

DANCING THROUGH LIFE

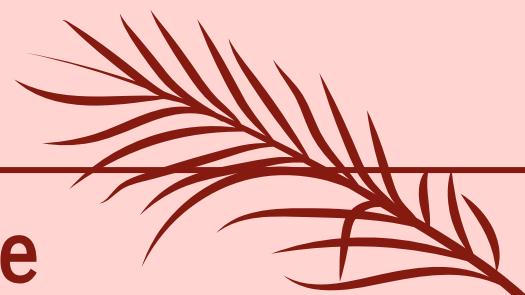
Growing in Faith

Celebrate the sacrament of matrimony through dance! Ballroom dance is a beautiful and fun way to explore the truth that man and woman have been created in God's own image and as a gift for one another. This month, Eric and Elizabeth Hartung from the Madison Diocese have put together a wonderful date night for you. They share how dance has inspired their marriage and they even created two video tutorials introducing some basic and intermediate steps for East Coast Swing. What a great month to pursue your spouse! Use the dance tutorials, playlist, reflection and questions for conversation found below to celebrate the love you share.

Valentine was a priest in Rome who was martyred on this day in AD 270. The most likely reason for his patronage of young lovers is historical happenstance. Valentine's martyrdom falls on the day before the Roman Lupercalia, when young people would choose courtship partners for a year or even propose marriage. It was only natural that once the old gods were dethroned, the Christian faith should baptize some of these harmless customs.

Valentine

2 oz. banana liqueur
1 oz. vodka
3 oz. cranberry juice



Pour into shaker filled with ice and shake forty times. Strain into a red wine glass.



BASIC SWING LESSON

INTERMEDIATE SWING LESSON

EAST COAST SWING PLAY LIST

Dancing Through Life, Growing in Faith

Social dancing has been part of our relationship from the very beginning. We first met in college at Two to Tango, a student-led social dance club where, ironically, we didn't at first enjoy dancing with each other! This changed as our commitment to leading the club and to learning social dance gave us many opportunities to learn, teach, grow, plan, perform, and eventually develop not just a strong dancing partnership but a deep friendship as well. Eventually, a glass of wine and our first slow dance together at Mona Lisa's restaurant sparked an interest in something more, including an invitation to come back to Holy Mass and a search for how our Catholic faith could be active in our new relationship. As it turns out, the lessons of respect, cooperation, compromise, and forgiveness in our roles as dancing partners have translated well to our vocation as husband and wife. 17 years, 3 kids, a dog, and many ups and downs later, we are still trying to figure out how to perfect this dance called marriage by learning to draw out and highlight the best in each other.

Making Something Beautiful

In social dance, the roles of both lead and follow within the structure of the dance are essential. The lead must be clear and gentle. The follow must be able to receive that communication and execute the move. A clear and healthy tension must exist between the two dancers so that this communication can happen and the partners can respond and react to each other. Mistakes happen. Toes get stepped on. Egos bruised. No matter your skill level, the need for flexibility, understanding, and forgiveness is always present. A healthy dose of humility goes a long way, too!

As a couple learns and practices together more, they become more skilled and the dance becomes more impressive. We have learned, however, that it's not just about technical skill. It's about cooperation, chemistry, resolving conflicts, respecting each other, and allowing each person's personality to shine through. Dance can become a visual expression of the connection between two people. A skillful couple can perform an impressive dance, but it's the couples who have chemistry from a deeper foundation of friendship and joy that can make a truly fun and beautiful dance. The interactions off the dance floor show up on the dance floor. It takes some hard work to cultivate. Our marriages are also meant to be beautiful!

A Beautiful Marriage

We hope you have enjoyed dancing together and considering how your marriage is like a dance. We would invite you to reflect individually and together on the unique and indispensable skills, abilities, and talents that each of you, uniquely created as man and woman by God, possess that make your marriage beautiful.

St Paul says in Eph 5:21 that we should be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Eph 5:25 states: "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her."

We would invite you to grab a glass of wine and to read Eph 5:21-33 together with the lens of entrusting yourself to the other's love and care in your marriage, or being subject to one another, out of reverence for Christ. How did Christ love? He showed his love for us by living with us, suffering among us, and dying for our salvation. That's a tall order, yet this is our example of true love!

In our marriages, how can we focus on dying to ourselves and loving our spouses with the self-sacrificial love of Christ? It is through a love like this that we can empower each other to be the husbands and wives we are called to be for the good of each other and the families we have created. Christ will train us in this love when we turn to him as we navigate the joys and sorrows of our lives. Remember, practice makes perfect! It's in this way that we can work to perfect the dance and to create a truly beautiful marriage!

Questions for Conversation

- Talk about a time that you felt like you were really in sync with your spouse.
 - What did each of you contribute to that experience?
- When have you "stepped on each others' toes" in your relationship?
 - What did it take to heal, forgive, and make a plan to move forward more gracefully?
- Dance involves private practice and public performance, just as marriage involves both your home life and your life outside the home. When have your public interactions as a married couple shown the love of Christ to the world?
 - Which of your strengths as a couple shine when you're in public?
 - How could you improve or let hidden strengths shine?
 - Which public strengths could use a little work during your time at home?

