



WAY OF LIFE | PRACTICE TOOLKIT

NOTICING COMMUNITY EXAMEN

INTRODUCTION

◆ Background

The Examen is a spiritual practice created by priest and theologian St Ignatius of Loyola in the 16th century. It is a prayer of thankful reflection: a tool to walk through the recent past with God, noticing and naming God's presence in joyful and difficult moments, and a way of asking God to help resolve how to live well in the future.

◆ Summary of the practice

Community Examen is based around three questions:

1. Where have we seen a glimpse of glory?

This question enables us to see where God is in the present.

Our response is thanksgiving.

2. What is troubling us?

This question enables us to name our fears, anxieties and the things we lament.

Our response is to ask for peace.

3. What are we hoping for?

This question enables us to look to the future in faith.

Our response is to seek God's blessing.

◆ Ways to use the practice

Community Examen can be a good way to start or close a PCC, Synod or other church meeting. Use the practice in small groups; with children, young people and adults; in school as a tool for spiritual reflection or RE lesson; as a family at home; in church as a sermon.

Community Examen can form the structure for meetings, using each question as a lens to look at a particular issue - mission, finance, buildings, diocesan priorities, e.g.:
Where have we seen glimpses of glory in our local community?
What is troubling us about our building?
What are we hoping for financially?

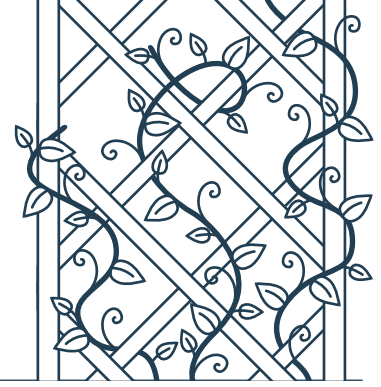
◆ Time

Community Examen is 'stretchy'. It can take a few minutes at the start of a meeting or form the entire structure of a meeting, small group or church service. With more time, there is space for reflection, sharing and conversation between each question.



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OUTLINE

1 Pray

Open in prayer. You could use the following liturgy; inviting everyone to join in with the words in bold:

Slowing our breath, remembering God's presence with us, we open our hands to pray...

Come Holy Spirit to our mind,
We receive your goodness.

Come Holy Spirit to our heart,
We receive your peace.

Come Holy Spirit to our soul,
We receive your blessing.

2 Question

Ask each question in turn, leaving space in between for silent reflection. If you have time, invite the group to share a few thoughts before concluding each question with a simple call and response.

Where have we seen glimpses of glory?

Where have we seen God at work? Where have we known God's Presence? What has been good?

Hold silence

Share brief reflections

CALL: Where we see glimpses of glory,
RESPONSE: **Lord, we thank you.**

What is troubling us?

What is making us fearful? What is making things difficult? What are we lamenting?

Hold silence

Share brief reflections

CALL: Where there is trouble,
RESPONSE: **Lord, bring wisdom and peace.**

What are we hoping for?

What are our hopes and dreams? What is giving us energy? What are we wanting from God now?

Hold silence

Share brief reflections

CALL: Where we see hope,

RESPONSE: **Lord, pour out your blessing.**

3 Pray

At the end of the meeting, you could use the following closing prayer; inviting everyone to join in with the words in bold:

God, our maker, redeemer and friend. We thank you for being present with us:

May your goodness guide us.

May your peace protect us.

May your blessing encourage us.

May you send us out together in love.

Amen.