



World Marriage Day February 13, 2005

Marriage Week USA February 13-19, 2005

Marriage, as instituted by God, is a faithful, exclusive, lifelong union of a man and woman joined in an intimate community of life and love. They commit themselves completely to each other and the wondrous responsibility of bringing children into the world and caring for them.

The call to marriage is deeply woven into the human spirit.

Catechism of the Catholic Church nos. 1602-1605

Strengthening Marriage

The US Bishops recognize that “Our world today needs living witnesses to fidelity. These are the most convincing signs of the love that Christ has for every human being. Couples who are living faithful lives of mutual love and support—though not without difficulties—have the gratitude of the whole church.”* No matter our role or vocation, strengthening marriage is something we all can do.

What couples can do:

- ♦ Take stock of your priorities to assure that your relationships with your spouse and children are getting the time and attention they need and deserve.
- ♦ Invest in the strength of your marriage by improving your communication skills.
- ♦ Make a public declaration of the importance of your marriage by renewing your vows in the presence of family and friends.
- ♦ Consider mentoring a younger married couple. Share your experiences and insights, and gain fresh enthusiasm and energy for your own marriage.

What extended families can do:

- ♦ Be supportive of the marriages in your family. Celebrate anniversaries. Volunteer to baby-sit so your parents, children, or siblings can spend time building their marriage.
- ♦ Sponsor couples in your family on a *Marriage Encounter* (www.wwmecolumbus.org) weekend.
- ♦ Be an example of a healthy marriage.

What religious organizations can do:

- ♦ Teach couples about the importance of praying together.
- ♦ Establish a mentoring program where newlyweds are partnered with couples married ten years or more.

- ♦ Affirm people in being faithful, committed, and accountable to their marriages.
- ♦ Offer marriage enrichment as special events and ongoing programs.
- ♦ Sponsor “Date Nights.” Provide childcare while parents enjoy the evening out.
- ♦ Honor and celebrate marriages that have persevered through hard times or long years.

What educators can do:

- ♦ Provide curriculum that helps develop self-esteem and illustrates healthy relationships.
- ♦ Present information to students about the psychological, emotional, and physical benefits of marriage.

What businesses can do:

- ♦ Offer resources to employees that deal with family topics such as marriage relationship-building, family finances, effective parenting, and child development.
- ♦ Design personnel practices and policies that recognize that employees are spouses, parents, and members of families and communities.
- ♦ Minimize time employees spend away from family by offering flextime options, reducing overtime, and trimming back on work-related travel.

What government can do:

- ♦ 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.

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* “Follow the Way of Love,” © 1994 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

*There is no limit to love's forbearance,
to its trust, its hope, its power to endure.*

1 Corinthians 13: 7



Creative Ways to Celebrate

1. Buy a box of kids valentines and hide them all around the house.
2. Take the day off work and spend it together.
3. Arrange for the kids to stay overnight with grandparents or a friend and borrow a DVD or video from the library and enjoy a romantic evening.
4. Wake up very early, make a pot of coffee and watch the sun rise together before the kids get up. (Or, if you are night people, make a pot of cocoa and watch the moon rise after the kids are in bed.)
5. Take 100 pennies to a local fountain or "wishing well" and take turns making wishes, counting blessings and tossing coins.
6. Pretend you are tourists in your own city. Visit THE attraction that you've always meant to see but never have.
7. Visit the nearest state or national park and venture through the wilderness.
8. Go roller blading... or ice skating... or salsa dancing.

An Unforgettable Gift



Here's an idea your spouse will remember for the rest of her/his life—write a letter. In the letter, express the wonderful things you see in her/him as a person... kindness, leadership skills, a generous heart. Compliment her/him on being such an involved parent or committed spouse. Let her/him know how your life has been positively impacted. Then, get other friends and family to write a letter also. Present all of the letters together to your spouse on her/his birthday, Christmas, or Valentine's Day. (Better yet: make it an annual tradition!)

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Make Your Marriage the Best it Can Be

- ♥ Plan what you want your marriage to look like and work toward that plan.
- ♥ Be affectionate with each other.
- ♥ Schedule priority time together.
- ♥ Laugh together.
- ♥ Play together.
- ♥ Be romantic together.
- ♥ Become great communicators.
- ♥ Expect conflict and don't be surprised when it comes!
- ♥ Be committed to your marriage for life.
- ♥ Seek out a mentor couple and remain or become a part of a network of close, true friends.
- ♥ Find significance in your spiritual lives.

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Loving Marriages: Romance Alive!

Research shows that marital satisfaction is higher when marriages are sufficiently loving.

Loving marriages are romantic. Romantic relationships tend to be those in which couples communicate well and behave affectionately.

Loving marriages are forgiving. As couples work through the various misunderstandings that arise in marriage, they hopefully learn from their mistakes and grow in the process. It takes hard work to be successful in a relationship, and times of conflict are opportunities for growth as a couple.

Loving spouses are respectful of each other. Since each person has his or her own definition of respect, it is necessary for spouses to learn how to show respect for each other. Mutual respect makes the relationship more satisfying.

Loving spouses are sensitive and supportive. It is essential that spouses learn how to be sensitive and supportive of one another. In supportive relationships, spouses solve problems through teamwork.

By Dr. Jane Rosen-Grandon © Family Information Services, January 2004. (Adapted).