

# Take a good look

ADVENT LITURGY  
10-20 minutes

**LEADER: Sign of the Cross**

Let us bless this time of prayer, set aside to help us focus on this special season of Advent.  
We pray  
In the name of the Father...

**READER Introductory prayer**

Let us pray,  
Lord, in this time of Advent, we wait for You.  
Prepare our hearts and minds to see what is important.  
Lord let us see like You saw  
Let us love like You loved  
Let us be aware of all of those who need our help and support.  
We ask this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
AMEN

**LEADER Light Introduction Awareness Examen (review)**

**5 minutes**

*Take this nice and slow. This element of the liturgy should be a light, engaging, fun exercise that would then help the young people to understand the process of the examen. It may be helpful to describe the activity as a review. In this time it is helpful to have some soft instrumental music playing.*

Opening Up: Invite youth to close their eyes.

Lead them in this short reflection about what they have noticed about the room

- What have they noticed?
- What are people wearing?
- What hangs on the walls of the room?
- Who is seated next to whom?

Now, divide into pairs. Invite each pair to talk about their favourite type of chocolate bar/sweet a minute or two. (If they are listening well they will be focussed on the other person and should be able to easily take part in the next stage)

Next, with eyes closed, have the pairs change their appearance in two or three ways. They might untuck a shirt, button the top button, remove a belt, mess up their hair, or take off their glasses. Now, have pairs face one another and attempt to discern what has changed in their partner's appearance.



**Reflection:** This can be a question and answer part of the prayer

- How closely were they paying attention?
- How aware were they of the details of the room?
- How easy was it to figure out what changed in their partner's appearance?

Use these activities to lead into a discussion of how much we tend to miss in the world around us.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**5 minutes**

Why do you think we miss so much? In pairs come up with at least three reasons

Examples

- Social media
- Busyness of lives
- Culture of me me me

### Not a new problem...

All throughout history people have struggled with this. For Christians it has always been important to stop, think and reflect. In the Gospels, even Jesus took himself away for moments of quiet reflection. There is a challenge for us to stop and reflect, EVERY DAY, about what has happened to us, who we have met, how we have seen God each day.

**Bio about the Examen (review):** You don't need to go into too much detail about this. Just to note that it is a practice that has been useful for many years.

The Awareness Examen, is an ancient introspective Christian prayer practice designed by Ignatius of Loyola. It offers an opportunity to reflect on our daily lives and to attend to the details that we often miss, particularly to those that point to the way God comes to us in the regular routine and habits of our daily lives.

### Digging In – the Examen itself

**10 minutes**

*In this time it is helpful to have some soft instrumental music playing.*

Ask young people to close their eyes and settle.

Go through each of the following steps slowly and intentionally. Remember to pause throughout.

- Think back over the day or week as if you were watching a movie of all that happened. Allow the experiences of that time to flow back to you. Ask yourself: What did I notice? What feelings or thoughts do I associate with this time?
- Think about where you saw God at work during the day/week? Give thanks for these moments.
- Think about where it seemed you were unaware of God's presence.
- Think about where you were resisting God's presence. Ask forgiveness for this



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shortsightedness.

- Consider where God may be calling you to a new awareness. What new actions/attitudes might God be calling you to in your work/family/ministry/community?

## Final prayer

Let us finish our examen by lifting up our day to the Lord.

Lord we thank you for this time with You.

Help us to be more aware of You in our everyday lives.

We pray for all those whom we have thought of in this time.

We ask for the prayers of Mary, our mother and Yours, as we say

Hail Mary...



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