

40 Days of Examen

Lent 2027 · Ash Wednesday 10 February to Easter 28 March · A guide for priests and group leaders

Instead of many resolutions, one single practice: ten minutes each evening looking back over the day, as St. Ignatius of Loyola taught. The group carries what, alone, falls asleep after ten days. It needs no technology, only a fixed meeting and someone who asks: "Will you join?"

THE FIVE STEPS (SPIRITUAL EXERCISES 43)

1. **Give thanks** for the good of the day, concrete and small.
2. **Ask for light** to see the day with God's eyes.
3. **Review:** hour by hour, encounter by encounter. Where was I alive, where closed?
4. **Ask forgiveness** for what was not good.
5. **Resolve** for tomorrow: one small thing, not ten.

THE ONE THING (SE 24 TO 31)

Ignatius advises choosing one single thing as well: resolve it in the morning, look at it briefly at midday and in the evening: impatience, speaking ill of others, the phone at meals. After a few weeks the pattern shows: when, where, after what. Whoever knows the pattern can change something.

THE WEEKLY MEETING (45 MINUTES)

- 5 min silence and arriving
- 10 min Examen together, one person leads aloud
- 20 min sharing in threes: "What did I see this week?"
- 10 min looking ahead, intercessions, blessing

THE WAY THROUGH LENT

- **Before Ash Wednesday:** an introductory evening, pray the Examen together once, everyone chooses their one thing.
- **First week:** arrive. Each evening name three things you are grateful for.
- **Until Palm Sunday:** review more thoroughly, write down one sentence. Empty evenings are part of it.
- **Holy Week:** look back over all the weeks. The notes are the best preparation for Easter confession.
- **Sundays** do not count: only give thanks, nothing else.

FOR THOSE WHO LEAD

- No one has to share. What is shared stays in the room. No advice, only listening.
- In desolation, change nothing in your resolution (SE 318). Keep going, even when it feels empty.
- For those prone to scruples: keep it shorter, stay with gratitude. The Examen is not a tribunal.
- Plan and announce an opportunity for confession in Holy Week.



TOOLS

A notebook and a pen are enough. For those who want a companion on their phone: the app **Lumen** leads through the evening Examen in six languages and, on the Lent Journey, offers a word of Scripture each day. The Examen and the Lent Journey need no subscription and no account; entries stay encrypted on the device. More content through the optional MAGIS subscription.

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