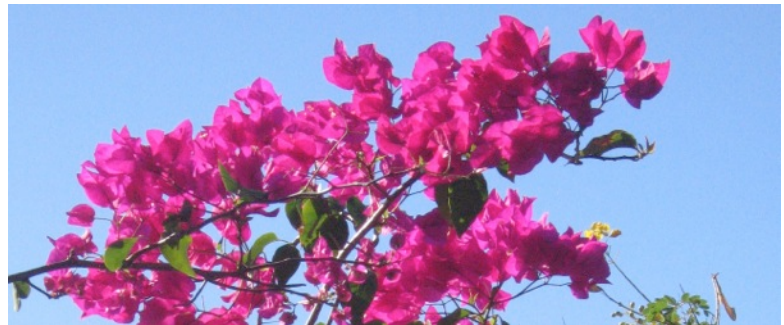


## Devotional Garden

By Julie Filby

Create a garden, of any size, filled with flowers, plants, trees or herbs named for Jesus and his mother Mary. It will be a place of beauty to remind your family of Christ, allow you to experience creation, and encourage prayer and reflection.



### For

Young Family

### Season

Spring

### Needed

A plot outdoors, or a simple pot (indoors or outdoors); soil, seeds, water, a representation of Jesus such as a statue, plaque, holy card, or other image

### Prepare in Advance

- Research types of plants compatible with your area's climate and soil (check with a nursery, consult a gardening book, or do research on the Internet)
- Consider what flowers, plants, herbs or trees you would like in your garden (see the attached sheet for a few ideas)
- Visit a nursery to purchase seeds or plants (and ask for advice if needed)

### Activity Plan

1. Say this prayer aloud to begin.

*Jesus, thank you for this time together today. We pray that you will be pleased with the garden we make in your name, and that it will bring us closer to you. Amen.*

2. Prepare the soil in the outdoor plot, or fill the pot(s) with soil.
3. Take turns planting seeds or bulbs. As each person presses seeds into the soil, talk about its legend related to Jesus' life (see next page); and/or thank God for something God has created (flowers, trees, grass, pets, friends, relatives, etc.).
4. Once planting is finished, place the image of Jesus in the garden.
5. Water the garden, and finish with the following prayer:

*God, we ask that you bless this garden. May we see the wonder of your love in its beauty, and may it bring you greater glory and honor. Amen.*

6. Each time you water the garden, reflect on a story associated with one of the flowers or plants; and/or thank God for the beauty of creation.
7. Variation: Plant the garden on or around Mother's Day, and include an image of Jesus' mother Mary in the garden.

## Devotional Garden Flowers

While hundreds of flowers are linked to the lives of Jesus and his mother Mary, these are a few and their associated legends. Whether the legends are historically accurate or mythical is not important, as long as they draw us closer to Christ.

- **Carnation:** One legend says carnations first bloomed the night of Jesus' birth; another says they first appeared the day Christ was crucified.
- **Oxeye Daisy:** Legend claims that yellow flowers bloomed in front of the manger in Bethlehem, marking it for the wise men with their resemblance to the shining star that had led them there.
- **Dianthus:** Also called "Lady's Bedstraw;" legend says Mary used this dried flower to prepare a bed for Jesus.
- **Lavender:** This plant was said to have received its scent after Mary laid Jesus' clothes on it to dry.
- **Madonna Lily:** The angel Gabriel is believed to have been holding a lily when he appeared to Mary to announce she would bear a child.
- **Calla Lily or jonquils:** Said to represent Saint Joseph's staff.
- **Columbine:** Were said to have sprung up wherever Mary's feet touched the ground when she was on her journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth.
- **Lily of the Valley:** Legend claims when Mary cried at the cross, her tears turned into these flowers.
- **Chrysanthemum:** It is believed these flowers were present when Christ was laid in the tomb.
- **Marigold:** Called "Mary's Gold" by early Christians who placed them around statues of Mary, offering them instead of coins. It was also said that Mary used the blossoms as coins.
- **Rose (red):** Associated with the blood of Christ and Mary's sorrow at his death.
- **Bluebell:** The bell-shaped flowers, resembling tiny thimbles, were named after Mary to honor her working hands as she made Jesus' clothes, including the robe he wore when he was crucified.
- **Fuchsia:** Referred to as Christ's Blood Drops or Our Lady's Eardrops (earrings).
- **Fig tree:** Legend says the Holy Family ate the fruit of this tree during their flight into Egypt.
- **Dogwood tree:** There is a commonly told story that a dogwood tree was chosen as the wood for the cross on which Jesus was crucified.

