

What You Can Do to Strengthen Marriages in Mississippi

Individuals can help strengthen marriage

1. Take stock of your personal priorities to assure that relationships with your spouse and your children are getting the time and attention they need and deserve.
2. Make a public declaration of the importance of your marriage by renewing your wedding vows in the presence of family and friends.
3. Invest in the strength of your marriage by participating in premarital counseling before marriage or by skill-building in communication and conflict resolution with your spouse.
4. Consider mentoring a younger married couple. Share your experiences and insights on marriage with them, and gain fresh enthusiasm and energy in your own marriage.

Extended family can help strengthen marriage

1. Be supportive of the marriages in your family. Celebrate anniversaries. Volunteer to babysit so your parents, children, or siblings can spend time building their marriage. Listen to each other's stories of courtship, early marriage, struggles, and successes.
2. Role model marriage for the children in your family and in your peer group. Be an example to those who may not have the marriage relationship modeled in their own home.
3. Sponsor married couples in your family on a marriage enrichment weekend.

Religious Organizations can help strengthen marriage

1. Encourage and equip people to meet high standards of commitment, fidelity, honesty, and accountability in their relationships.
2. Honor and celebrate marriages that have persevered through hard times or long years by encouraging couples to renew their wedding vows as a public testimony of their commitment.
3. Require marriage preparation of all couples getting married in your place of worship.
4. Offer marriage enrichment seminars and classes as special events and ongoing programs in your education plans. Teach couples about the importance of praying together and the benefits they could recognize from such practice.
5. Recognizing that couples will go through struggles in their marriage, provide instruction and counseling in conflict resolution. Encourage couples who have experienced hard times and worked through them to mentor couples who are struggling.

6. Sponsor "date nights" on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Provide children's activities and supervision so that married couples can share dinner alone and then have some entertainment at the (possibly a music performance or marriage speaker) to conclude the evening.
7. Establish marriage-mentoring programs that partner newlyweds with couples who have been married more than 10 years. Both couples can learn from one another's experiences, insights, and enthusiasm for their marriages.

Educators can help strengthen marriage

1. Present accurate information to students about the psychological, emotional, and physical benefits of marriage.
2. Provide positive examples of marriage to students, since some may not see marriages modeled at home.

Government can help strengthen marriage

1. Adopt the standard that all legislation and policies must "first, do no harm" to the strength and integrity of marriages and families. Examine all legislation for its impact on marriage and family.
2. Evaluate current divorce law and explore ways to ensure that there is justice, protection and a respect for the marriage commitment in divorce proceedings.

Businesses can help strengthen marriage

1. Recognize that your employees are husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, and members of extended families and communities even while they are at work. Reflect that understanding in your personnel practices and policies.
2. Make efforts to minimize the time an employee spends away from his or her family by exploring flextime options, reducing overtime, and cutting back on work-related travel when and where possible.
3. Offer resources to your employees—books, tapes, videos, or seminars—that deal with family topics such as marriage-relationship building, family finances, effective parenting and child development.

Consider becoming a partner of the Mississippi Healthy Marriage Initiative. To sign up or learn more information about the initiative, visit www.MarriageMississippi.com.