up again and again in the part of the Examen where you look at sorrow and regret for your failings. In that case, God may be asking you to look at your life more seriously and make some amends. The Daily Examen, in other words, is not simply so you can see where God was that day. It's also a way that God has of helping you lead a holier life in the long term. Daily Examen yes, but weekly, monthly, yearly or even life-long effects.