

INFORMATION SHEET



MARQUETTE
UNIVERSITY

The Examen(ed) Church

What is *The Examen(ed) Church*?

The Examen(ed) Church is a grant-funded initiative based at Marquette University. It is focused on promoting congregational thriving through reflection on three themes: awareness of and adaptation to the changing context, clarifying mission and values, and deepening Christian practice.

The process unfolds over a period of 2 years and includes training, guided practices, consultation, and access to a growing library of resources.

How is participation structured?

1. An application process will communicate the church's interest in participating and provide program staff with profile of the church.
2. The church will be represented in the program by a "Thrive Team" of 6-8 people (plus a clergyperson).
3. The Thrive Team will participate program activities as a group and with teams of other churches.
4. Thrive Team will be given resources to share their experience as well as elements of the initiative with the broader congregation.

What is the church's commitment?

In *year one* of the process...

- The church will form a "Thrive Team" of 6-8 individuals plus a clergyperson who will participate in the program activities.
- The church leadership will receive periodic updates of the Thrive Team's reflection process.
- The Church will provide opportunities for the Thrive Team to share their experience with the congregation.

In *year two* of the process...

- Church leadership will collaborate with Thrive Team in discernment of some church action as the result of the process of reflection
- Church will host an event with nearby or like-minded churches to share the fruit of reflection.
- Thrive Team, church leadership, and congregation will participate in assessment of the experience and resources

What does it cost?

Participation in *The Examen(ed) Church* comes without financial cost for congregations; all expenses are covered by the grant. This includes events hosted by the congregation as part of program expectations.

What benefits are there for participating Churches?

- ✓ Pastor and Thrive Team receive training in reflection and in program themes.
- ✓ Congregation is exposed to the practice of reflection.
- ✓ Pastor and Thrive Team gain access to Program Staff and other Marquette personnel and resources.
- ✓ Churches that complete the process receive a \$2000-4000 stipend.
- ✓ Small grants will be available to encourage congregations in new initiatives executed to during the experience.

How does the process unfold?

The church's "Thrive Team" will participate in several activities in four phases over two years (explained below). Up to 20 churches total will participate fully in the initiative. Some events will provide opportunity for churches to learn together. Many of the month-to-month activities will be guided experiences for your church's Thrive Team to engage together as a group.

- **Phase One: Learning Reflection.** The Thrive Team will be instructed in and practice both personal and group reflection using the Examen of Ignatius of Loyola. They will share the fruits of their experience with the congregation.
- **Phase Two: Applying Reflection.** Your church's Thrive Team will participate in Workshops covering topics relevant for church thriving: understanding and adapting to the church's context, clarifying mission and values, and deepening Christian practices.
- **Phase Three: Discerning to Action.** The Thrive Team and church leadership will discern some response to the months of reflection on church experience, identity, and the program themes.
- **Phase Four: Reflecting on Experience.** The Thrive Team will lead the congregation in assessing the experience and identifying elements of the process the church might sustain.