

# YOUR LIFE STORY

There are a number of parts that make up the story of our lives. Here's some things you might like to consider as you write and share yours:-

- **Your family of origin and heritage.**
- **Your early years** – Where you grew up and went to school. How you found school and early family life. Adolescence. Your emergence into adulthood.
- **Significant themes / key events** – Like defining moments of self-discovery, self-acceptance or self-rejection. Career choices, marriage, family.
- **Turning points in your life story** – Events or experiences that caused radical shifts within your life journey.
- **Encounters with God** – Early memories, revelations or teaching about God and spiritual things. Your journey of response to God. How God's presence is generally felt by you. Instances in which the presence of God was especially vivid. How God has made himself known to you in each period of your life. Empowerment by God. Significant formation events, and any seasons of drought or flourishing.
- **Crises of Faith** – These include things such as:-
  - CRISIS OF DOUBT - what questions troubled you, how did you deal with them? In what ways did you grow as a result?
  - CRISIS OF DISOBEDIENCE - when and how did you fail? What happened? What were the results? Where was God? What did you learn?
  - CRISIS OF CIRCUMSTANCES – consider some of the hard circumstances in your life. Look at the spiritual results. In what way did you grow or regress? How did you cope? What did you learn about God?
  - CRISIS OF DEPRESSION – In the midst of your emotional turmoil, what did you learn about yourself, others, and God.
- **Outcomes of Growth**
- You might also find it helpful to draw a **timeline** of your life and mark significant things on it. This may help you find words to describe particular seasons of your life.

Just start the story and see where it leads you. Trust God to guide you. And then find a trusted person to share your story with!

# THE EXAMEN (also called a daily review)

The Examen was popularised by Ignatious of Loyola (1491-1556). It has helped millions of Christians centre themselves in God.

The idea is to take a few minutes at the end of every day to review the events of that day asking God to show you evidence of His divine presence that you might have missed. You might ask, “how was God present with me today? What promptings did I notice? How did I respond or not respond?”

## Here’s some guidance on how to practice the Examen...

1. Take time to quiet yourself in God’s presence.
2. Review the events of your day, starting at the beginning, asking God to show you where He was present with you and you were not aware of it. Move through the different aspects of your day...whatever brings you to the current moment.
3. Notice moments of gratitude, love, peace, guidance, authenticity, protection, or wisdom that seemed to come from beyond yourself. Notice when you felt Jesus was near to you in some special way. Thank Him for those moments.
4. Notice moments of desolation as well – moments that felt empty, confusing, stressful, draining, unworkable, frustrating. Moments when you were not your best self, and felt disconnected from God. If God felt absent, ask Him to show you evidence of His presence. If the source of desolation is something you have control over, ask Him what it would look like for you to choose life next time. If there is an area in which you fell short of Christlikeness, confess it, receive God’s forgiveness and ask for God’s help moving forward.

*(steps taken from Life Together in Christ – Ruth Haley Barton, pg 145-146)*

**Be careful that this doesn’t become simply another duty. Think of it as a way to dialogue with God in friendship – holding the practice in the context of relationship.**