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Good News for Newlyweds

July 2019

Diocese of Scranton

Office for Parish Life



THE EXAMEN

A beautiful way to pray, alone or as a couple.

Five Ways the Examen Can Play a Role in Marriage

From Ignatianspirituality.com

By

[Becky Eldredge](#)

I remain thankful for all who taught me Ignatian spirituality. It is not only the spirituality that guides my relationship with God, but it is also the spirituality that guides my marriage. Here are five ways the [Examen](#) can play a role in marriage.

1. The Examen helps us pray our marriage.

When I teach someone about the Examen, I often say, “It helps you pray your life.” Our relationships and marriages are significant pieces of our lives. The Examen helps us bring all of our lives before God, and our relationships are part of this. The Examen provides a framework to pray through all aspects of your marriage: emotional, spiritual, physical, and social.

Daily interactions with our spouse are brought before God, and God can help us see where we gave or showed love to our spouse, where we received love from our spouse, and where we could do better in showing love for our spouse.

2. The Examen guides us in making small decisions.

The Examen guides us to know what steps to take on a daily basis. It helps us know what brings an increase of faith, hope, and love into our marriage, and what brings a decrease of faith, hope, and love into our marriage. It might help us know that we are in need of quality time together or that we are saying yes to other things that compete with keeping our relationships a priority. The Examen acts as a rudder, slowly helping us shift and make choices that help us both continue to grow in God.

3. The Examen leads to deeper reflection and conversation as a couple.

My husband Chris and I check in with each other regularly on what is arising for each of us as we pray the Examen individually. We may move through the steps of the Examen in our sharing, giving us each a chance to share what we are thankful for, where we feel God’s presence, where we are struggling to feel God’s presence, and what we are hopeful or fearful of as we look to the future. Praying the Examen means we never run out of things to talk about!

4. The Examen helps us unpack what’s going on in our relationship.

The Examen serves as a way for us to name what is happening between the two of us. Perhaps we feel we are “off,” and [praying the Examen and sharing our responses](#) might help us name that we feel “off” due to the focus on children’s activities with little time for us, or perhaps we are a little too addicted to the newest TV show we are watching and instead we need time just to talk. Like the Examen does in all aspects of our lives, it helps us name what is causing [consolation and desolation](#) in our relationship with each other.

5. The Examen helps us make major decisions.

Chris and I lean hard and heavy on the Examen when we need to make big decisions as a couple. Looking back at our 13 years of marriage, I can name multiple times the Examen grounded us in God and in the values of our faith as we discerned graduate school for Chris, career moves, having children, raising children, how to spend our money, what home to buy, and on and on. The

Examen offers us a way to see which of these decisions will deepen our relationship with God and each other, and which decisions will not.

Chris and I tap into the power of Ignatian spirituality to strengthen our marriage and guide us through life's many ups and downs. It is not uncommon for me to say to people: "If it weren't for the gifts of Ignatian spirituality in our lives, we would be flat on our faces when things got tough." The gift of Ignatian wisdom is the history and legacy of this spirituality providing pathways to live deeper, fuller lives of meaning and purpose. A key prayer tool of Ignatian spirituality is the [Examen](#), and I invite you to use this prayer tool in your marriage. I assure you, it will be an invaluable asset in your relationship!



Have you celebrated your first anniversary? **Do you think you may be called to minister to those preparing for marriage?** If you would like to begin the discernment process, or to recommend another couple for this ministry, please contact [Jen Housel](#), 570-207-2213 x 1104.

Connect with other young adults (ages 18-40) in the Diocese of Scranton

Join our Young Adult Ministry for a Camping Trip from August 23rd to 25th! (Young families welcome too.)

Contact [Shannon Kowalski](#) (570-207-2213 x 1155) for details and to learn more about young adult activities in our Diocese. You can also text "@dosyam1" to 81010 to get text message updates about other young



**Is it time to revisit some discussion about your Families of Origin?
Consider reading and**

adult opportunities in our
Diocese.

sharing
together, Choosing
the Best from Our
Families
by Steve and Kathy Beirne



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