

# The Five Finger Exercise

This exercise is based on the Examen, a simple spiritual tool developed by St Ignatius of Loyola. It is about noticing apparently small and insignificant details of life and realising that they are powerful signifiers of personal, spiritual and community truth.

The Examen can take different forms, but generally speaking it invites us to notice times of consolation, when we feel energised, alive and full of life and possibility, as well as times of desolation, when we feel empty, drained, hopeless and lacking in energy and vitality. If Jesus invites us to live life in all its fullness, then this would be consolation, and its opposite would be desolation. The Examen allows us to attend reflectively and prayerfully to the dynamics of consolation and desolation in our lives.

## 2. Where have you seen God and goodness?

This is the index or pointing finger. It asks the question 'Where?' Withdraw a little from the busyness of the day. Take time to step into the stillness. Where did you encounter God?

## 3. What has stood out?

The tallest finger stands out. What has stood out in your day? Rewind the day, calling to mind the people you have met, the situations you encountered. If you were to write the newspaper headline for today, what would it be?

## 4. Where have you been at your weakest?

The fourth finger is the weakest finger. What might you have done differently today? Where have you not lived up to your commitments to yourself, to others, the world, or God? Where might you have hurt others and failed to notice at the time? Say or pray 'sorry' and ask for God's help.

## 1. What has been good?

A thumbs-up denotes what is good. What do you have to be grateful for? Think about where you have been blessed, and thank God for those moments.

## 5. What little change can you make?

The little finger provides balance when writing, typing, or holding a cup. Is there anything in your life which is out of balance and needs adjusting? What small change could you make to rebalance your life and the world around you?



# Five Finger Noticing Script

Smile, breathe and make eye contact with each person in the group.  
Hold the stillness for a few seconds.

1. I invite everyone to make the **thumbs-up** sign. The thumbs-up denotes good things and gratitude.

What do you have to be grateful for today? Where do you feel you have been blessed today?

**Silence for 1 minute**

If you would like to, you can respond with the prayer 'Thank you'.

2. Now point to your **index finger**. This is the pointing finger; it asks the question 'Where?'

Withdraw a little from the busyness of the day. Take time to step into stillness.

Where have you seen God and profound goodness in your day today?

**Silence for 1 minute**

3. Point to your **middle finger**. Use this tallest finger to think about what stands out; what to notice.

Rewind the day, calling to mind the people you have met, the situations encountered. If you were to write the newspaper headline for today, what would it be for your experience of the day?

**Silence for 1 minute**

4. Look at your **fourth finger**. This is the weakest finger.

Where have you been at your least or weakest today? What might you have done differently today?

Where have you not lived up to your commitments to yourself, to others, the world, or God today?

**Silence for 1 minute**

We say or pray simply 'Sorry'. We ask for God's help.

5. Take hold of your **little finger**. This is the smallest finger.

The little finger provides balance when writing, typing, or holding a cup.

Is there anything in your life which is out of balance and needs adjusting? (Pause)

What small change could you make to rebalance your life and the world around you?

**Silence for 1 minute**

**Amen**

Smile, breathe and make eye contact with each person in the group (or invite the group to do this).