

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

Sample Messages

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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Welcome Letter

Send 5-7 days prior to the first session.

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

Welcome to *The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen: Discovering the Presence of God in Your Day* at St. Peter Catholic church. The Examen helps us to become more aware of God's daily leading in our lives. During the 4-weeks of this retreat in everyday life, we will explore the prayer that St. Ignatius of Loyola called the most important 15 minutes of the day.

Our first meeting is on [Date/time] in [location and location description]. (It is important that we start on time, so if attending the 9 AM Mass, you may need to leave immediately after communion.) Your retreat leaders will be [insert names].

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If you already have a copy of *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen* by Mark Thibodeaux, SJ please bring it. If not, we will have a copy for you. In addition, please bring a prayer journal. If you do not already have one, select a simple spiral notebook of a size that is most convenient for you to write.

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. 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

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*

Hopefully you are praying the Examen daily and briefly journaling about your experience. Have you written your letter to God? Please bring your journals on (Sunday/Wednesday).

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

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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.

With an open heart we sit with God and ask for an insight and a strength that will make the Examen a work of grace, fruitful beyond our human capacity. With heartfelt gratitude we praise God for showering us with blessings like the sun shining on the earth.

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

Did you recognize our Lord in anyone today?

*Grant me, O Lord, to see everything now with new eyes,
to discern and test the spirits that help me read the signs of the times,
to relish the things that are yours,
and to communicate them to others.*

Give me the clarity of understanding that gave Ignatius.

-Pedro Arrupe, SJ, former Superior General of the Jesuits you

Blessings!

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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 one 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 also finds the sacred 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

Blessings!

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Week 3 – Send mid-week after Session 3

SUBJECT: The Ignatian Prayer of the Examen - Hand of God

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](#)

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.

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

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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:

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.

-Morning prayer of [2016 Jesuit General Congregation](#)

Blessings!

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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)]

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

It looks to be a great group! Our opening night 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 of 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; the other is for you to pick up your materials from the Parish Office along with a brief written overview of session 1 so that you can do some solo catch-up.

Let us know what works for you. If you do want to continue with this group, we will need to determine how to get you the materials that you need so that you can fully participate in the coming sessions.

[your name & additional contact information]

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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 is a message that was sent to one group. Don't worry about repeating information as we may need to see a message multiple times for it to resonate (consider how advertising works). Also consider that any message is better received at that unpredictable convergence of need and opportunity.

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

Happy Easter!

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 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 new (since Lent) [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".