

## Lent 2026

### SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR LENT - Repentance, Penance, Healing

Lent is a season of intensified self-examination and repentance. While these practices are part of regular Christian life year-round, we give them special attention during Lent to ensure they do not devolve into mere rote activities. Here is one way to give special attention to the work of self-examination and repentance during this season.

#### DAILY EXAMEN

One of the long-established spiritual practices in Christianity, championed by Ignatius of Loyola (a Spanish reformer and contemporary of John Calvin, who sought to reform the Roman church from within), is a discipline of self-examination and repentance Ignatius called examen.

Lent is a most appropriate season for Christians to engage this daily practice of taking inventory of our lives and resolving prayerfully to grow spiritually.

In his daily spiritual exercises, Ignatius invites us to begin each morning reminding ourselves of the “defects” in our lives we hope to amend today. At midday we take a first inventory: How has today so far with regard to the amendments we are seeking to make in our lives? Finally, at the end of the day, a full examen is undertaken: Where today did we experience a special awareness of Christ’s presence and transforming power, and where did we feel absent from him? We thank God for the places where we can discern our Lord’s presence with us and repent for those places where we strayed from the way of Jesus. Ignatius speaks of the former as *consolations*, and of the latter as *desolations*.

The spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius constitute a thorough, systematic immersion in attention to Jesus, examination of self, and acts of repentance. They can be found online at [ccel.org/ccel/ignatius/exercises.all.html](http://ccel.org/ccel/ignatius/exercises.all.html). Lent offers an opportunity to begin a daily practice of examen that might be so thorough but is nevertheless powerful. This entry-level practice might consist at first of taking time each evening in Lent to list the consolations and desolations of the day, lifting them up to the Lord in prayers of thanksgiving, confession, and repentance.

Some will find it helpful to share their consolations and desolations with friends or family members who serve as prayer partners; others will want to keep a daily journal listing the flow of consolations and desolations they have encountered.

Taken from [gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/curriculum/ideas](http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/curriculum/ideas)

This is part of an article written by Rev. Sheldon W. Sorge.