

## Introduction to Evening Reflection

1. Welcome everyone – thank them for taking a chance on this experience. Thank them for being at Rockhurst and for embracing Rockhurst’s Jesuit mission.
2. Go over the following Guidelines for Evening Reflection, either aloud or in print. You could simply read them if you wish:
  - a. One person speaks at a time.
  - b. Listen when others speak. Listen with your entire body (eye contact, face the person speaking, etc.)
  - c. Monitor yourself – if you are speaking too much, take a break and listen. If you haven’t been sharing, challenge yourself to share.
  - d. All small group discussion is confidential – what is said here stays here unless it is a matter of personal safety/health (“I want to kill myself” “I’m extremely depressed”, etc.).
  - e. We are here to build each other up – no cut-downs.
  - f. We are here to listen, not to give advice.
  - g. We are not here to give short, glib “answers” to questions asked of ourselves or others. We will reflect upon some of life’s most profound questions: suffering, apathy, joy, community. Our reflection, prayer and discussion this week is not intended to “solve” these problems. Rather, the intent is to sit with these questions – faithfully, respectfully, prayerfully - in community...only God knows if we will be given answers, partial answers, or the grace to live with the questions.
  - h. Again, challenge yourself – though sharing is not mandatory, the more willing everyone is to open up, the richer this experience will be!
3. Go over the format for each night:
  - a. Period of silence to collect ourselves
  - b. Opening prayer
  - c. St. Ignatius’ Examen
  - d. Sharing from the Examen
    - i. Experience love
    - ii. Experience sorrow – PAY ATTENTION TO THIS!
    - iii. Invitational style...once one person shares, they then invite the next person to share.
  - e. Closing prayer
  - f. Announcements/plans for tomorrow

### Opening Prayer

Lord, take me where  
you want me to go;  
Let me meet who  
you want me to meet;  
Tell me what  
you want me to say, and  
Keep me out of your way.

-Fr. Mychal Judge, O.F.M.

*Chaplain, NYFD, killed in the 9-11 attacks*  
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### Closing Prayer

God,  
support us all the day long:  
‘til the shades lengthen,  
and the evening comes,  
and the busy world is hushed,  
and the fever of life is over,  
and our work is done.  
Then, in Your mercy,  
grant us a safe lodging  
And a holy rest  
And peace at the last.  
Amen

- Cardinal John Henry Newman

## The Examen – A Contemporary Version

(*Note for the Leader:* Read the following slowly to guide individuals through the prayer.)

- 1) (Light a candle, play soft, reflective music if available.) Quiet yourself, breathing slowly and deeply.
- 2) Acknowledge by faith that you are in the presence of God, the One who loves you unconditionally. Breathe in that unconditional love of God.
- 3) Ask God to bring to your awareness something for which you are most grateful today. You may use the following questions to help identify that for which you are most grateful:
  - When did I give and receive the most love today?
  - When did I have the greatest sense of belonging to myself, to others and to God?
  - When did I feel happiest?
  - In whom did I see and experience joy, resilience, hope?

Bask in the remembrance of the life you experienced in the moment for which you are grateful.

- 4) Ask God to bring to your awareness something for which you are least grateful today. You may use the following questions to help identify the moment or experience for which you are least grateful:
  - When did I give and receive the least love today?
  - When did I have the least sense of belonging?
  - When did I feel the saddest?
  - In whom did I see and experience sorrow, pain, suffering, hopelessness?

Examine what it was about that moment that made it difficult. Be with the experience, not trying to change or fix it, but holding it gently in the light of God's forgiveness and love.

- 5) Close with a silent prayer of thanksgiving for the gifts of this day and of life and a prayer of hope for tomorrow.

Adapted from *Sleeping With Bread* by Dennis, Sheila and Matthew Linn

**Ask for a volunteer to start the discussion by sharing their two points:**

1. Where they experienced love
2. Where they experienced sorrow

**Once they've shared, they then invite the next person to share.**