

From "Happy Together"

In **Happy Together: the Catholic Blueprint for a Loving Marriage**, at the end of Chapter 4:

See page 56, LISTEN TO GOD'S STORY. Read the Scripture passages and hear how God teaches us to love each other.

See pages 57, REFLECT ON YOUR STORY, for more conversation starters.

Wisdom of Our Catholic Tradition

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us:

"Every man experiences evil around him and within himself. This experience makes itself felt in the relationship between man and woman." #1606

"To heal the wound of sin, man and woman need the help of the grace that God in his infinite mercy never refuses them. Without his help man and woman cannot achieve the union of their lives for which God created them 'in the beginning.'" #1608

"... Love one another as I have loved you."

John 15:12

The Catholic Church Cares About Your Marriage

*In 2005 the United States Catholic Bishops launched an initiative in support of marriage. They want to help couples live their vocation and they want to remind society that marriage is a gift and a blessing. Their pastoral letter: **Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan** (Nov. 2009) is available for free at USCCB.org. They offer additional resources designed for couples at all stages of their marriage at: foryourmarriage.org and portumatrimonio.org.*

Prepare for your next date by reading Chapters 5 through 10 of **Happy Together: The Catholic Blueprint for a Loving Marriage**.

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SIX DATES for Catholic Couples

Date Four

What About Me?

Before You Begin

As you enjoy your time alone together as a couple, look over this booklet and choose one or more of the activities that you find most interesting to the two of you. When you reflect on the questions and share your thoughts with each other you may uncover disagreements. If any of the activities threatens to take the fun out of your date, set it aside and agree to discuss the issue at another time.

Memories

Share with each other your memories as you answer these questions.

- ♥ Do you remember your decision to marry your spouse?
- ♥ How did you arrive at that decision?
- ♥ Did you realize that with your wedding vows you were making a commitment to God as a couple?
- ♥ Recall how you felt when your children were born.

Priorities

Conflicts are inevitable in marriage. Being aware of our differences in what we value can help us in dealing with our conflicts. Rank the items below on a scale from 1 to 10 — with 1 as your most important item and 10 as your least. When you are both finished, explain to each other the reasons for your choices.

	ITEM	Importance According to Husband	Importance According to Wife
1	Children		
2	Job		
3	Comfortable Home		
4	Secure Financial Future		
5	Being Happy Together		
6	Getting Along With In-Laws		
7	Career		
8	Pursuing Separate Hobbies		
9	Close Friends		
10	Practicing My Faith		

Reflections

- ♥ What are some of the major decisions we have made together?
- ♥ In my interactions with my spouse, when do I hear the inner voice that says, “What about me?”
- ♥ A decision I made that was self-centered and ignored what my spouse wanted was . . .
- ♥ Is our way of resolving conflicts working for us? Does it make us feel united or does it tear us apart?
- ♥ What are the conflicts in our marriage that will never go away? How are we going to live with them?

Learning to love requires overcoming selfishness. God teaches us self-giving love.

How Are We Doing?

Growing in love requires learning to **Forgive** each other. This means recognizing your own shortcomings and asking for forgiveness. It also requires being able to forgive your spouse.

You are likely to encounter the situations below. Take turns describing what you do in these situations and how you feel about it.

1. What do you do to put aside the hurts that are caused by your spouse’s mistakes?
2. What do you do when your spouse is not ready to forgive?
3. What do you do to initiate reconciliation with your spouse?
4. What do you do when you want forgiveness from your spouse?
5. What do you do to let your spouse know you have forgiven him/her?
6. What do you do when you have been hurt by your spouse?

Action for This Week

What can you do differently this week to keep mistakes and shortcomings from hurting your relationship?

Husband	Wife