A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 1:12–15:
The Temptation of Jesus

At once the Spirit drove [Jesus] out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

1. Where did Jesus go? For how long was He there? What happened to Him there?

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2. What happened before Jesus came to Galilee?

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3. What did Jesus proclaim in Galilee?

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The Gospel reading for the first Sunday of Lent tells us of the forty days Jesus spent in the desert before beginning His public ministry. During this time Jesus fasted, prayed to His Father, and resisted the temptations of Satan. Even Jesus, who is fully God and fully man, took time to reflect and to pray in order to better prepare Himself to do the will of His Father.

In part, Lent is a time for us to imitate Christ’s forty days in the desert. Lent is a time for us to fast, to pray, and strengthen ourselves to resist temptation and avoid sin. One great way of reflecting on our lives during Lent is to reflect each day using a method of prayer and reflection called the examen. This style of prayerful reflection on our lives, being aware of God’s presence, and recognizing how we have loved God and others and how we have failed to do so was first developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit religious order. It is simple and can be done quickly, but always invites us to be more prayerful, reflective, and aware of God’s will in our lives.

Every day during Lent (or as often as your class chooses to do it) use the following examen questions to reflect and to pray.

1. **Begin with prayer**
   
   In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

   Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you and praise you for this day and for all the blessings that you have given to us. Help us to prayerfully reflect on all the ways we have loved you and others and all the ways that we have failed to do so. Please continue to bless us today and every day. Show us your way in all we do. Amen.

2. **Examen reflection**
   
   Take a moment to remember and reflect upon the fact that you are always in the presence of God. He is with us every day, in everything we do, and in everyone we meet. Quietly thank Him for His love for you.
Think back over the last 24 hours (or however long it has been since your last examen reflection). Then, reflect upon and journal about the following:

- What are you most thankful for during this time?
- How have you loved God during this time?
- How have you loved others during this time?
- How have you failed to love God during this time? What is one thing you can do to make up for this?
- How have you failed to love others during this time? What is one thing you can do to make up for this?

3 Think ahead to tomorrow

Think ahead to the next day. Then, reflect upon and journal about the following:

- What do you most need God’s help with in the next day?
- Who would you like to pray for?

4 Conclude with prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise you for your goodness. Thank you for the gift of life and for your mercy and love. Help us today and every day to love you and to love one another according to your will. Amen.