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# The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing The Spiritual Exercises Of St. Ignatius In Daily Life



## Synopsis

Third Place, Prayers & Spirituality category ACP Excellence in Publishing Awards, 2012 There is no better guide than St. Ignatius Loyola if one desires to discover how faith and everyday life can thrive together. In *The Ignatian Adventure*, Kevin O'Brien, SJ, follows St. Ignatius's lead and offers today's time-strapped individual a unique way of "making" the Spiritual Exercises in daily life. The first part of O'Brien's book provides helpful background information, including a brief history of St. Ignatius, an explanation of the Spiritual Exercises and their purpose, and a description of different ways to make the Exercises. The book's core offers 32 weeks of prayer and meditations to draw participants into a deeper encounter with God. But what truly sets this book apart from other 19th annotations is how O'Brien has woven throughout the chapters his own personal accounts of living out the Exercises in everyday life. Through his deeply moving stories, readers discover how the Exercises intersect with the real world. *The Ignatian Adventure* is an ideal resource for spiritual directors, but its user-friendly, down-to-earth style also makes it perfect for any individual seeking a deeper life of prayer.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This lovely book by Kevin O'Brien, S.J. -- *The Ignatian Adventure* -- has been my go-to Christmas gift this season. His is a thoughtful reflection that shares with the reader a bit of Jesuit history, a touch of his own personal story, a heaping of spirituality, and a dose of inspiring prayer. He then extends a welcoming, encouraging invitation to experience the Spiritual Exercises, by offering this positive, accessible guide. It is a book that will become a companion for life -- one that you will read

time and time again, in preparation, during and certainly after you experience St. Ignatius's Exercises. It is obviously a book grounded in religion and Catholicism, but to some degree, one might argue it has a broad and more universal appeal, being of interest to anyone who seeks to challenge themselves to grow in union with God through prayer.

I purchased this book over a year ago on the recommendation of a friend, shortly after returning from an extended visit to one of my favorite monasteries. I have been a student and practitioner of the Exercises of Ignatius for a number of years now, and I've leaned heavily on several resources to assist my teaching and leading in the Exercises. I was relatively comfortable with my collection of resources, but the endorsement of my friend for *The Ignatian Adventure* prompted me to order it out of sheer curiosity... I'm so very glad I did! My first reading of this book was shortly after I received it and consisted mostly of a "speed read" and general comparison of content between a couple of my other Ignatian Exercises resource materials. I was reasonably impressed with what I found, but planned to spend more "practiced" time with *The Ignatian Adventure* before writing out a review. Now, after journeying through thirteen plus weeks with a friend, I feel that I have the hands on experience I was waiting for. For the record, the following titles are my ready resources for teaching and leading others in the Ignatian Exercises: *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (there are various English translations and I don't know that any one of them is necessarily better than the other), *Inner Compass* by Margaret Silf, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything* by James Martin, S.J., *Journey with Jesus* by Larry Warner, and *The Ignatian Workout* by Tim Muldoon. While each of these titles has its place in my resource list, I'm putting *The Ignatian Adventure* by Kevin O'Brien S.J. at the top of my list for the "go to" journey companion for working through the weeks of the exercises. Even with this affirmation, I think there are a few pro and con statements worth mentioning. For the "pro" side, I think the methodology and instruction that O'Brien leads the retreatant through the weeks is better than any of the other resources I have in my possession. The instructions are clear, information regarding the process of the exercises is shared in "bite-size" pieces making them helpful in the meditation and reflection process, and he (O'Brien) sprinkles prayers, affirmation, encouragement, and anecdotal stories to help round out interactive elements of the experience. While I personally believe the Ignatian Retreat is best experienced with one or two people going through the Exercises together, the way Kevin O'Brien has ordered this guide makes it very accommodating for a single person experience (this also assumes that the single retreatant is reporting to or being guided by a spiritual director/companion who is familiar with the Exercises of St. Ignatius). My only criticism is the lack of depth in background information surrounding Ignatius

and the Exercises. There is information included in the Adventure, but it is surprisingly brief. It is for this reason that I think I would recommend supplemental reading or companion resources before recommending this book as a standalone resource. There is certainly enough background and information to get someone started, but because of my experience, enjoyment, and wisdom gleaned from other sources, I think a little more time spent in preparation and background instruction would be very helpful. On the other hand, if someone were in the position of choosing only one book for working through the Ignatian Retreat, this one would receive my hearty endorsement.

I am moving through the Exercises meaningfully as a result of following the suggestions and clear format of this wonderful guide.

This excellent resource based on the centuries-old yet still freshly compelling Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola captures the essence of the Jesuit tradition of spirituality and roots it in the depth, as well, of Catholic Christian spirituality for our own times. You'll find an inviting voice in this practical guide to various forms of prayer and meditation, not to mention in the adventure with the God to whom it is meant to draw us more close. Also notable and unique about this resource is the way that Fr. O'Brien weaves in biography, beginning first with the story of St. Ignatius's journey from soldier to saint, and adding reflections from his own life along the way. By unfolding the Exercises in this way, Fr. O'Brien's approach moves one to reflect on how his or her own life story already bears the marks of God's action. And this is appropriate, as the Spiritual Exercises themselves uniquely draw a person to insight into how God's past and present action, whether revealed in moments of extraordinary prayer or in the day-to-day details of our lives, also calls us forward to ever-new decisions about living a life marked by love of God and service of neighbor. This book is a sure guide whether you consider yourself a spiritual novice or someone long on the path but seeking freshness and renewal.

I am thoroughly enjoying this practical guide to living the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius more in my daily life. I am a Catholic who has had the benefit of a Jesuit education. Father O'Brien's book is a concise and understandable refresher in how to become more connected to my faith in everyday life. Father Jim Martin's "The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life" is the only other book like this one. Both books give the reader an easy-to-use guide to improving your prayer life. I highly recommend Father O'Brien's book for anyone who wants a realistic and refreshing rubric for how to live in a more mindful and spiritual way. Buy it for anyone who has been

lucky enough to spend time with the Jesuits!

This is a very solid and user-friendly way to do the Exercises without going away from your regular life of work and family. It takes a concerted effort of 45 minutes per day of quiet prayer time. However, the fruits of the the exercises quickly convince you that the time is well spent. The Jesuit order, with its notion of contemplative a in action, appeals to people of our time, with our necessarily busy lives, making us all the more desirous of quiet contemplation. I can't recommend this highly enough! Give it five days and you will be hooked!

"The Ignatian Adventure" captures the essence, vitality and faith of living The Spiritual Exercises in today's world. Whether you are Catholic, Protestant, an experienced professional or beginning your own spiritual journey, Fr. Kevin O'Brien's story and guided prayers will engage your imagination and deepen your faith.

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