

Meet Up 3 - Living as Citizens of Heaven through Examen

5 minutes Preparing our hearts.

The leader might say something like,

We'll take a few minutes of quiet on our own so we can set aside all that the day has held and turn our attention toward Jesus. Go ahead and silence your cell phones now and if you'd like, you can find a space in the room where you feel more alone and simply quiet yourself. Take a couple of deep breaths. Try to become aware that God is with you. Consider this quote from Ann Voskamp as you begin to quiet.

In Christ, you're a native of heaven right now. You aren't a citizen of here trying to work into heaven. You're a citizen of heaven trying to work through here.

Ann Voskamp. The Way of Abundance, a 60-Day Journey into a Deeply Meaningful Life

After a few minutes I'll invite us to come together in a circle.

30 minutes Abiding together.

The leader might say something like,

Sometimes it's hard to remember that we are citizens of heaven right now. What does it look like for you to live as a citizen of heaven right now? Could some of you share what this looks like in your lives?

Pause and allow a few to share

The leader might say something like,

There is a prayer style, called Examen, that could help us pay attention to God throughout our days. I imagine this might help us as we think of ourselves as citizens of heaven. For the next 20 minutes I'm going to invite you to follow the directions for Examen on your own and then we can come together and talk.

Pass out Examen directions or email them (included below). Allow 20-30 minutes of private time for team members to complete the Examen. You might suggest that people return at a specific time or if you're all in the same room you can tell them that you will call him back when time is up.

15-20 minutes Dwelling Together

The leader might say something like,

How was that for you?

What did you notice as you practiced Examen?

What thoughts/responses or nudges from the Holy Spirit you can share?

We took a full 30 minutes to practice together because we carved time out to dwell with Jesus as a team. But as we go through the week, we can make this a little shorter so that it fits in our schedules easily. Rather than trying to answer every question, we can settle in with 1 or 2 questions like, "How did I notice Jesus with me in the last three hours?"

Before we gather again next week can we commit to practicing the Examen on our own throughout the week? Is it realistic for each of you to carve out 15 minutes at least four times next week in order to practice Examen? As we participate individually but together as a *3Story® Team*, we encourage each other by a mutual commitment. So, let's talk about what will work for all of us.

Pause for comments, make a group decision. Ask group to consider if there are ways to encourage each other in this throughout the week? Perhaps pair up and check in by phone one time?

Group Handout
Examen

The Prayer of Examen

The purpose of this prayer practice is to help us process our lives each day with God and before God. The Examen carves out a few moments of solitude in the midst of every day to allow us to reflect on what is going on and where our actions and choices are taking us. It is a form of discernment because it enables us to look concretely at events and ask:

Where is God in this situation?

How is God leading me?

What is God saying to me?

How was God there for me in that specific experience?

What in my present situation is leading me to God and others in love?

What is leading me away?

What is the underlying spirit in my dealing with others?

What is really going on and what's happening in my life these days?

The whole point of Examen is to become more God-centered by observing the moments when we are and are not God centered.

What the prayer looks like...

Transition into Examen:

I pray, asking the Holy Spirit to help me become aware of the love with which God looks upon me as I begin this practice of Examen.

Step one: I notice the gifts that God's love has given me this day and I give thanks to God for them.

Step two: I ask God for insight and the strength that will make this practice of Examen a work of grace; fruitful beyond my human capacity alone.

Step three: I review the last day with God. I look for stirrings in my heart and the thoughts that God has given me this day. I look also for those that have not been of God. I review my choices in response to both throughout the day and in general.

Step four: I ask for the healing touch of the forgiving God who, with love and respect for me, removes my heart's burdens.

Step five: I look to the next day and, with God, plan concretely how to live it in accord with God's loving desire for my life.

Finally, aware of God's presence with me, I prayerfully conclude this practice of Examen.

Leader Formation YFC/USA

3Story® Teams

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