

INTRODUCTION

Life can be so confusing and stressful sometimes. How does anyone make sense of it? Actually, there's a step-by-step process that can help. It's called the Daily Examen. Don't let the "exam" part make you think it's some kind of test. The Examen is simply a way to look at your day with God's help—no judgment, lectures, or comparisons to anyone else. Created by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Examen is used by millions of people seeking guidance and clarity. You don't need apps or special tools. Just an openness to searching for meaning and direction in the things that happen every day. Here, we'll take the Examen's basic framework and apply it to certain kinds of days—when you take a big test, for example, or experience a breakup. The idea is to get into a habit of self-reflection so that God can help you become the incredible person he created you to be.

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The steps in this booklet are based on the Daily Examen. Here's a mnemonic to make them easy to remember. Just think **GROWTH**:

God. Begin by placing yourself in God's presence.

Review. Revisit your day with God's help. Sure, we all have days we'd rather forget, but, sometimes, events stay with us, causing anxiety and stress. Here you'll find some basic questions to help you look back at your day and seek peace.

Observe. Look at your reactions and how you felt about the day's events. Observe your mistakes—and the good that you did, too, noting God's presence throughout.

What can I learn? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you one event from your day. Trust that there's something here for you to learn.

Tomorrow. Pray for help to grow and do better tomorrow.

Heart and soul. If it helps, jot down anything that's in your heart or on your mind.



Tips

- * Most people do the Examen at the end of the day, before falling asleep. If that doesn't work for you, try it another time—waiting for a ride, or before you do homework, for instance.
- * Give yourself time at each step to think and pray. Try not to rush through this.
- * The Examen is about being honest with yourself. It's not about being judgmental, or comparing yourself to anyone. It's not a pity party, or a time to bask in your accomplishments, either. (If you have a tendency toward any of this, ask God for help.)
- * This booklet is for you alone. But because your parents are part of your life, you're welcome to share the questions with them and invite them to try it themselves. Remember, though, you don't have to share your Examen thoughts and prayers with anyone other than God.

A GENERAL EXAMEN FOR ANY DAY...

God's presence. God, be with me as I look back on this day. With you, nothing is impossible, so help me see today as you see it. Help me know that you love me through it all.

Review. Here in God's presence, I ask myself, what is the best thing that happened to me today? What is the worst thing that happened?

Observe. How do I feel about today's best thing? Do I only grudgingly admit it's good? Do I need to look more deeply? Looking at the worst thing, how did I feel at the moment? Confused? Embarrassed? Angry? Where did these feelings come from? How was God present or not present there?

What did I learn? God, I think I know what the best and worst things were today. But maybe in your eyes, there are other things I need to see. Show me one thing that happened today that I need to see. What can I learn from this? Is there something I need to do differently in the future?

AFTER ACHIEVING SOMETHING, LIKE PASSING A DRIVER'S TEST OR MAKING A TEAM...

God's presence. God, thank you for the good that happened today. Let me smile and enjoy it for a few moments here with you. I know you are happy for me.

Review. As I look back on my day with God's help, I see things I did that I'm proud of. But do I also see anything I'm not so proud of? I ask myself, is there anyone else who deserves some credit for the good that happened? Is there anyone who might not be feeling good about today? What might they be feeling right now?

Observe. How do I feel about the work I did to accomplish this? Could I have done more? How did I act and react today? How do I feel right now about it all?

What did I learn? Holy Spirit, show me one thing that happened to me today that I need to see. What can I learn from this? Is there something I need to do differently, starting tomorrow?

Tomorrow. God, help me find the good in this day. Help me find you. Whatever I did that was good, I thank you for giving me that ability. Show me how to build on

