

Journey of Faith



Reflecting on Our Choices

"I'm going to describe a scene to you, and I'd like you to tell me if the person's action was right or wrong," Mrs. Evans announced. "One of your classmates goes into someone else's gym locker and steals his shoes."

"That's bad!" Terrence shouted out first.

"Yes," Mrs. Evans nodded. "But what if you found out that classmate's parents couldn't afford to buy him shoes and this classmate needed the shoes for gym class?"

The group thought a little longer this time.



"I still think it's wrong," Lisa said. "The person could have just asked to borrow the shoes. But it doesn't seem as wrong as just stealing the shoes for no reason."

Mrs. Evans nodded and said, "Why we do things *does* matter. That's what we're going to be doing today. Taking a close look at our actions, why we make the choices we do, and where we can be better. This is called scrutinizing."



Looking Inside



Jesus gives us clear rules about what's right and what's wrong. But we can sometimes still get confused when other voices (even our own voice) drowns out Jesus. That's why it's important we really **scrutinize** or look very carefully at the things we do and how we feel after we make a wrong decision.

This is so important, the RCIA even has a rite called the scrutinies. The **scrutinies** are meant to help you uncover the times you say "no" to God and give you the strength to say "yes" to God all the time. You will only participate in the scrutinies if you haven't been baptized yet. But if you are already baptized, you can still learn a lot from what the scrutinies teach.

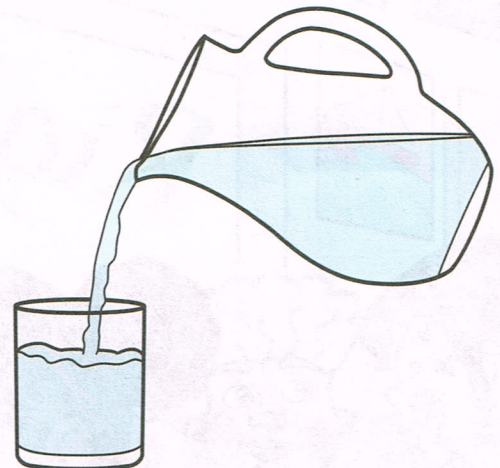
First Scrutiny

CHRIST AS LIVING WATER

In the Gospel story of Jesus meeting a Samaritan woman at a well (John 4:4–42), Jesus tells her he is living water:

"Jesus...said to her, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'"

John 4:13–14



How is Jesus your living water?

How does baptism give you eternal life?

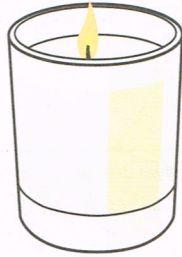
Second Scrutiny

CHRIST AS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

In the Gospel story where Jesus heals a man who was born blind (John 9:1–41), Jesus calls himself the Light of the World:

"While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

John 9:5



How does knowing Jesus help you see the world clearly?

Third Scrutiny

CHRIST AS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

In the Gospel story of Jesus raising his friend Lazarus back to life (John 11:1–44), Jesus calls himself the resurrection and the life:

"Jesus told her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'"

John 11:25–26



How do you have new life in Jesus?

EXAMINING OUR ACTIONS WITH GOD

Saint Ignatius of Loyola knew that following God's will and making good decisions was the best way to live a holy life. Saint Ignatius talked to God every day about how he could do better! In fact, St. Ignatius thought this was so important he created a five-step prayer so other people could do it, too. We call this prayer the **examen** because it's something we do every day to examine our lives.

1. Remember God is with you. Whenever we pray, God comes to us in a special way.
2. Say "thank you." God gives us a lot of gifts every day. As you think about what you did today, thank God for everything he gave you.
3. Ask the Holy Spirit for help. The Holy Spirit can help you see your actions clearly and help you understand your choices.
4. Review your day. Think about all the things that happened. Pay attention to what you did and why you made those choices. Did you say "yes" to God every time you could?
5. Say "I'm sorry." We all make wrong choices sometimes. If you realize you made a wrong choice, tell Jesus you're sorry. Ask Jesus to help you do better next time. Then end your prayer with the Our Father.





SAYING "YES" TO GOD

Does each action you take below say "yes" or "no" to God? Circle your answer and then write one sentence saying why you said "yes" or "no."

Several of your classmates are making fun of someone's clothes. You join in, too.

Yes

No

Why:

Your friend asks you for answers to a pop quiz. You offer to help your friend study instead.

Yes

No

Why:

You get bored during Mass, so you decide to start texting instead of paying attention.

Yes

No

Why:

You hear your classmates saying bad things about someone else. You don't do anything.

Yes

No

Why:

Your sister is studying for a big test, so you offer to do her chores after dinner.

Yes

No

Why:

In Short

- A daily examen of consciousness moves us closer to Christ.
- God's mercy is offered freely and to all.
- The scrutinies are rites for self-searching and repentance.



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