

Definition of Community Marriage Policy

A Community Marriage Policy is a set of agreed-upon guidelines for premarital preparation and community support for marriages. Its purpose is to empower couples for healthy, life-long marriage and to raise the standard of two-parent families within the community.

This community policy is not intended to imply criticism of single-parent families nor does it assume that abusive situations should be endured.



This marriage policy is a work in progress, and we invite and encourage other churches, organizations, and individuals to become involved with us in strengthening marriages in Lawrence County.

If you wish to discuss the policy or add your name to the growing list of supporters please contact one of us from the Marriage and Family Alliance.

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Our Goals from a Community Marriage Policy

To Reduce the Rate of Divorce:

An important study released in 2004 stated that the first 114 communities with a Community Marriage Policy reduced their divorce rate by 17.5% over seven years, saving 50,000 marriages through 2001. With six more years and twice as many CMPs, perhaps 100,000 divorces were averted.

To Reduce the Rate of Cohabitation:

The same study reported that from 1990-2000, cities with a Community Marriage Policy ended the decade with a cohabitation rate one-third lower than those without a CMC. By contrast, the number of cohabiting couples has soared 12-fold since 1960 from 430,000 to 5.2 million in 2005

To Raise the Rate of Marriage:

Modesto, Cal., the first city to create a Community Marriage Policy, saw its number of marriages rise from 1,300 in 1986 to 2,500 in 2005. Evansville, IN reports a 16% rise in the marriage rate from 1998 to 2004-5. This is in stark contrast with the 50% drop of the U.S. marriage rate from 1970-2005.

To Encourage Lengthy Courtships:

Short courtships before marriage – that is courtships lasting less than a year – are associated with a higher risk of divorce.

To Expect a Premarital Process:

A Gallup Poll found that 57% of all marriages fail due to poor communication and conflict resolution skills. In 38% of those divorces, couples say they were aware of those problems when they married or soon afterward.

To Initiate a Mentor Couples Program:

Trained mature married couples will serve as mentors to work with engaged couples, newlyweds and those experiencing marital difficulties.

To Encourage Marriage Enrichment Opportunities:

Nine out of ten couples attending marriage enrichment weekends, seminars, or classes believe that the experiences strengthened their marriages.

Marriage and Family Alliance



Community Marriage Policy

**April, 2008
Lawrence County, Indiana**

Lawrence County Community Marriage Policy

This Policy is to provide the preparation and support of Lawrence County citizens and community members for marriage and family life. It marks a coming together of the Lawrence County faith community as well as other individuals and community institutions that are committed to developing a community culture that expects and encourages healthy, holy marriages and families.

We Believe

God has ordained and sanctified marriage for the welfare and happiness of the human family. He alone created it as the foundation for the human community. For this reason, our Savior has declared that a man shall leave his father and mother to be joined with his wife and the two shall become one.

God intends marriage between a man and a woman to be a lifelong union.

As faith community leaders, it is our call to instruct the faithful in how to fulfill their marriage vows according to God's plan.

As faith community leaders, we understand that premarital preparation instruction provides a significant protection against divorce: therefore we are responsible for providing premarital preparation to

couples to equip them with necessary skills and understanding of marriage.

As faith community leaders, we have a responsibility for nourishing and strengthening all marriages.

As faith community leaders, we have a responsibility for educating about and encouraging courtship.

As faith community leaders, it is our call to support and nurture development of families in the midst of their trials and frailties.

Therefore we will

Encourage courtships of at least a year.

Encourage abstinence and purity before marriage and fidelity of marriage vows.

Provide premarital preparation courses and agree not to conduct marriages unless the couple has completed the premarital course

Provide trained mentors for all engaged couples for a minimum of four months. Topics will include a premarital inventory, communication skills, conflict resolution skills.

Offer two follow up mentoring sessions within the first year of marriage with a mentor couple or clergy.

Select and train married couples as mentors serving all engaged and married couples, including those in crisis.

Provide on going marriage enrichment through faith growing events and social activities for

couples including an annual couples retreat within the church or faith community at an affordable price.

Assist separated couples at reconciling with a workbook course **Reconciling God's Way**.

Utilize mentor couples who have survived crisis to help heal and support hurting marriages.

As a faith community, create step-family support systems in order to strengthen marriages and families.

Share our resources and ourselves with others of the faith community to strengthen marriages.

This brochure was developed with the assistance of Marriage Savers,
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