



elev8

life on another level

Student Workbook

YEAR 3

Life and Action

**Blessed are
the Pure in Heart**

Bible Readings

Matthew 5:8

Psalm 51



Learning Outcomes

At the end of this week you will be able to:

- Articulate your understanding of 'purity in heart'.
- Partake in the spiritual discipline of 'Examen'.
- Reflect intentionally on God's place in your everyday life.

Notes from Bible Reading

Scripture A word or phrase that stood out to me:

Observation What is happening in this Bible reading?

Application Something that I learned about who I am or how I should live:

Prayer What I would like to say to God, ask of God, or what I think God is saying to me:

Key Question What does it mean to be pure in heart and how do we become like this?

Engage

Go around the group and share one thing for each heading that has happened since you last met:

- Plus – What has been good or enjoyable?
- Minus – What has been difficult or painful?
- Interesting – What has been unusual or thought provoking?

Discussion starter:

As a group, figure out what you think someone who is 'pure in heart' would be like.

What would they:

- Do / not do
- Think / not think
- Say / not say

Explore – Locate

- *What stood out to you in the Bible readings this week?*
- *What did you find meaningful or significant?*
- *Is there anything that you didn't understand or found confusing?*
- *Any questions or comments you may have?*

Read together: Psalm 51:1-10

Something which is 'pure' is something that is free from contamination. As humans, our hearts are certainly not pure: they do not contain only good, clean, love-motivated thoughts and feelings, but are polluted by all sorts of unhealthy, sinful, God-offending things.

However, through our relationship with Jesus, including our acceptance of his life, death and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins we are, in God's sight, washed clean - 'whiter than snow' the Bible says (Psalm 51:7).

Then, as we progress on our journey through life, God continually transforms our character and purifies us. This takes time, effort and trust in God, who provides Jesus as our perfect example of purity - he was sinless and was motivated by His love for God and for others.

Spending time reflecting on Jesus and spending time with Jesus are excellent ways of developing our purity of heart.

St. Ignatius of Loyola was a Spanish follower of Jesus who lived in from 1491-1556. He developed a way of intentionally doing this. It is called 'Examen' and Ignatius believed it was a gift of God revealed to him, to help him "detect God's presence and discern (figure out/hear) his direction" (www.ignatianspirituality.com)

Spending time with God is a sure-fire way to help us develop character more like his - that is, to help us become more pure of heart. Examen is a great way to help us do this.

Explore – Express

EXAMEN (taken from www.ignatianspirituality.com)

Your group leader will lead you through the following 5 steps of the Examen exercise.

You might like to go as a group and find a nice, quiet spot outside amongst nature while you do the following:

1. Become aware of God's presence.

Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. The day may seem confusing to you – a blur, a jumble, a muddle. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

2. Review the day with gratitude.

Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God.

Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts.

Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with.

- What did you receive from these people?
- What did you give them?

Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.

3. Pay attention to your emotions.

One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions.

Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence?

What is God saying through these feelings? God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults.

But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out to her in some way.

4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.

Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important.

It may involve a feeling – positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant.

Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

5. Look toward tomorrow.

Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation?

Allow these feelings to turn into prayer.

Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face.

Do all this in the spirit of gratitude.

Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God.

Explore – Integrate

- What did you think about the Examen process?
- Did anything from the reflection time stand out to you? Did you learn anything new? Share with the group
- How could Examen help you to be 'pure in heart'?

Extend

Discuss with your group the challenges you are tackling. Use the time to ask for any help you might need, or to work together on any shared projects that you have.

Questions that may be helpful include:

- What challenges are you working on at the moment?
- Do you need any support or assistance?
- Are there any challenges that you have completed that we need to recognise and celebrate?
- Are there any new challenges that you want to work on?

Encourage

Tell another student in your group something you value or appreciate about them.

Share one thing you would like to pray for and pray for one another.

Pray the Lord's Prayer together:

*Our Father in Heaven,
Blessed be your name,
Your kingdom come
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin
against us.
Give us the strength to stand against temptation,
And deliver us from evil
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory
Forever and ever,
Amen.*