

# Widening the Circle

*Celebrating Neurodiversity in Faith-based Schools*

## FOCUS

## STRATEGY:

### An Examen for Practitioners

This Examen is an opportunity to seek God's grace, acknowledge our challenges, and renew our dedication to serving all students with love and compassion. This is a powerful opportunity especially for Catholic staff in the process of reaching to the margins. In this process, several critical questions arise:

- How do I personally interact with those who are unique and unrepeatable?
- What is stopping you from being the minister I need to be?
- Knowing that we were all made with intentionality, how does this truth inform my practice?
- How do I encounter the other?
- What prejudices do I have about the Other and how do I face these prejudices?
- When times are good, do I go out and look for ways to encounter the Other?

#### Step 1: Gratitude

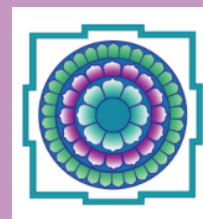
Take a few deep breaths and quiet your mind. Recall the moments today when you felt God's grace and presence in your work as a teacher. Reflect on the positive experiences, the connections you made with your students, the joy of witnessing their growth, and the fulfillment you experienced in living out your vocation.

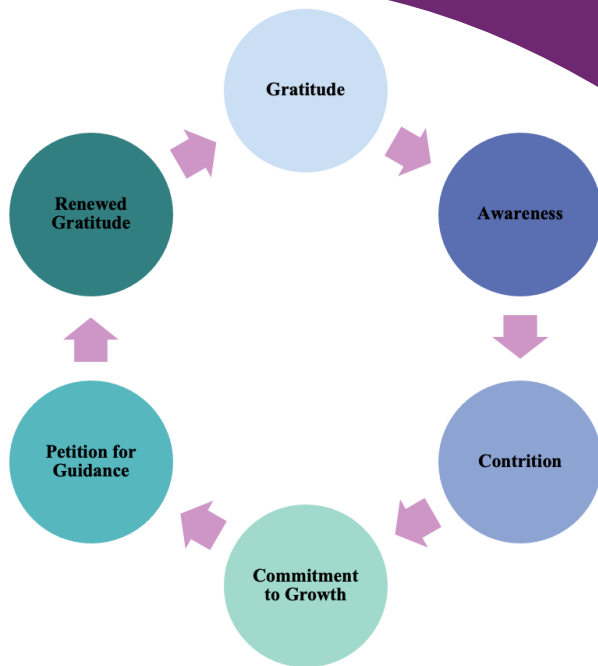
#### Step 2: Awareness

In the presence of God, honestly examine your day as a teacher. Acknowledge the moments when you may have fallen short, when you encountered challenges or faced difficulties in meeting the needs of students on the margin. Recognize any feelings of frustration, fatigue, or self-doubt that may have arisen during the day.

#### Step 3: Contrition

Turn to God with a humble heart, acknowledging any mistakes or missed opportunities you may have had in meeting the needs of all your students, especially those who require extra support and attention. Seek forgiveness for any impatience, indifference, or lack of understanding you may have exhibited. Reflect on what you did, said, or thought in those instances. Were you drawing closer to God, or further away?





#### Step 4: Commitment to Growth

Now, express your sincere desire to grow as a teacher and as a person. Ask God to grant you the wisdom, compassion, and strength needed to meet the unique needs of each student, particularly those who are vulnerable or marginalized. Commit yourself to seek continuous improvement in your teaching practices and to nurture a culture of inclusion and love in your classroom and school community. Look toward tomorrow — think of how you might collaborate more effectively with God’s plan.

#### Step 5: Petition for Guidance

Take a moment to lift up to God the specific challenges and difficulties you encountered in your work as a teacher. Ask for guidance, inspiration, and support to overcome these obstacles and to find creative ways to address the needs of your students more effectively.

#### Step 6: Renewed Gratitude

End this Examen with a deep sense of gratitude for the privilege of being a Catholic school teacher and for the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of your students. Thank God for the gifts and talents He has bestowed upon you and for the grace to serve Him in this noble vocation.

#### Closing Prayer

Loving God, as we close this Examen, I place myself and my students in Your hands. Grant us the grace to grow in holiness and to live out our calling as Catholic school teachers with dedication, compassion, and love. May I be guided by Your Spirit to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all students can flourish and grow in faith, knowledge, and virtue. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

