



promoting the  
centrality and integrity of  
marriage for children  
and society

# A Positive Educational Campaign in support of Marriage and the Family

A project of Catholics for the Common Good Institute

## Your Action Kit

### Three Easy Steps to Start Educating People in Your Parish on the Importance of Marriage

1. Ask your organization to join the *Stand with Children* coalition by adopting a resolution to stand with the common interest of every child in having a married mother and father.
2. Invite other organizations in your parish to adopt the *Stand with Children* resolution and join the coalition.
3. Participate in upcoming efforts to rebuild a marriage culture -- *Stand with Children* will keep members informed on details of issues and .

#### CONTENTS:

1. Invitation letter explaining the need for action.
2. All about *Stand with Children*- Q&A.
3. Organization Application Form to join *Stand with Children*.
4. Resolution to be adopted by organizations.
5. Talking points – new positive ways to talk about marriage as an imperative of social justice.



CATHOLICS FOR  
THE  
COMMON GOOD  
INSTITUTE

Choose to  
Stand with Children  
Support and Defend  
the Rights of Children,  
and Your Family



**CCGI Board**

JOHN GALTEN  
Chairman

WILLIAM B. MAY  
Executive Director

RAYMOND TITTMANN  
Secretary

JOHN SULLIVAN  
Treasurer

WILLIAM BAUMEL

MARK MC ELRATH

REV. MICHAEL P. SWEENEY, O.P.  
President, Dominican School of  
Philosophy and Theology

**CCGI Senior Fellow**

ERNEST PIERUCCI  
Attorney, Co-Founder,  
John F. Henning Institute for Catholic  
Social Thought

**CCGI Episcopal Advisors**

MOST REV. GEORGE H. NIEDERAUER  
Archbishop of San Francisco

MOST REV. ALLEN H. VIGNERON  
Archbishop of Detroit

MOST REV. SALVATORE CORDILEONE  
Bishop of Oakland

**CCGI Advisors**

GIL BAILIE  
President, Cornerstone Forum,  
national lecturer, author

MARK BRUMLEY  
President, Ignatius Press

STEVEN CORTRIGHT  
Professor of Philosophy, St. Mary's  
College, Co-Founder, St. Anthony of  
Padua Institute

ROBERT DESTRO  
Project Director, National Marriage  
Law Project, Columbus Law School,  
Catholic University

RAYMOND L. FLYNN  
Former U.S. Ambassador to the  
Vatican and Mayor of Boston

WILLIAM E. MAY  
Michael J. McGivney Professor of Moral  
Theology at the John Paul II Institute  
for Studies on Marriage and Family

JENNIFER ROBACK MORSE  
Founder and President, The Ruth  
Institute, national lecturer, author, and  
columnist

REV. GEORGE SCHULTZE, S.J.  
Moral Theology, Director Field  
Education, St. Patrick's Seminary

MARTHA SEARS, RN  
National author, lecturer, expert on  
parenting

Dear Fellow Catholic,

California Proposition 8 turned back the California Supreme Court same-sex "marriage" ruling that would have made it discriminatory to express a difference between same-sex "marriage" and traditional marriage. However, other laws are still on the books in California and across the country that undermine the true meaning of marriage and parents' rights to educate their children about it.

Have you ever wondered why we are seeing more grown children in our families or those of friends getting divorces, cohabitating, or having children out of wedlock? Today, an astounding forty percent of children are born outside of marriage. A dramatic marriage gap has formed between high school dropouts and college graduates.

We are witnessing the consequences of 40 years of cultural influences that are redefining marriage, family and human sexuality. This is such a threat to the dignity of the human person and to society that the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has made marriage and family a top priority and has developed a five-year program to promote them. *Stand with Children* is a complementary lay-led effort to support the common interest of every child without exception in having a married mother and father.

It is natural for everyone to desire a married mother and father. We can verify this by turning to our own experience. Therefore we know the heart's desire of every child.

The family is the first cell of social life – the first school of love, peace, and justice. Married mothers and fathers are critical to the development of children and for preparing them to be good citizens. There is a direct correlation between family breakdown and poverty, increasing incarceration rates, school dropout rates, and teen pregnancy. Supporting policies that promote marriage and family and opposing policies that undermine them is an imperative of social justice.

However, there is a private interest agenda to redefine marriage, family and human sexuality that conflicts with the public interest and the common interest of every child. At a time when schools should be promoting marriage, students are being taught that marriage is a lifestyle choice equivalent to cohabitation and other alternative lifestyles.

For example, a law that came into effect in early 2008 introduced viewpoint discrimination in public schools against anyone understanding marriage to be the foundation of the family providing children with a mother and a father. Even prior to this, the publicly funded Public Health Institute argued: "Reproductive bias is evident in the following statement: 'Changes in young women and men during puberty prepare them to reproduce and create new life'."\* They state that saying "a loving marriage is the best environment for children"\* also exhibits bias. This is just one example of many to show how the truth about marriage and human sexuality is being obscured from our children.

It is time to band together and fight for the integrity of our families and for social justice for children. It is time to make a choice between the private interests of particular adults and the common interest of every child without exception. **We hope your organization will choose to stand with children** and join a growing group of organizations and individuals dedicated to promoting and supporting marriage.

For the common good,

William B. May  
Chairman, Catholics for the Common Good  
Executive Director, Catholics for the Common Good Institute

\* *Review of Health and Relationships in the New Millennium*, Public Health Institute, December 2006

# ABOUT *STAND WITH CHILDREN*

## A Positive Educational Campaign in Support of Marriage and the Family

### What is *Stand with Children (SWC)*?

*Stand with Children* is an educational coalition of concerned Catholic organizations and individuals promoting marriage with a positive focus on:

- The common interest of every child in the marriage of his or her mother and father;
- The family as the foundation of social justice – the first school of love, peace and justice.

All *Stand with Children* materials and messages are based on the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church.



### Who is behind it?

*Stand with Children* is a project of the Catholics for the Common Good Institute, affiliated with the organization that led the lay Catholic coalition for the California "Yes on Prop 8, Protect Marriage" campaign in 2008. It has been developed in close collaboration with the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley, CA and the staff of the California Catholic Conference.

### Why should my organization or I join?

#### Why join?

- Help fight poverty and higher delinquency, school dropout, and teen pregnancy rates caused by family breakdown.
- Learn how to provide better answers to the tough questions your children bring home from school.
- Defend your children against influences undermining their understanding of marriage and the family for their future.

Marriage continues to decline with devastating social consequences for children and society. Forty percent of children are now being born out of wedlock. A Brookings Institution report indicates "most, and in some cases all, of the increase in child poverty over the past thirty to forty years can be explained by changes in family structure."

Powerful private interests have successfully implemented policies increasingly hostile to marriage and in conflict with the common interest of every child. Children are required to be taught in school that marriage is a lifestyle choice equivalent to cohabitation and other alternatives.

We must work together through a large coordinated coalition with positive messages for the restoration of a marriage culture. This will benefit children who cannot advocate for their stake in their

parents' marriage. It is also an imperative of social justice.

- 63% of youth suicides
- 90% of all homeless and runaway children
- 85% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders
- 71% of all high school dropouts

**come from fatherless homes.**

### How do we join *Stand with Children*?

**Organizations** are invited to join and participate by using the organization application form. It is recommended that each organization consider and pass the "We Choose to Stand with Children" resolution". Organizations should then appoint a SWC chair or coordinator as a liaison.

**Individuals** are invited to join by subscribing online or by submitting the reply form attached to the *Stand with Children* brochure.

**Your organization's name will be listed on the *Stand with Children* website with other member organizations.**

### What does being a member of *Stand with Children* involve?

The names of organizations that join *Stand with Children* will be posted on the *Stand with Children* website. In addition, SWC will keep organizations and individuals informed about concerns and events by periodic emails related to marriage and family. Organizations will be invited to participate in projects that would include:

- Inviting other parish organizations and individuals to join *Stand with Children* (SWC).
- Distributing literature within parishes or organizations. SWC will provide flyers, talking points and other educational materials.
- Recruiting volunteers to work on specific projects.

### Is there any cost to join?

Membership in the coalition is free. However, CCGI-*Stand with Children* would be grateful for donations of any amount for support of this educational effort.



*Stand with Children* is a project of the Catholics for the Common Good Institute, a IRC 501c3 educational organization. Contributions to CCGI-*Stand with Children* are deductible for federal income tax purposes.

# Choose to Stand with Children

## Organization Application Form

Join the coalition of concerned Catholic organizations and individuals promoting marriage as the foundation of the family that provides children with a mother and a father.

- Help fight poverty and higher delinquency, school dropout, and teen pregnancy rates caused by family breakdown.
- Learn how to provide better answers to the tough questions your children bring home from school.
- Defend your children against influences undermining their understanding of marriage and the family for their future.

### How to join:

1. Adopt the "We Choose to Stand with Children" resolution.  
[ccgaction.org/downloads/SWCResolution.pdf](http://ccgaction.org/downloads/SWCResolution.pdf)
2. Appoint a chair or coordinator as a liaison to *Stand with Children* and complete the application below.  
This liaison will be the main contact person between your organization and the SWC coalition.

### Getting started

It will take a massive effort to build a positive campaign to restore a marriage culture. As you begin, please distribute SWC brochures and other SWC materials and ask others to join the coalition.

Ask other organizations in your parish to join yours in having their organization listed on the SWC website. Ask them to let everyone know that they also have chosen to *Stand with Children*.

Remember, children depend on adults to advocate for their common interests.

CCGI-*Stand with Children*, P.O. Box 320038, San Francisco, CA 94132,  
For further information call (415) 651 4171, or email [info@ccgaction.org](mailto:info@ccgaction.org)  
[StandwithChildren.org](http://StandwithChildren.org)



**71% agree with  
*Stand with Children*  
"The growth of unwed mothers is a  
'big problem'."\***

It is a big problem for children who are deprived of a father or married parents. It is the root cause of the increase in poverty.

**69% agree with  
*Stand with Children*  
"A child needs a mother and a  
father to grow up happily."\***

In fact it is the heart's desire of every person to have a married mother and father. We can turn to our own experience to verify that.

\* As Marriage and Parenthood Drift Apart, Public is Concerned about Social Impact, Pew Research Center, July 2007 based on a national random sample of 2020 adults.

Name of organization \_\_\_\_\_

Name of SWC chair or liaison (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution adopted (date) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

President's or leader's name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parish (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor's signature (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: CCGI-*Stand with Children*, P.O. Box 320038, San Francisco, CA 94132  
or fax to: 415 738 0421, or email to: [CCGAction@gmail.com](mailto:CCGAction@gmail.com).



## *Resolution*

# *We Choose to Stand with Children*

**Whereas** human rights are derived from what is common and what is good for the flourishing and development of every person without exception;

**Whereas** it is common for every person to have a mother and father, and whereas it is in the nature of every person to desire a married mother and father;

**Whereas** 40% of children are born out of wedlock and 34% live apart from their biological fathers;

**Whereas** marriage is increasingly being presented as a lifestyle choice – equivalent to cohabitation and other relationships;

**Whereas** reproductive acts outside of marriage have the potential for generating new life (even with contraception) and resulting in more out-of-wedlock births and children without married mothers and fathers.

**Whereas** families are seeing increasing numbers of grown children experiencing divorce or cohabitating and having children out-of-wedlock;

**Whereas** there is a high correlation between marriage breakdown and poverty, delinquency, school dropout rates, and teen pregnancy;

**Whereas** there is a growing marriage gap – the cohabitation rate for high school dropouts has reached 60% (compared to 37% for college graduates) and 44% of high school dropouts are single mothers (compared to 12% for college graduates);

**Whereas** children depend on adults to advocate policies for their common interest and good, which sometimes conflict with the private interests of particular adults;

### ***Therefore be it resolved:***

**We choose to *Stand with Children*** and their common interest in having a married mother and father. We support the following principles:

- The family is the foundation of social justice – the original cell of social life – the first school of love, peace and justice;
- As a matter of social justice, the clear and unequivocal public interest in marriage for people who engage in reproductive acts must be established in the culture and in public policy.
- Married mothers and fathers are good for the development of children and provide anchors for the nuclear and extended family;
- Social institutions should be judged by how well they support the family;

**Adopted by** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

# I Choose to Stand with Children

## Talking Points

“Stand with Children” is a positive educational project to support the common good and raise awareness about:

1. **The common interest of every child** without exception in having a married mother and father.
2. **The family as the foundation of social justice** – “original cell of social life” – the first school of love, peace, and justice.

Children cannot voice or advocate their common interest. They depend on adults to advocate for them.

### Main Points

- Having a mother and a father is common to every human person.
- It is natural for a person to desire a married mother and a father. Although many are deprived of one or both parents through death, divorce, abandonment, mental illness or abusive betrayal, the loss is a privation grieved by the person who naturally desires a mother and a father.
- Mothers and fathers are good. They are good for the development of the human person and provide anchors for the nuclear and extended family.
- The reason for the public interest in marriage is in providing the foundation of the family with a mother and a father for children.
- Promoting marriage for those who engage in reproductive acts (the only acts that produce new life) is a matter of social justice for children.
- Depriving a child of a mother or father intentionally, unless done for the protection of the child, is a denial of justice.

### Supporting Points

More and more children are deprived of a married mother and father.

- 40% of children are born outside of marriage.
- 34% of children live apart from their biological fathers.
- 28% of children live with a single parent.

There is a growing marriage gap between the poor and middle class as well as between high school **dropouts** and college-educated:

- 60% cohabitation rate for high school dropouts (37% for college grads)
- 44% mothers without husbands for high school dropouts (12% for college grads)
- High correlation between marriage breakdown and poverty, delinquency, school dropout rates, and teen pregnancy.

The public understands the seriousness of the situation:<sup>1</sup>

- 71% “say the growth of unwed mothers is a ‘big problem.’”
- 69% “say that a child needs a mother and a father to grow up happily.”

Children who live absent their biological fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior than their peers who live with their married, biological (or adoptive) parents. (*National Fatherhood Initiative, 2008*)

### The Choice

The common interest in a married mother and father for every child without exception.

OR

The private interest of a small group of adults to redefine and restructure marriage and the family.

“... children are powerless to preserve or defend their stake in their parents’ marriage”

- David Popenoe, Rutgers University



A project of



CATHOLICS FOR THE  
COMMON GOOD  
INSTITUTE

<sup>1</sup> Public opinion survey -- “As Marriage and Parenthood Drift Apart, Public is Concerned about Social Impact,” Pew Research Center, July 1, 2007 (survey conducted between 2/16 and 3/14/2007)