

*Community
Marriage
Day*

Second Sunday in February

“they are no longer two, but one.” - Mark 10:8

Dear Pastors and Church Leaders,

Community Marriage Day will be the second Sunday in February. We encourage you to plan something special to honor the married couples in your congregation. There are many ideas in this booklet.

Celebrating Community Marriage Day is a great way to support couples and strengthen families. It sends a message to your congregation that it is wise to prepare for marriage. Jesus speaks to us as being the bridegroom and we, the church as His bride.

Last year several churches held a special service and dinner on the Saturday evening before to honor couples. This might be an option for your church. We have also included in the booklet a special blessing for married couples that can be incorporated into your Sunday celebration.

Our pastor who participated last year said that a couple in his congregation thanked him for having the renewal of wedding vows and that it probably saved their marriage. They were ready to give up, but the ceremony helped them remember why they married and gave them the courage to work on their problems and stay married. We are finding that many couples are embarrassed to have the pastor know they are experiencing trouble in their marriage. This special day may be just the encouragement they need.

If your church has not yet signed the Community Marriage Policy, we invite you to do that. There are currently 180 churches working together to promote lifetime marriages. We hope that getting married in a church in our community means that a couple has taken the time to pray and prepare for a lifetime commitment. We need each church involved in this process.

Please feel free to contact our office (812) 477-2260 for further help or ideas. Training is available for you and mentor couples in your church. A note to the media about your plans would help bring awareness to the whole community.

Thank you and God Bless,

Ann Gries, Ph.D.

p.s. Special thanks to North Haven General Baptist Church, Amy Bolek and Laura Fritz

Consider Celebrating

Community Marriage Day

World Marriage Day is an ideal opportunity for Community Marriage Policy/Covenant participants and other marriage programs to celebrate marriage. Each year it is recognized on the second Sunday of February.

Its Statement of Purpose is: "World Marriage Day honors husband and wife as head of the family, the basic unity of society. It salutes the beauty of their faithfulness, sacrifice and joy in daily married life." And its permanent theme is: "Love One Another." (John 15:12)

Listed below are a few ideas on ways to celebrate:

- 1. Show videos or slide shows of long-term happily married couples and their families in your church.*
- 2. Display wedding albums and photographs.*
- 3. Reserve church pews for couples married 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 or more years, with flowers and gifts.*
- 4. Honor the longest married couple in your church or community with special recognition and a gift.*
- 5. Arrange a "marriage reception" after church service, complete with a wedding cake for all married couples.*
- 6. Plan to attend CMB's Sweetheart Banquet held February 14th in Evansville.*
- 7. Ask married couples to give a short talk.*
- 8. Have a prayer of blessing for married couples.*

Scripture Selections

Genesis 2:21-25

Ruth 1:16-17

1 Corinthians 7:1-6

Hebrews 13:4

1 John 4:7-21

Mark 9:6-12

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Song Suggestions

Wherever You Go

Blessings The Marriage

As For Me and My House

This Is The Day

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Where There Is Love

Faithful Family

Companions on the Journey

City of God

Cherish the Treasure

Give Thanks

They'll Know We Are Christians

Servant Song

Anthem

I Have Loved You

Abba! Father

We Are Many Parts

Prayer of St. Francis

Only A Shadow

Love One Another

Hosea

Precious Moments

Community Marriage Builders is dedicated to educating and equipping the community for lifetime marriages.

THE CEREMONY OF MARRIAGE VOW RENEWAL

Good morning/evening and welcome! We are gathered here in the sight of God and the presence of these witnesses, to renew the vows of marriage between these men and women, and honorable estate, instituted by God, which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with His presence in Cana of Galilee. It has not been entered into unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God.

Recognize the Lord Jesus as the head of your house, the ruler of your destinies and the object of your deepest affection. If you do, He will continue to confirm your marriage by His guidance and will overshadow it with His presence. I encourage you to love each other, to support each other and to serve Him with sincere hearts and determined wills until your mutual service for Him shall be completed.

Pastor to Husbands: Have you chosen your wife to be your partner for life? Will you love, respect and honor her, sharing your plans and interests, ideals and emotions, through crisis and difficulty, through joy and pleasure, caring for her in life-long commitment? (Men respond: "I will.")

Pastor to wives: Have you chosen your husband to be your partner for life? Will you love, respect and honor him, sharing your plans and interests, ideals and emotions, through crisis and difficulty, through joy and pleasure, caring for him in life-long commitment? (Women respond: "I will.")

Pastor to husbands: Repeat these vows:

I promise before God and these witnesses, with all my heart, to be your faithful husband, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we shall both live.

Pastor to wives: Repeat these vows:

I promise before God and these witnesses, with all my heart, to be your faithful wife, to share with you in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health and to join with you so that together we may serve God and others as long as we shall both live.

Pastor to couples: Please repeat these words after me, together:

Depending upon God for strength and wisdom, we pledge ourselves to the establishment of a Christian home. Together we will constantly seek God's will, and honor Christ in our marriage.

When two become one"

PRAYER OF BLESSING

Heavenly Father,

We ask you to bless this couple with Your wisdom, understanding and love. Please help this couple to be patient with one another. Bless this couple with the gift of kindness toward one another. Help each one of them develop unconditional acceptance. Help these two knit together as a godly husband and wife. Bless them with a sense of humor. Teach them to sacrifice and put the other one first. Help this couple to preserve through difficult times. May this couple give their marriage real priority. Be with this

couple as they journey together toward heaven. We ask this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ through the power of His Holy Spirit. Amen

The Southwestern Indiana Community Marriage Covenant

This covenant expresses the common concerns of the faith community regarding the need to strengthen marriages.

We believe:

- God has established the sanctity and companionship of marriage in scripture.
- God intends the marriage bond of husband and wife to last a lifetime.
- As religious leaders we have a responsibility to participate in and to provide premarital preparation to improve the understanding and mutual commitment of those couples being married.

As religious leaders we have a responsibility to provide ongoing support to strengthen and nourish existing marriages.

Therefore, we will:

- Encourage a courtship of at least one year.
- Promote sexual abstinence outside of marriage.
- Affirm fidelity in marital relationships.
- Provide a premarital preparation process of at least four months that incorporates a minimum of four premarital counseling sessions utilizing spiritual guidance, a premarital inventory such as PREPARE of FOCCUS, and intensive education.
- Provide enrichment opportunities designed to strengthen marriages such as:
 - ⇒ Marriage Encounters - an established and proven process designed to strengthen marital relationships
 - ⇒ a Marriage Mentoring process - enlisting mature married couples, equipping them to guide and assist those who are newly married or having difficulty in their married relationship
 - ⇒ a variety of marriage enrichment programs that teach communication skills and marital growth

- Make available and provide intervention services for stressed marriages.
- Train and utilize mature married couples to serve as mentors for:
 - ⇒ Those who are engage
 - ⇒ Newlyweds
 - ⇒ Married couples experiencing marital difficulties
 - ⇒ Married couples seeking married enrichment
- Cooperate with other congregations and organizations to share family resources for the purpose of helping all marriages succeed
- Cooperate on an ongoing basis with other congregations in the community to strengthen marriages.

Signature

-Sample Script-

MARRIAGE PUZZLE

Scene: Married couple working a jigsaw puzzle. Attitude toward each other is matter of fact, as if they're discussing somebody else's marriage.

Husband: How long have we been working on this jigsaw puzzle?

Wife: Not long enough. I think we finished the border last week, but the sky part is giving me fits.

Husband: Well, on a cold winter day, I can't think of anybody else I would rather be working a jigsaw puzzle than with your.

Wife: That's nice. (slight pause as they work on the puzzle) Well, honey, it's been one whole week since we've graduated from "Marriage Counseling Anonymous."

Husband: Yes, wasn't that Internet based counseling realistic? I mean, I felt as if I was really there!

Wife: You were there honey, it was the counselor that wasn't. He was somewhere in the Ukraine.

Husband: Oh yeah. He put me at such ease that I felt as if I could tell him anything.

Wife: You did tell him a lot, like the time you told him you couldn't cut the grass because your knee was hurting from an old war wound. Honey, you hurt your knee playing basketball. You were never in a war.

Husband: Basketball is war honey. (Pause) You know, you also stretched the truth during counseling. You said.....

Wife: (Laughingly) I know, I did exaggerate to the counselor when I said I bought all my clothes at discount places and donated the money I would have spent to buy clothes to the Evansville Christian Life Center.

Husband: (Laughs and pulls out a laminated card from his wallet) Well, in spite of the slight exaggerations, we have our certificate to prove that we're a certified, card carrying, there's (they both say this line together) "no marriage like our marriage" couple.

Wife: All our problems are behind us.

Husband: Huh, (not paying attention) Hey, remember when I used to have the problem of not paying attention?

Wife: You used to have the problem?

Husband: Yep, them days are behind us now. (waves his card)

Wife: Those days honey, not them days, that's poor punctuation. (pause) Hey, remember when I used to have the problem (pick some lint off of his shirt) of being a perfectionist? Isn't it great to be free from that burden?

Husband: I wouldn't know. And the problem of me always forgetting a special day?

Wife: Tomorrow you need to call your mom.

Husband: Why?

Wife: Because tomorrow is her birthday.

Husband: And you think I forgot? (awkward silence, tension starts to build)

Wife: Remember when I didn't like it that you had 25 different **hobbies?**

Husband: And I thought I could go fishing on a Saturday, but if you wanted to do something, you had to find a baby-sitter for the kids?

Wife: Those days are gone?

Husband: Sure, oh, except for this weekend Bill and I have planned to....

Wife: And I used to always interrupt and tell you what you were thinking. You used to laugh and say that you started your sentences but I always ended them.

Husband: Yeah, it's coming back to me now. Ha, Ha. (sarcastic)

Wife: And I was jealous of your job. (Husband and wife getting very irritated at each other.)

Husband: And I thought playing softball on the work team was part of my work obligation and you consider it "work time." (uses his hands to make quotation marks when he says "work time.")

Wife: Even the pizza parties after the game that lasted until midnight?

Husband: It's easier to work with guys that you have bonded with.

Wife: And I used to complain about you not doing your equal share around the house.

Husband: And I complained that you wanted to go to the movies every Friday night whether you liked the movie or not. (By this time he is standing up looking down at her).

Wife: Remember when you used to get mad at me and stand over me and glare down at me? Does that ring a bell?

Husband: Oh, yeah. I remember I used to do that. (He sits down. She turns away and gives him the cold shoulder). Remember when you would hold grudges and never forgive me for making mistakes? Remember those terrible days?

Wife: (pause) Maybe.

Husband: (Pause, she turns back and they look at each other) Well, thanks to the great Internet course, "Marriage Counseling Anonymous", all those problems are behind us.

Wife: We've got the certificate to prove that, don't we? We're certified. (They both say it together "There's no marriage like our **marriage.**")

Husband: (looking at his certificate) I guess that means we couldn't improve on this marriage if we tried.
(Both look at each other and realize the impact of what he just said. Both embarrassed.)

Wife: Well, maybe our marriage isn't exactly 100% perfect.

Husband: Well, maybe (rips up the certificate) saying we reached perfection is slightly overstating the situation.

Wife: (she has gone back to looking over the puzzle) I just found that piece of the sky that I'd been looking for. (smiles) Isn't it neat when the puzzle starts to come together?

COMMUNITY MARRIAGE BUILDERS

RETROUVAILLE

for troubled marriages a weekend away that has an 85% success rate
1-800-470-2230

FOCCUS

Premarital inventory to help prepare engaged couples.
Call our office for training.
812-477-2260

First Aid for Marriage

Third Monday of each month
Community Marriage Builders
1229 Bellemeade Ave.
Evansville, IN 47714
7:00pm - 9:15pm
812-477-2260
reservations suggested

Reconciling God's Way

Workbook with Support Partner book. Twelve (12) week session for troubled marriage. Can be used by one spouse or couple.

Send \$54 donation to:

ICRGW

P. O. Box 1543

Modesto, CA 95353

1-800-205-6808

www.reconcilingGodsway.org

Additional Resources

Community Marriage Builders

Web site: www.marryright.org

812-477-2260 800-443-8495

E-mail: office@marryright.org

Books, tapes, Counseling Referrals

Community Marriage Builders

Tips for strengthening YOUR Marriage

- ♥ Greet each other with a smile, hug & kiss
 - ♥ Make time for each other
 - ◇ a weekly date
 - ◇ an evening walk
 - ◇ time to talk after dinner
 - ◇ share what you are thankful for
 - ♥ say things to build up each other in private and in public
 - ♥ use kind words, not rude words
 - ♥ use “I” statements - Ex. “I feel insecure when I don’t know where you are.”
 - ♥ have a financial plan, work together toward the goal
 - ♥ be the first one to forgive
 - ♥ pray for one another
 - ♥ pray together
 - ♥ become a marriage mentor couple
 - ♥ call someone for help... Don’t wait
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COMMUNITY MARRIAGE BUILDERS

1229 Bellemeade Ave.

Evansville, IN 47714

Tel: (812) 477-2260 Fax: (812) 473-2912

Toll free: 800-443-8495

E-mail: office@marryright.org
www.marryright.org