

The Examen

I. Purposes of this session:

1. To become aware of God's grace at work in relation to one's recent experience.
2. To share this awareness of God's grace with one another.
3. To practice leading and praying the *examen*.

II. Suggested format:

A. Preliminaries: (15 minutes)

1. Light the candle - its light reminds us of God's revelation. Open with a prayer.
2. Introduce the practice of the *examen*. The two leaders share the responsibility for introducing the *examen* prayer, giving instructions for how to do it, and introducing the questions that we will use during this prayer and sharing time. (**NOTE:** There will be a short amount of time for you to plan this together when we have our leaders meeting Saturday morning. You may need to meet again to complete your planning.) We will use these two sets of questions:
 - a. "What blessed me today?" and "How was God present in that?"
 - b. "What troubled me today?" and "Where was God in that?"

These aren't evaluation questions—"I liked or disliked such and such." Rather, they're asking how God touched a person today; how the person senses God's work within him/her. Point out that the candle light is a reminder of God's revelation, and now we're looking to see how God illumines our own experience to this point in the weekend.

B. First silence and sharing (30 minutes)

1. The first leader announces that you'll begin with the first questions, "What blessed me today?" and "How was God present in that?"
2. Invite people into silent time (5 minutes). Close the silence with, "Amen." Give them a few minutes to "come back" and be ready to interact.
3. Sharing. Begin by mentioning that the group will have a total of 20 minutes for this sharing. Make sure everyone gets an opportunity to share.
4. Wrap-up of first sharing - ask if, after hearing everyone, there are any insights or questions about praying with the *examen*, about gratefulness, about awareness of God's action in and through the day. (5 minutes)
5. Offer an opportunity for a short break to stand, stretch, use the restrooms, etc.

C. Second silence and sharing (30 minutes)

1. The second leader announces the second reflection question: "What troubled me today?" and "Where was God in that?"
2. Repeat # 2 & 3 above.
3. Wrap up second sharing. Invite any insights or questions about praying with this second question, "How was praying with this question different from praying with the first one?" Any last observations (5 minutes.)

D. Evaluation (15 minutes)

1. Offer the opportunity for conversation about the experience of leading and participating in the practice of the *examen*. What was inviting? What was difficult?
2. Lead the group in a closing prayer and **EXTINGUISH CANDLE**