

Marriage vs. Cohabitation*

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” Ephesians 5:31

Social science shows that cohabitation is not an adequate substitute for marriage for adults or their children:

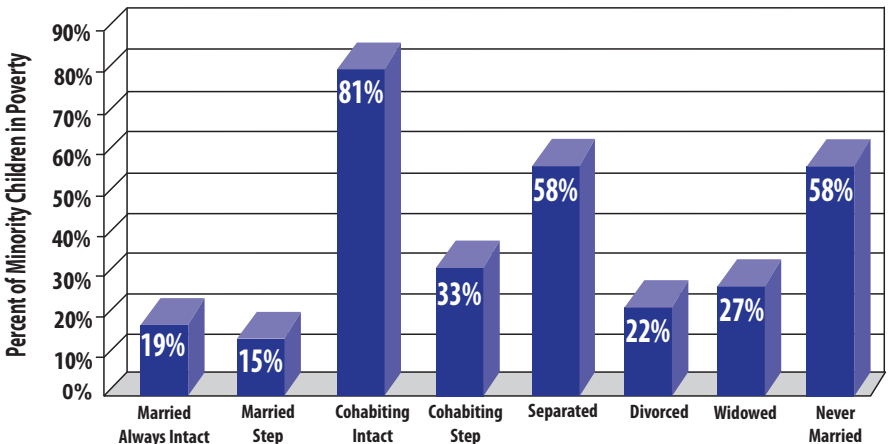
- Marriage decreases a child’s chances of living in a low-income family.
- Marriage between the biological single parents of impoverished children in single parent families would move 80 percent of the children above the poverty line.
- Children from married households have higher cognitive scores and more self-control.
- Cohabitation significantly decreases the levels of religious worship of men and women, as well as the importance of religion for women.
- Married couples report less depression than cohabiting couples.

No wonder marriage is God’s design, for adults and for their children. Nothing surpasses it in fruitfulness and benefits. Violating marriage violates the child and the community. What can you do to encourage marriage over cohabitation?

This chart shows that the children of married families are relatively unlikely to live in poverty. Should we not encourage marriage on behalf of children when it provides them the best context for socio-economic upward mobility and relational stability?

Percent of Minority Children in Poverty by Family Type 2009

Source: American Community Survey, 2009



For links to the research behind these statements, please visit www.marri.us/churchbulletins

*It bears emphasizing that these patterns hold for the groups involved, not for all the individuals who make up each group. There is naturally a wide variation among individuals.



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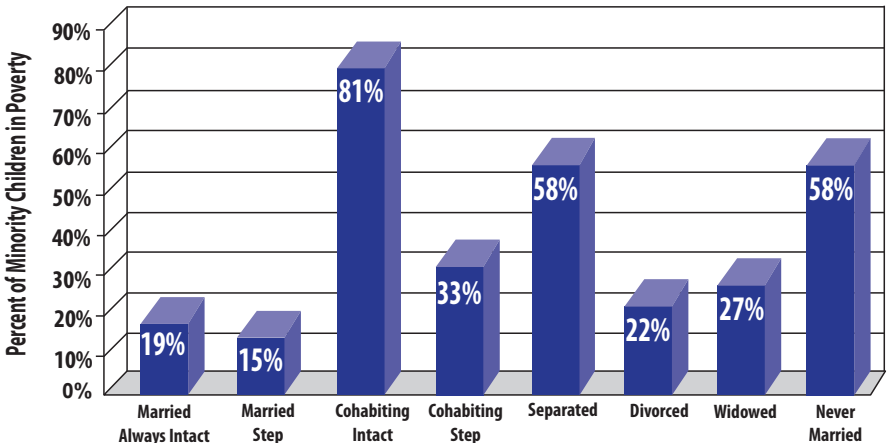
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