

MISSISSIPPI
Healthy Marriage Week

February 7 - 14

Ideas to Celebrate Healthy Marriage Week in your Community

Anyone

- Honor a member of your extended family whose marriage has had a significant positive impact on your own life. Invite other family members to participate.
- Teach by example! If you're not married, offer to babysit so someone else can celebrate.
- Married Couples
- Celebrate your own marriage with your husband or wife for the time you have been together.
- Celebrate your own wedding anniversary!
- Strengthen your own marriage. Read a book, attend a course. See www.MarriageMississippi.com for classes, and www.SmartMarriages.com for books.
- Create a coupon book for your spouse, offering them coupons such as one night out, back rub or massage, car wash, special date night, etc.

Community Leaders & Marriage Education Leaders

- Recognize the couple in your community, region or state who has been married the longest. For suggestions on how to run a Couple Married Longest (CML) Contest in conjunction with World Marriage Day (Second Sunday in February) see "Sample Press Releases" on their web site, <http://wmd.wvme.org>.
- Include activities for engaged couples and dating couples – emphasize helping them create strong, healthy marriages for the future.

- Honor a couple or couples in your community who have been married fifty years or more and have celebrated a Golden Wedding Anniversary. Invite teenagers and young adults to participate in planning the celebration.
- Encourage civic, community or religious leaders to acknowledge Marriage Week USA with an official endorsement, announcement or declaration and help promote Marriage Week USA with appropriate activities.
- Offer special classes for police, fire and the military. Include couples separated by military service - organize a media Valentine's event around them - a contest, a TV hook-up from around the world, etc.
- Celebrate couples who have reached marriage milestones - 25, 40, 50 years. Create a Marriage Hall of Fame with photos and their tips for success in a prominent public place like the marriage license office, schools, library or places of worship.
- Identify the couple in your community, region or state who has been married for the longest period of time and give them due recognition. For suggestions on how to run a Couple Married Longest (CML) Contest in conjunction with World Marriage Day (Second Sunday in February) see "Sample Press Releases" on their web site, <http://wmd.wwme.org>.
- Organize a marriage conference in your civic or religious community during Marriage Week USA. Invite appropriate speakers to address the conference.
- Invite local business organizations, merchants or other interested groups to participate in Marriage Week USA in ways conducive to their particular situations and circumstances.
- Distribute the booklet "Strengthening Marriages in Your Community: 101 ideas to Get You Started". The ideas listed below are taken from the booklet. These are also perfect to hand out in the community as you organize. To order, go to <http://www.fambooks.com/frontcover.htm> Bulk as low as 50¢ a copy.
- Offer free class previews & Marriage Check-ups during Marriage Week. Get the list of a variety of classes and events to the media well in advance.
- Promote the idea of gift certificates. "Give engaged or expectant couples, couples celebrating an anniversary, etc - a class for Valentine's Day." Copy and modify the gift certificates posted at: </giftcertificates.html>

Clergy

- Acknowledge the importance of marriage and/or Marriage Week USA in their weekly religious services.
- Distribute bulletin inserts, bookmarks, and other materials promoting Healthy Marriage Week.
- Begin a couple's class, *10 Great Dates* program, or another couple oriented event.

Include the Media

- TV, radio and newspapers are hungry for feature stories for Valentine's Week. Find couples that have attended classes that are available for interviews. Send a brief description of a range of types of couples those who took a class to prepare for marriage; newlyweds; new parents; parents of teens; stepfamilies; empty-nesters; couples on the brink of divorce.
- Create a "Ten Most Affordable (or most romantic, or most creative) Marriage Dates" list/contest for your community. Get these to the media - radio, TV, newspapers, community newsletters. Ask radio stations to promote a contest - keep the focus on Marriage - not just any old date, but ideas for the best Marriage Dates.
- Ask members of the local media (newspaper, radio, television) to help promote Marriage Week USA. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper stating why you think marriage is important and your intentions to celebrate Marriage Week USA.
- Encourage local television and radio stations, movie theaters or drama companies to celebrate Marriage Week USA with appropriate programs, films or productions.
- Ask journalists to include a Strengthening Marriage Tip, Marriage Article, and Marriage Quiz for the full week. Send them the material! It's only seven days.
- Write a letter to the editor or offer to write an article about why your community should celebrate Marriage Week. Include marriage, divorce, out-of-wedlock statistics for your county/state and surrounding counties/states and information about marriage strengthening initiatives available to improve things.
- Encourage local television and radio stations or movie theaters to celebrate Marriage Week USA with appropriate programs, films or productions. Organize a Marriage Film Festival for community organization. Movies to get you started: *The Story of Us*, and *Family Man*. Use the study guide on the web site for "*The Story of Us*." [/story.of.us.html](#)

- Ask local stations to run Public Service Announcements about marriage.

Involve Youth

- Hold a "How this marriage has had an impact on my life" or a "Why I think this is a great Marriage" essay contest for children (lessons learned, examples set, why they want a marriage like this when they grow up, etc.) Award prizes, get the media involved. Marriages described could be those of their parents, relatives, ancestors or one of local, state or national significance.
- Suggest or assign young people in public schools, youth groups or at home to write a brief report on a married couple they deem to be significant. Where possible, identify the date, place and circumstances of the marriage. The couple could be living relatives, ancestors or a husband and wife of local, state or national significance. Teachers, youth leaders or parents could assist in identifying various couples for recognition. Help students learn the various customs and traditions of how and when marriages have occurred in this country.

Promote Marriage-Friendly Policies

- Ask judges and divorce lawyers to declare a moratorium on divorce – NO divorces filed or granted during Healthy Marriage Week, or at least on Valentine's Day (as was done in Indiana). Ask them to "schedule vacation" that week if that's what it takes. Get this idea to the media!
- Challenge Businesses to create marriage-friendly policies for the workplace. One example is to give your employees the day off for their wedding anniversary.