

## The Examen

*This activity requires the examen prayer card available from:*

<http://isblog.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/17>

*You may wish to have soft music playing in the background throughout this prayer experience or during the time when there is a pause to reflect.*

**Leader:** Please make yourselves comfortable, close your eyes, and pay attention to your breathing. Take a few deep breaths and exhale in a slow, relaxed fashion.

**First Reader:** (Read Step One on the card.)

Ask God for Light.

I want to look at my day with God's eyes.

**Leader:** Pray in your own words for the illumination of the Spirit and for grace-filled understanding.

*Pause*

**Second Reader:** (Read Step 2 on the card.)

Give Thanks.

The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.

**Leader:** Review the gifts in your life today. No gesture, word, encounter, or exchange is too small to notice or consider a gift. Give thanks for those things that "made your day." As you look over your day, pause to reflect on the more permanent gifts in your life that come to your awareness: talents, relationships, challenges that could bring growth. Thank God for all these gifts.

*Pause*

**Third Reader:** (Read Step 3 on the card.)

Review the day.

I carefully look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit.

*C21 Engage*

Series Theme: Catholic Spiritual Practices

Session 3: Discernment

**Leader:** Review the feelings – both positive and negative – that surface as you recall the day.  
Pay attention to the whole range of feelings that you experienced.

*Pause*

**Fourth Reader:** (Read Step 4 on the card.)

Face your shortcomings.

I face up to what is wrong – in my life and in me.

**Leader:** In this step, you may wish to focus on a shortcoming or you may wish to stay with the feeling that most caught your attention. Let a prayer surface about that feeling. It could be a prayer of praise, petition, contrition, or another form.

*Pause*

**Fifth Reader:** (Read Step 5 on the card.)

Look toward the day to come.

I ask where I need God in the day to come.

**Leader:** Think about tomorrow or the coming week. Call to mind the appointments, tasks, and encounters that you expect to have or that you have scheduled. What feelings surface as you think ahead? Whatever the dominant feeling is, turn it into prayer.

*Pause*

**Leader:** As we conclude our review of the day, let's close by saying the Lord's Prayer together.

(Adapted from the examen prayer card and Dennis Hamm, S.J.'s, "The Ignatian Examen: Praying Backward through Your Day" in *Catholic Spiritual Practices: A Treasury of Old and New*.)