



# GROWING TOGETHER AS A COUPLE

## July Date Night In

The summer sun is out and gardens are flourishing! Or are they?! Is your garden lacking water or battling pests? Marriage has the potential to be immensely beautiful. So beautiful in fact, the Church teaches that marriage is supposed to be a reflection of the Blessed Trinity. Your marriage is called to be a witness to the world of God's unfathomable love. This doesn't happen without some hard work and a lot of grace. Are there weeds in your marriage that need pulled? What parts of your marriage need God's grace to shine in? Assess what your marriage may need, or what is going well so that it can outshine the most magnificent garden display.

## Activity

Go for a walk, hold hands, pray a rosary, let the beauty of God's creation remind you of His goodness in all things, especially in bringing you together in marriage. Step it up and visit a botanical garden. Consider planting a flower, vegetable or herb. Care for it as a family.

## Drink Recommendation

St. Ignatius of Loyola was a fiery young man with a number of vices. While recovering from a battle wound, he had nothing to read but a life of Christ and book of saints. This brought about a great conversion! He abandoned his worldly lifestyle and became the founder of the Jesuits. Later, the Jesuits in Mexico used the newly discovered passionflower to teach about the Passion of Christ. In their honor enjoy a Passion-Fruit Italian Cream Soda.

8 oz. soda water  
3/4 oz. passion-fruit syrup  
3/4 oz. of cream

Build in a highball glass  
with crushed ice.  
Stir & enjoy.

# MARRIAGE NEEDS DAILY NOURISHMENT

How do you grow a garden? It's as easy as planting a seed, right? Well, that might work, but if you want a lush garden filled with flowers or want to harvest vegetables in the fall, you won't see real results until you put in time and effort.

Good gardening involves planning, planting, feeding the soil, watering the plants, pulling weeds and paying careful attention to the weather. Gardens must be tended and nourished every day. The more you give, the more your garden grows.

Sounds a bit like a marriage, doesn't it? Growing together as a couple is like growing a garden. Your spouse — and your relationship — need daily nourishment (CHECK OUT THE LINK-IT'S AWESOME! <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/healthy-marriage-traits/nourishing-your-marriage/>).

The Bible often uses gardening or farming as a way to teach us about relationships. Psalm 128:1-3 speaks of such a relationship: "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in obedience to him. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table."

If growing together as a couple is like planting a garden, how do you start?

The best place to start — according to Psalm 128 — is to have a relationship with God. Honor and obey Him. Once your relationship with God is in place, you can work on your relationship with your spouse.

Good marriages include a number of traits that help couples grow together. One of those traits consists of nourishing your marriage. Nourishing involves supporting your spouse's goals, encouraging your spouse, supporting each other in times of stress and spending time together. The Bible describes nourishing this way:

- Ephesians 5:25 — "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her."
- 1 Peter 3:7 — "Likewise, you husbands should live with your wives in understanding."
- Ephesians 5:33 — "In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband."

Nourishing your spouse (<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/nourish-treat-your-spouse-in-valuable-ways/>) — loving them, showing respect, care and encouragement — is vital to your growth together as a couple. How will you nourish your marriage today?

*Heavenly Father, thank You for my spouse.  
Remind me to nourish them each day.  
Amen.*

Adapted from FOCUS ON THE FAMILY