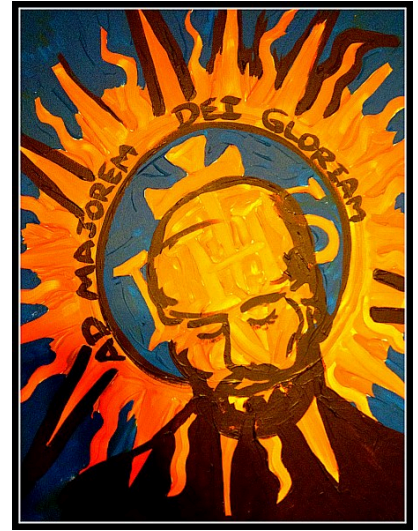


# An 8 Week Adaptation of The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola

*"Give me only your love and your grace.  
With this I am rich enough,  
and I have no more to ask."  
- St. Ignatius*



## What are we doing?

The Exercises were written in the 1500's by Saint Ignatius of Loyola (born as Iñigo López de Loyola y Oñaz) to help people pray and recognize the movement of God in their lives. He founded the religious order The Society of Jesus, commonly known as the Jesuits.

The exercises are about several activities all brought together to help you hear God's Spirit and to give a fuller response to the love of God in your life. Those activities include, but aren't necessarily limited to:

- + Reading scripture
- + Praying with scripture
- + Conversational prayer with God
- + Journaling
- + Conversations with a spiritual friend

We're going to start with an easy routine that should take 10 minutes in the morning and 10 minutes in the evening, Monday thru Friday, a whole 20 minutes a day, plus a little time each week to meet and talk about how things are going.

## Beginning the journey with prayer.

### Soul of Christ or Anima Christi

*"Soul of Christ, fill me.  
Body of Christ, be my Bread of Life.  
Blood of Christ, fill my Cup of Salvation.  
Living Water of Christ, overflow from me to others.  
Sacrifice of Christ, be my strength and example.  
Good Jesus, hear me when I pray.  
Let your wounds teach me service and wisdom.  
Never leave me or let me stray from you.  
Please use me to light up the darkness.  
Let me know you eternally, now and after death.  
Embrace me one day, face to face.  
Welcome me with all who have looked for you.  
My goal will be forever to love and thank you.  
Amen."*

This prayer was a favorite of St. Ignatius. Many people attribute it to his authorship, but it in fact has been recorded in documents over a hundred years before his writing of The Exercises.

Still, it is a great way to start a morning session. This is a paraphrase of the prayer. If you'd like, you can Google© it for the original Latin or more traditional English wording of the prayer.

# What We'll Do Each Day

## In the morning... 2 Parts!

**Reading.** The morning time is spent reading a passage of scripture and then praying with it, feeling around inside for anything that might be coming to your mind from the passage. Ignatius wrote about two ways to interact with a passage, either putting yourself in the shoes of one of the characters or just letting a word, phrase or idea from the passage kind of roll around in your heart and mind for a while. Praying with a passage is simply reading it with God, or even to God, and letting your prayer be shaped by the passage in things like vocabulary or themes.

**Prayer.** After reading the passage and praying, take a moment to journal some of your responses, thoughts and ideas. There's no required amount of journaling, but it's good to capture your thoughts about the passage or prayer time. Your journaling can take the form of diary entry or be a written prayer, or both! You could even draw something or copy a section of the passage that was really meaningful to you. It's an opportunity to capture your immediate responses to the morning's time of reading and prayer.

## In the evening... 3 Parts!

**Examen.** I think that the evening activities are actually fun, most of the time. In the evening you will practice something called the examen, pray and then do a little more journaling. The examen is a reflection on your day, and then a time of prayer about the day past and the day coming. Here are the five action/questions for reviewing your day in the examen...

- † Be grateful for the day.
- † Do I feel good about the way I spent this day, and why or why not?
- † How can I make tomorrow even better?
- † In what ways would I like to see God move in my life tomorrow?
- † In what ways might I more fully give myself to God tomorrow?

**Prayer.** Now, take the thoughts in answer to these questions and let them guide your time of prayer. Here is a great time to practice colloquy prayer which is simply a way of praying that is more conversational and way less formal. Just talk with God and listen, with your soul as much as with your ears.

**Journal.** Finish the day with some journaling. You may have a thought or experience from the day to record, or maybe some of your reflections during the examen would be good stuff to put into writing for later contemplation. This is good material for shaping the time that you spend with your spiritual friend. It's also encouraging to be able to look back weeks, months and years later and be reminded of how God is moving in your life.

## Some important things to remember...

- ✓ Make a special time and place for your prayers. The space you chose should help you focus and relax, and it should limit distractions. Pick a time when you're not overly sleepy, busy with other things or tired.
- ✓ Try to choose a good translation of the Bible. It should be one that you can be comfortable with and use through the whole eight weeks.

- ✓ Choose a journal to meet your needs. It can be either a separate book or pages added to this notebook, but try to stick with one all the way through this experience with the exercises so they form a complete picture of your journey.
- ✓ There really isn't a right and wrong way to do any of this. God moves in us in similar ways and in different ways. The important thing is to do. Keep going.
- ✓ You'll be prompted with a prayer emphasis for each week. Start with that prayer and try to make it a heart felt request.
- ✓ Ignatius taught that life has movements of both consolation and of desolation, that is to say, we often go through events or times that create a feeling of comfort within us, or a feeling of discomfort. When journaling or practicing the examen, think about whether the day's scripture gave you comfort or discomfort, or use those terms in thinking about the way your day went. Ignatius says that comfort is not always good, and discomfort is not always bad... just recognize the difference and use the movements to shape your prayer and time with God.

## So, here we go...

We don't want to make this seem too complicated. Hopefully, the routine will grow on you and become a little more second nature as you go. My desire is that you'll have an experience less like doing homework and more like an adventure. The whole point of the exercises is to be more open to God's presence in your life. God invites you on a walk, a journey of life and faith, and the exercises are just one way to respond to that invitation.

Here are a few words that Ignatius wrote for you before you get started...

*"The most important qualities in the person who enters into these exercises are openness, generosity and courage. As [participants] our one hope and desire is that God will place us with his Son so that in all ways we seek only to respond to that love which first created us and now wraps us round with total care and concern." (SpEx 5)*

## Here's a quick look at our adventure:

Weeks 1-4, The Reality of God's Love and Presence

Weeks 5-8, The Ministry and Passion of Christ

## A special thanks...

I am profoundly grateful to the Holy Trinity Parish in Georgetown, Washington DC, the home of my own spiritual friend who has taken through the Exercises many times, Father Leo Murray SJ. I am very thankful to God for the man, Ignatius of Loyola, and for all he selflessly gave to help others hear God's voice. And I'm grateful for you and the chance to be your sacred companion.

## A few helpful resources:

**The Jesuit Center for Spirituality**, <http://www.trinity.org/spirituality>

**Sacred Space**, an online prayer site hosted by Irish Jesuits, <http://sacredspace.ie/>

**Pray As You Go**, an amazing daily Jesuit prayer resource <http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/home/>

**Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality**, ISBN-13: 978-1570753367

**The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything**, James Martin SJ, ISBN-13: 9780061432699

# Week One

## The Reality of God's Love and Presence

# God Loves Me, Really

Each day this week we'll look at a piece of scripture which points us toward the unending faithful love of God for us. Sometimes that love is directly spoken, as in statements like *"I love you."* Other times that love is seen in action and in metaphorical images of a caring God who is involved in our lives. If any one passage really speaks to you, don't be afraid to repeat it throughout the week. There's no requirement to have read all these passages.

### Weekly Prayer Intention:

*"Please help me feel your nearness  
and your love for me throughout the whole day.  
In Christ I pray, amen."*

### After each reading reflect on words and characters involved.

- † How does the passage make you feel?
- † What theme or idea seems to speak to you most clearly?
- † Do you feel a response to God in your heart from the reading?
- † Are there words, a phrase, or a single word that really grabs you?
- † Is there a character in the passage with whom you especially can relate?

### The week's readings...

- **Monday:** Isaiah 43:1-7 "Do not fear... you are mine."
- **Tuesday:** Romans 8:37-39 "For I am convinced..."
- **Wednesday:** Psalm 117 "For great is his love toward us..."
- **Thursday:** Matthew 6:25-34 Living life in an awareness of God's love.
- **Friday:** Choose any passage from above, or take a few minutes to review your journaling from the previous days this week. What are some special things from the week that stand out to you? How has the week felt to you?

### 5 Steps of a Daily Examen:

- † Be grateful for the day.
- † Do I feel good about the way I spent this day, and why or why not?
- † How can I make tomorrow even better?
- † In what ways would I like to see God move in my life tomorrow?
- † In what ways might I more fully give myself to God tomorrow?

## Week Two

### The Reality of God's Love and Presence

# God Is Near Me, Really

One of the hardest things about prayer is getting over the idea that there's a wrong way to do it or a special, magical way that it must be done for God to hear. Prayer is opening up a line of communication with God. God is near. God cares about what is happening in your heart and your life. God wants to be a part of your life. God has spoken to us in many ways, through prophets and scriptures and Jesus Christ, and quiet movements in our own souls. Prayer is just part of our response to all that God is saying and doing.

### Weekly Prayer Intention:

*"Thank you so much for caring about my life and for listening to me.  
Help me recognize the ways that you are present in my life, today.  
In Christ I pray, amen."*

### After each reading reflect on words and characters involved.

- † How does the passage make you feel?
- † What theme or idea seems to speak to you most clearly?
- † Do you feel a response to God in your heart from the reading?
- † Are there words, a phrase, or a single word that really grabs you?
- † Is there a character in the passage with whom you especially can relate?

### The week's readings...

- **Monday:** Psalm 116:1-9 "...for he heard my voice."
- **Tuesday:** Isaiah 55:1-7 Calling, Seeking, Finding, Nearness
- **Wednesday:** Acts 17:24-28 "For in him we live and move and have our being."
- **Thursday:** 1 John 4:7-21 "...if we love on another, God lives in us..."
- **Friday:** Let's start back in yesterday's passage, at vs. 16, "**God is love.**" How does that simple statement make you think about God? What does that simple statement tell you about the way God thinks about you? Has anything else from the week stood out as especially important or meaningful to you?

### 5 Steps of a Daily Examen:

- † Be grateful for the day.
- † Do I feel good about the way I spent this day, and why or why not?
- † How can I make tomorrow even better?
- † In what ways would I like to see God move in my life tomorrow?
- † In what ways might I more fully give myself to God tomorrow?

# Week Three

## The Reality of God's Love and Presence

# Freedom Calls for a Response

God has made us human beings of dignity and deep individual worth. We are people of freedom and individual will, but what will we do with that freedom and will? God is moving in this world, and calls us to join in with that **"divine purpose."** That sounds heavy, but it just means that God invites us to become a special people who take the responsibility to share with others all the goodness that's been shared with us.

### Weekly Prayer Intention:

*"Help me know you and your will better this week,  
so I might answer your call with joy and gratefulness.  
In Christ I pray, amen."*

### After each reading reflect on words and characters involved.

- † How does the passage make you feel?
- † What theme or idea seems to speak to you most clearly?
- † Do you feel a response to God in your heart from the reading?
- † Are there words, a phrase, or a single word that really grabs you?
- † Is there a character in the passage with whom you especially can relate?

### The week's readings...

- **Monday:** Ephesians 2:4-10 "For we are God's handiwork..."
- **Tuesday:** Galatians 5:1 & 13-26 Freedom is not isolation, it's shared!
- **Wednesday:** Luke 1:26-38 What kind of courage did it take for Mary to agree to this angelic announcement? She says, **"Let it be..."**
- **Thursday:** Mark 8:34-38 What might following Jesus cost me?
- **Friday:** Choose any passage from above, or take a few minutes to review your journaling from the previous days this week. What are some special things from the week that stand out to you? How has the week felt to you?

### 5 Steps of a Daily Examen:

- † Be grateful for the day.
- † Do I feel good about the way I spent this day, and why or why not?
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- † In what ways would I like to see God move in my life tomorrow?
- † In what ways might I more fully give myself to God tomorrow?

# Week Four

## The Reality of God's Love and Presence

### God is Calling

We are each called by God, both as a community and as individuals. We are called into relationship with God and called into life as God's people, sent to be light in darkness, salt in blandness, peacemakers and good neighbors. This week is all about listening to God's call in your own life. How have you been equipped to serve? What opportunities for you to serve is God making available to you?

### Weekly Prayer Intention:

*"Please speak to me loud and clear;  
I will try to remove any distractions and listen for you.  
In Christ I pray, amen."*

### After each reading reflect on words and characters involved.

- † How does the passage make you feel?
- † What theme or idea seems to speak to you most clearly?
- † Do you feel a response to God in your heart from the reading?
- † Are there words, a phrase, or a single word that really grabs you?
- † Is there a character in the passage with whom you especially can relate?

### The week's readings...

- **Monday:** 1 Kings 19:11-13 How have I tended to hear God? In big ways, or more quiet, subtle ways?
- **Tuesday:** Jeremiah 4:1-10 Could God know you and me and call us in such a way?
- **Wednesday:** 1 Peter 4:8-11 What gifts has God given you to share with others?
- **Thursday:** Romans 12 We are transformed by Christ to be a new kind of people!
- **Friday:** Choose any passage or reflection from above, or take a few minutes to review your journaling from the previous days this week. What are some special things from the week that stand out to you? How has the week felt to you?

### 5 Steps of a Daily Examen:

- † Be grateful for the day.
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