

The Art of Examen

Saint Ignatius



THE ART OF EXAMEN

DEEPER GUIDE

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Mark 1:35

But why did Jesus pray?

He prayed because He was fully God. Within the Trinity this conversation has been ongoing since the beginning of time, Jesus simply continued that. But Jesus, also fully human, made prayer part of how he orientated around his primary identity – that he was Son and loved by his Father.

“There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual conversation with God”

- Brother Lawrence

Take a look at these two famous early Church Icons. On the left is Rublev’s Icon of the Trinity and on the right one called the ‘Icon of Christ and His Friend’. They express these two sides of Jesus’ prayer well...



“It’s an invitation from the heart of the trinity, into the heart of the trinity”

- Alain Emerson

Take some time to marvel in this relationship, which was not only Jesus’ but one we are invited into as well.

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EXAMEN PRAYER

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INVITE THE HOLY SPIRIT
GRATEFULLY REVIEW YOUR DAY
WHEN DID YOU CONNECT WITH JESUS?
PRAY ABOUT ONE THING THAT STANDS OUT
LOOK TO TOMORROW

DAILY READINGS

MONDAY

Luke 5:15-16

Jesus withdrew to pray when his ministry was reaching its height of popularity. He knew his focus was God not fame. Reflect on how you find the idea of making your own heart a chapel for God.

TUESDAY

Luke 11:2-4

The Lords prayer was a response to the disciples seeing Jesus praying and asking Him to teach them to pray like that. Patrick, one of the early Celtic saints began his faith journey tending to sheep and learning to pray in the solitude. Ask God to teach you to pray like Him.

WEDNESDAY

Revelation 3:20

This famous verse comes from the letters of Jesus to the early churches in John's Revelation letter. Artist Holman Hunt painted a Jesus with a lantern at an old overground door, knocking and asking to come in. He knocks on the door of our hearts today and every day.

THE ART OF EXAMEN

THURSDAY

John 5:16-20

Within the prayers of Jesus is wrapped up the amazing idea of Jesus doing what the Father is doing. Mission is God's idea not ours and in these verses we see the heart of Jesus' prayers was unity with God's plans. We can pray with that same heart. Ask God to speak to you as you pray.

Could you be the answer to your own prayers? Is God already answering them around you?

FRIDAY

Luke 15:17-24

The parable of the Lost Son shows us the love God has for each of us, and for those who are far away from him. Mission has always been at the heart of prayer. We see this as St. Cuthbert used to withdraw from long times of prayer before going out on evangelistic journeys around the country.

Dedicate your mission to prayer today. Pray for friends and neighbours.

SATURDAY

Luke 22:39-46

The prayers of Jesus show us the vulnerability and pain of prayer as well as joy and celebration. Take some time to be still today and ask God to help you pray deep and painful prayers.

SUNDAY

John 17:20,21

Amazingly in John's gospel we read that Jesus prayed for us as disciples who'd come after his life here on earth.

Accept these prayers today. Receive the love Jesus has for you.



THE ART OF EXAMEN

DEEPER GUIDE EXTRA TIME:

Take some action

This week why not carve out a short time of daily withdrawal.

This could be outside, in the store cupboard at work, on the bus to school or wherever. Use Brennan Manning's simple prayer, breathing in saying "Abba" (the Jewish word for Father) and "I belong to you" as you breathe out.

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"At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea." Luke 4:42-44

We join in with God's mission. Prayer and Mission connect beautifully because each have God as their centre point. Like the monks of Northumbria, we go out and withdraw each day as we pray and then are sent by the God who loves all people.

Mission can be many things but most of all it is about the love and reconciliation that God has for the world. Theologian David Bosch says, "Christian mission gives expression to the dynamic relationship between God and the world."

Consider the people you live around day by day. Consider the world you see in the news or read in your paper. Consider the unique and life-changing love that God has for each of them. How might we share this love together to a world that feels unloved and is searching for meaning?



"Mission is the centrifugal force that sends us out"
- Scot Bower

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MONDAY

Hebrews 1:1-3

Mission is all about Jesus. John Wesley described his evangelism as simply "the offer of Christ." Whether it is sharing his story, offering his compassion or praying for his healing and justice - we always focus on Jesus in Mission. How can you share Jesus in all you do today?

TUESDAY

John 3:16

Mission starts with the act of God. John tells us mission began with the love of God. He sent his Son. Ponder the love of God today as you go about your daily routines. All that is before you is loved by God.

WEDNESDAY

Luke 4:18-19

The mission of Jesus means transformation. These verses are quotes from Isaiah 61, read by Jesus at the beginning of his ministry. This is a statement of intent. Jesus declares the words fulfilled in their hearing because His mission will bring these about – good news, healing, recovering of sight, release of prisoners. Pray bold prayers today knowing that God intends to change the world..

THE ART OF EXAMEN

THURSDAY

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Reconciliation is at the centre of mission. In the stories of Jesus in Samaria and Aidan's mission in Northumbria, the sense of being reconciled to all people even those who aren't like you is paramount.

Spend time praying for the people you meet who feel 'other' or 'different'. How might you practice reconciliation today?

FRIDAY

John 20:21

Mission is about God sending us just as He sent His Son. This could be to your neighbours, school or college, to your town, city, and nation or beyond. Saint Columba was someone who understood this call.

He shared the news of Jesus across Scotland, often tackling the affects of paganism and druidism head on. The weight of being sent by God led to him preaching with courage and with power.

SATURDAY

John 4:39-41

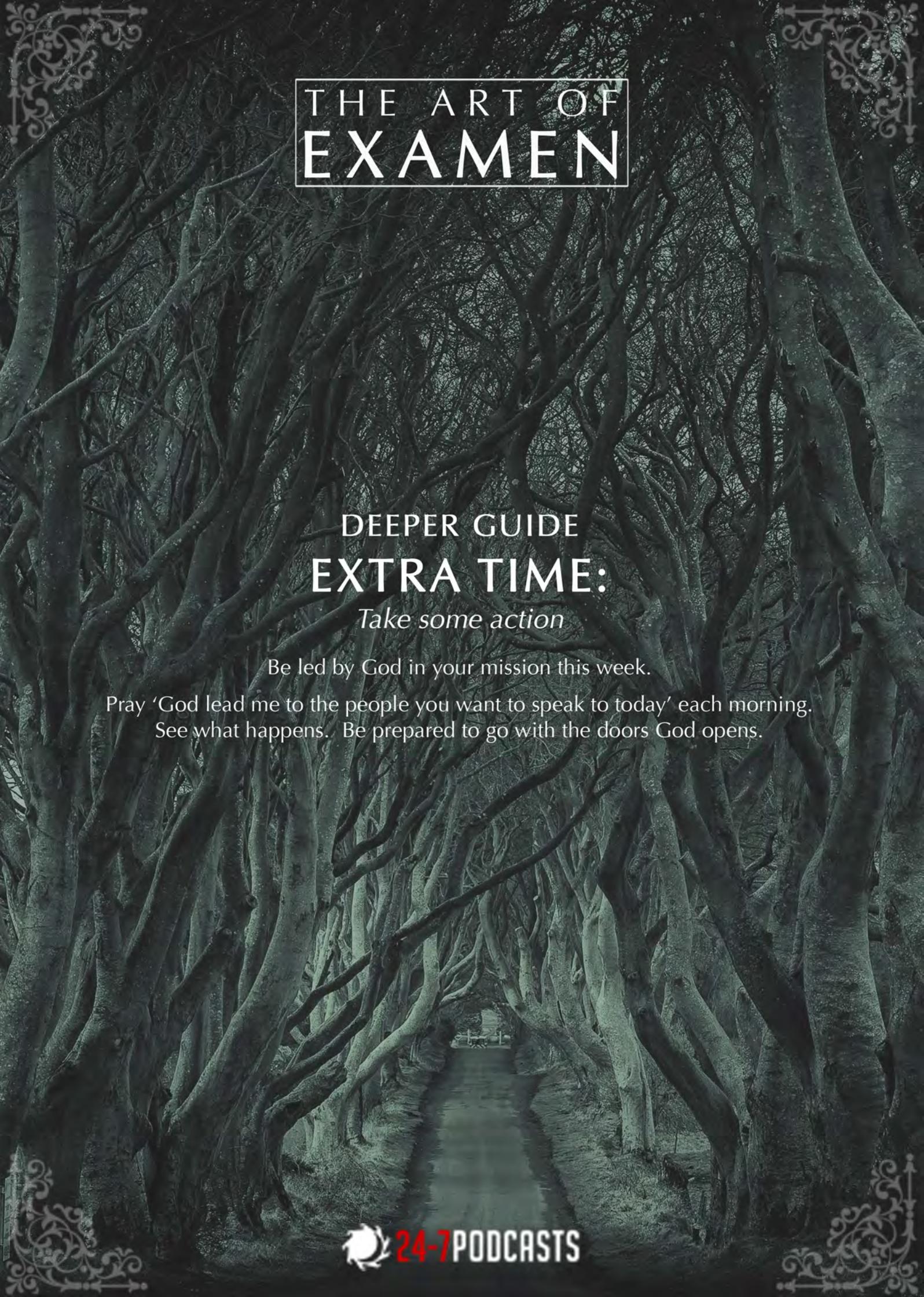
Mission is at it's heart very simple. Remember the Samaritan woman. Jesus crossed several boundaries just to sit and talk with her. Her response was to tell her whole village – not in complex terms – but of the man who knew "everything I ever did." Worship Jesus for what he's done for you.

Try and share that somehow with others today.

SUNDAY

Matthew 28:18-20

At the end of this week reflect on the commission God has given us. To go to our friends and neighbours, to our enemies and to the ends of the earth. Jesus promises to go with us. This is the mission God calls us to.



THE ART OF EXAMEN

DEEPER GUIDE EXTRA TIME: *Take some action*

Be led by God in your mission this week.

Pray 'God lead me to the people you want to speak to today' each morning.
See what happens. Be prepared to go with the doors God opens.

THE ART OF EXAMEN

DEEPER GUIDE

"A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed." Mark 1:40-42

Jesus was moved with compassion, he reached out to the man with leprosy. This was a man who had been excluded from society – not only facing illness but also isolation. Jesus saw him, he was moved and he acted.

"It's the touch of Jesus that we bring"

Brother Juniper was one of the earliest Franciscan monks. Like Jesus in Mark and like Vincent Van Gogh in the story Brian told, Juniper was compassionate and generous. He literally gave away everything he had to the poor and would regularly return to the Abbey without clothes or supplies having given everything away. Juniper was reprimanded for this by the leader of his monastery and told not to give anything more away.

But the next day Juniper met a naked beggar on the road. When the beggar asked him to help Juniper replied he could not give him his cloak but if he took it from him he would not argue. St Francis of Assisi was amazed and inspired by Juniper often prayed for a 'forest of Junipers' in his order.



"Justice starts in a moment of compassion"
- Brian Heasley

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DAILY READINGS

MONDAY

Genesis 16:13

At her lowest point, Hagar found that God was with her and she declared, "You are the God who sees me." Reflect on the idea today that God sees you and all you go through and he sees all those around you. Ask God to give you eyes to see the world as he sees it and to act in response.

TUESDAY

Micah 6:8

Compassion is more than just a feeling – it is something we choose to do in response to need. God spoke through Micah and talked of a marriage between acting justly and loving mercy – these ideas are at the heart of compassion. And in Micah we see these linked with walking humbly with God. Think about these ideas today and turn them into prayer.

WEDNESDAY

Matthew 9:36

Jesus had compassion on the crowds around him. All of those acts of goodness were rooted in a genuine love for each human being. Allow yourself to be moved by the world you see around you today.

Go to a crowded place and take a moment to experience the compassion Jesus felt as he watched the crowds around Him.

THE ART OF EXAMEN

THURSDAY

Luke 17:11-19

One person who was deeply impacted by the love Jesus had for people with leprosy was Francis of Assisi. Francis had a fear of Lepers and Leprosy yet overcame it one day confronted by a man with Leprosy on the road outside Assisi. He got down from his horse, hugged him and gave money to him. When he turned round after leaving him the man had gone. Francis decided that the man he hugged must have been Jesus.

Think about who are excluded people in our communities today – how can we love and include them?

FRIDAY

Psalms 89:14

The Psalmist writes that righteousness and justice are the foundations of God's kingdom. Think about foundations. They support everything in the house. Do you have this view of justice in your own life? Think about what changes you might make in the way you live to make justice a foundation.

SATURDAY

Matthew 12:20

Isaiah spoke of a Messiah who would deliver justice with gentleness and mercy. He would not break even the most fragile thing. Consider people you know who live lives of gentleness and mercy. How do they live? Why do they act that way?

What can you learn from them?

SUNDAY

John 12:3-8

Mary was like many followers of Jesus. She had lived a difficult life and was full of gratitude for the forgiveness; compassion and love Jesus had shown her. Many wonder what the point of acts of compassion are – can they change the world? Jesus changed the world with one life at a time and his mercy and justice transformed people's worlds. Spend some time in prayer and worship to the God of mercy today.



THE ART OF EXAMEN

DEEPER GUIDE EXTRA TIME:

Take some action

Give something away every day this week.
It can be small or big – whatever you feel is appropriate.

Allow yourself to see the world,
to be moved by compassion and then to act.

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DEEPER GUIDE

"For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him." Colossians 1:16

We worship a creator God. Paul highlights this creativity in the life and being of Jesus Christ – the man who revealed God to us in human flesh. This revelation of God drew pictures in the sand, rubbed mud in eyes, told stories that engaged hearts and prayed with such energy and vibrancy that disciples asked:
"Lord teach us to pray."

"God is not a static thing but a dynamic, pulsating activity. Almost a kind of drama. Almost...a kind of dance"
CS Lewis

God has, throughout history, filled people with his Spirit to engage in creative ways of following him. From Bezalel in the book of Exodus making furniture in the Tabernacle, to Hildegard of Bingen writing eloquent opinions or creating music and poetry and to CS Lewis creating characters like Aslan to share allegories of the Kingdom of God. How might you engage creativity as a source of energy in your own life? Creative praying? Creative living? Creative language? Creative acting. Let creativity loose in your world this week.



*"Could creativity be a tool to
freshen up parts of our faith that have become stale?"*
- Carla Harding

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MONDAY

Genesis 1:1-2

In the first five words of the Bible, God introduces Himself as Creator. He made all that we have around us. We can understand God as creative and as creator. Reflect on all the beauty around you. Columbanus suggested that 'if you want to know the creator, first understand and know creation.' Go for a walk today and try and understand the Creator a little more.

TUESDAY

Jeremiah 18:3-6

God is creative even with us. He made us. Jeremiah spoke of Israel as like clay in God's hands. His hands shaped the nation. How has God shaped you? Thank him that he's made you a creative, innovative and thoughtful being. Thank God for your mind, your hands, and your feet. He made you with love.

WEDNESDAY

John 12:1-3

Mary worships Jesus in a creative way and He loves it. We are wired to response to God and he encourages us to be creative. Nicholae Moldoveanu was imprisoned for 12 years in Communist Romania for his faith. In prison he would cover his window with soap and write music with his finger. He'd then commit songs to memory. On his release he wrote down more than 300 songs from memory, and they have now become the songbook of the Romanian Church

THE ART OF EXAMEN

THURSDAY

Ephesians 6:18

Carla reminds us how creativity can enable us to reach the full potential of prayer. There was nothing formulaic about the way Jesus prayed. He was creative and vibrant. Paul encourages the Ephesians to pray all kinds of prayers on all occasions. Many of these prayers are silent, are loud, are colourful, and are simple.

Try something new today.

FRIDAY

John 8:3-11

Jesus wrote in the sand whilst people tried to be cruel. This simple act brought a different atmosphere to a violent moment and through this he was able to bring grace to her.

How might you engage in creative thinking or action to change circumstances today? How might creativity result in kindness?

SATURDAY

Matthew 13:31-33

Jesus told Parables. These wonderful upside-down stories highlighted the otherness of the Kingdom of God yet also it's nearness to all of Jesus' hearers. Here was the God-man bringing the Kingdom into each of their lives. Not all of us are good with words by why not experiment with them today. Write something that expresses how you feel about God.

SUNDAY

Psalms 24:1

The earth is the Lord's. All the wonder that exists around us is made by Him and given to us as gifts. The splendour of mountains, the beauty of rivers, the simplicity of soil, the energy of the Bumble Bee, the vastness of the Whale.

All these things are made by the God who made us. Reflect on your feelings and emotions at the end of this week where we've considered creativity. What have you learnt?

THE ART OF EXAMEN

DEEPER GUIDE EXTRA TIME: *Take some action*

Spend a week on your own creative retreat.

This can be done in your normal pattern of life, but it involves moving wholeheartedly into being creative. Discipline yourself to being creative in the way you respond to the Bible. Write poems and draw pictures rather than write notes. Take your friends to see a film and go for a coffee to discuss it afterwards. Take a walk in nature during your week. Resolve to think creatively when problems arise. Cook creatively. Dress creatively.

Reflect each day on what's gone on in your daily Examen.

THE ART OF EXAMEN

DEEPER GUIDE

"Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken from her"
Luke 10:42

Throwing off the usual culture and practice of the time; Mary sits at the feet of Jesus wanting to learn. This famous little story features Martha too, working hard to be hospitable and wondering why Mary is helping. Jesus lovingly fights for the right of Mary to learn from her Lord.

*"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.
The important thing is to not stop questioning."*
Albert Einstein

The history of the church is filled with people who sought to understand God and understand their lives in the perspective of God's kingdom. Paul called this a transformed mind. St Anselm, one of the earliest Christian theologians, considered the ridiculous idea that men and women could understand God, yet delighted in the honour that God reveals himself to us. Most of all we know our calling to be disciples of Jesus. As followers it's not our call to become rabbis or teachers – more it is our call to be life long disciples, always ready each day to learn more.



"Let's make a commitment to being a learner"
- Adam Heather

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MONDAY

Proverbs 1:5

When offered the chance to receive a gift from God, Solomon asks for wisdom. He is known as the author of Proverbs, where wisdom is championed. What does it mean to you to be wise? What differences are there in the wisdom of God? Lets commit to be learners today.

TUESDAY

Isaiah 44:5

The parables of Jesus show us that the wisdom of God is quite different from what we might think the world is all about. Isaiah is one of many prophets who declare the wisdom of God to be the most important and to challenge those who think they are wise without Him. The Bible is full of the poor, excluded and downtrodden being given the wisdom of God. His wisdom changes the world.

WEDNESDAY

John 3:3-5

Nicodemus was a teacher and a wise man in Jerusalem. Jesus encourages him that the secret to learning from God is to be child-like, to be reborn. With all his wisdom Nicodemus found it hard to understand but still he followed Jesus. Paul called this the transformation of our minds.

THE ART OF EXAMEN

THURSDAY

Matthew 11:29

With Jesus we learn by following. Scholastica is known as the patron saint of Nuns. She understood that learning and development started in discipleship and so she encouraged women to commit to a monastic life. In doing so she provided the opportunity of learning and the religious life to women at a time when those opportunities were rare. Like the life of Jesus, this way of following involved sacrifice but as they did they learn the mysteries of God.

FRIDAY

Matthew 11:25

The learning of Jesus is empowering – to the poor, to children, to those who feel excluded. Paulo Freire spent his life focusing on education for the poor in Brazil and across South America in the 1960's. In 1961 in Recife had first chance to try his ideas and saw 300 sugarcane workers taught to read and write in 45 days. Changed their lives. "Education" he said is "means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."

How can you share learning with someone else today?

SATURDAY

Romans 12:1-2

Paul spent time showing his readers that culture can affect the way we think. Ponder the impact of advertising, the media, consumerism and culture. How does it shape the way you learn and the way you make decisions? These aspects of culture aren't necessarily bad but as followers of Jesus we are encouraged to be transformed by Him and not by culture. Write down the things that affect you and offer them to God today.

SUNDAY

Matthew 28:18-20

Paul encourages Timothy in simple ways. This is an experienced leader shaping and empowering a young man who was entrusted to lead. Paul told Timothy to continue in what he's learnt. Perseverance isn't always cool but it makes a massive difference in our lives. At the end of this week consider what you've learnt and ask God how you might continue in it.

THE ART OF EXAMEN

DEEPER GUIDE EXTRA TIME:

Take some action

This week why not commit to try and learn about something you don't know each day this week:

Learn something new about God, the world, yourself.

Let that knowledge change you. Pray about how you can be involved in the learning of others. You could try listening to kids read, teaching at church or asking friends for advice.

Reflect each day in your Examen on what you've learnt each day.

THE ART OF EXAMEN

DEEPER GUIDE

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly." Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?" Matthew 8:5-7

Hospitality has been a place of learning for the 24-7 Prayer movement over our short history. We have found something beautiful takes place as we gather together at a table knowing that Jesus is present. Jesus enjoyed hospitality too, indeed he got a reputation for spending a lot of time eating and hanging out. When he met Zaccheus he invited himself for tea. When Mary anointed his feet with oil he was out to dinner. He even gave us a meal by which to remember him by.

"Hospitality is a sign that a community is alive, that it is not afraid, that it has something valuable to share." - Ray Simpson

One of the great Celtic monasteries was founded on a hill outside the city of Derry in Ireland. Beginning quite small, the monastery began to grow and at its height fed 1000 people a day. This was a model of Celtic hospitality - to receive guests, give them welcome and feed them - right at the heart of a worshipping and serving community. One particular Celtic saint known for her hospitality was Brigid who was celebrated for her generosity to the poor. One story recounts an occasion where she gave away her mother's entire store of butter to a woman begging for food.



"Hospitality shows freedom from fear and individualism to a hungry world"
- Hannah McVeigh

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DAILY READINGS

MONDAY

Matthew 25:38

The Psalmist shows us that we have a hospitable God (Psalm 23) but one of the most striking passages about hospitality is in Matthew 25 when we see Jesus showing hospitable was a way of welcoming him. Saint Benedict practiced this faithfully, welcoming strangers as though the visitor was Christ himself. Vast monasteries founded on the kindness to the simplest stranger.

TUESDAY

Romans 12:13

Paul urged his readers to 'practice hospitality.' We might see hospitality as someone to do when we have a dinner party or a night out. However, Paul talks about it like a spiritual discipline and in Jewish culture there was great honour in providing hospitality. How might you practice hospitality in your home, your community or your church?

WEDNESDAY

Luke 4:18-19

The New Testament makes a few mentions of the hospitality of widows in Christian communities. The reality is that just like the first disciples, early evangelists relied on people supporting mission through hospitality. Widows often provided this help. People who had endured loss, still able to give of themselves. Ponder this today. Whose hospitality do you rely on. Try and say thank you today.

THE ART OF EXAMEN

THURSDAY

Acts 2:42-47

The earliest churches practiced hospitality, including the first church straight after Jesus death and resurrection. Its amazing to see how the Church was held in high regard in the community. Why was this? Notice too that the Church's actions to help the poor and pattern of worship also seemed to be built around community and hospitality.

What can we learn from this?

EASTER WEEKEND

Luke 23:26-43

Reflect on the amazing events that we remember of these days

There will be podcasts
from 24-7 to mark Easter weekend



THE ART OF EXAMEN

DEEPER GUIDE EXTRA TIME: *Take some action*

This week practice welcome.

Try saying yes when you'd normally say no. Try sharing what you have.
Try giving and receiving generosity.

What affect does it have on you and those around you to do this?

