

# Divorce

## Summary

Students will learn about the factors leading to divorce, legal aspects surrounding it, and identify coping methods for dealing with it.

## Main Core Tie

Adult Roles And Responsibilities

[Strand 4 Standard 6](#)

## Additional Core Ties

Adult Roles and Financial Literacy

[Strand 6 Standard 6](#)

## Materials

- [Vocabulary worksheet](#)
- [25th Anniversary article](#)
- [Fishbowl activity and discussion guide](#)
- [Majority Not Having Silver Anniversary article](#)
- [Why Do So Many Marriages Fail article](#)
- [Why Marriages Matter article](#)
- [Why Marriages Matter Snapshot article](#)
- [Divorce PowerPoint presentation](#)
- [Factors Leading to Divorce teacher information/case studies](#)
- [Divorce Listening Guide](#)
- [Personal Problems teacher information](#)
- [Coping with Divorce teacher information](#)
- [Adjusting to Divorce teacher information](#)

## Additional Resources:

Social Services offers a class on divorce for parents and children under 18 years of age.

Medved, Diane. *The Case Against Divorce*. New York, Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1989.

Friedman, James T. *The Divorce Handbook*. New York, Random House, 1984.

Litte, Marilyn. *Family Breakup*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1982.

Walczak, Yvette & Burns. Sheila. *Divorce: The Child's Point of View*. London, England: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984.

Wallerstein, Judith S. & Blakeslee, Sandra. *Second Chances*. New York, New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1989.

Family Service America, 11700 West Lake Park Drive, Milwaukee, WI 5324, 80-221-2681. (Free information and referrals to family counselors in your area.)

- *The Kids' Book of Divorce: By, For and About Kids*  
, by Eric E. Rofes, Random House.
- *The Kids' Guide to Divorce*  
, J. Brogan and U. Maiden, Fawcett.

## Instructional Procedures

### Vocabulary

Use the attached [vocabulary worksheet](#) (pdf) with students.

### Primary Vocabulary

Abandonment  
Alimony  
Child Support  
Custody  
Economic Stability  
Non-custodial  
Promiscuous  
Selfishness  
Socio-Economic  
Visitation

### FCCLA Activity Option

Power of One: Family Ties - Get along better with family members. Use the information found on <http://www.fcclainc.org/content/power-of-one/>

FACTS-Families Acting for Community Traffic Safety. Use the information found on <http://www.fcclainc.org/content/factsfamilies-acting-for-community-traffic-safety/>

Families First. Use the information found on <http://www.fcclainc.org/content/families-first/>

### Introduction/Motivator/Pre-Assessment

#### Option 1: Warm-up/Do-Now

Prior to class, arrange desks into pairs. Give each pair a variety of celebrity gossip magazines, paying close attention to those that highlight relationships, weddings, and divorces.

As students enter the room, direct them to each sit with a partner and look at the following prompt, written on the board for easier student access: "Examine the celebrity magazines in front of you to discover relationship trends. With your partner, discuss answers to the following questions:

Based on the information in the magazines, how sacred is the commitment of marriage? Do you agree or disagree with this view?

Why do you think it is difficult for famous people to get married and stay married?

If a relationship is hard to maintain, is it necessarily a "bad" relationship? Why or why not?

What is your longest relationship (either romantic or platonic)? What do you do (or what did you do) to maintain this relationship?

Do you think teenagers are capable of true love?"

After a few minutes, allow time for partners to share their findings with the class. How did answers compare? What factors led to different opinions? Why is marriage a popular institution in American culture? How many students think they will get married someday?

If you do not have gossip magazines, you may show pictures and headlines from celebrity gossip websites such as:

- <http://www.divorcemag.com/news/>
- <http://en.wordpress.com/tag/celebrity-divorce/>
- <http://www.hollywoodheartbreaker.com/shortest-celebrity-marriages/>

Marriage and commitment often plays a role in works of literature, such as William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*, or Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. How does the concept of marriage in these works compare to what is being conveyed in today's literature and/or media? What do you think accounts for this change?

#### Option 2:

Have the class members pair off and stand on one side of the room. (These couples need not be boy/girl. This is only an exercise in visualization.) Next, have one-half of the couples go to the other side of the room. Point out that the couples on the first side of the room represent the percentage of marriages that actually last. Those on the other side represent the percentage of marriages in the

United States that fail. Within the first group are also marriages that are in varying degrees of trouble. How many children will be affected by divorce if each couple has three children?

Children from broken homes make up one of the nation's fastest growing groups. One-third of all children in the United States will have lived through the divorce of their parents before they reach the age of eighteen. If, after all you have learned about making marriage succeed in this class, you become one of the divorce statistics, there are things you can do to ease the effects on your children and help them get through this crisis with the least degree of difficulty.

(TEACHER NOTE: Be aware and sensitive to those in the class that have had divorce affect their lives. They may want to contribute to the discussion and will serve as an important information source or they may not want to discuss the issue because of its sensitivity or family embarrassment. Also, be aware of parents' reactions to these types of discussions. Don't delve into family problems.)

Content Outline, Activities and Teaching Strategies

Option 1: Article

As a class, read and discuss the article, [25th Anniversary Mark Elusive for Many Couples](#) (pdf) focusing on the following questions:

What has happened to more than half of the people celebrating 25-year wedding anniversaries since the year 2000?

According to David Blankenhorn, what types of marriages are more fragile?

The article states that, "Among currently married women, non-Hispanic whites were the only group in which a majority had marked their 15th anniversary." What role, if any, do you think race plays in marriage and divorce rates? Explain your answer.

What is the proportion of all Americans who have been divorced?

What is your reaction to this proportion? Do you think it is too high, too low, or what you expected? Why?

How do the survival rates of 25-year marriages in the 1950's compare to those in the late 1970's?

Do you think longevity affects marital trends?

What role do you think marriage plays in today's society? Explain your answer.

Do you think marriage is a lifetime commitment? Why or why not?

Option 2: Divorce Statistics

After reading or discussing the statistics in the article, [25th Anniversary Mark Elusive for Many Couples](#), the students will participate in a [Fishbowl Activity](#) (pdf) and participate in a discussion about marriage and the recent findings of the marriage survey conducted by the Census Bureau. Included are several other articles for you to use as teacher information:

- [Majority Not Having Silver Anniversaries](#) (pdf)
- [Why Do So Many Marriages Fail article](#) (pdf)
- [Why Marriages Matter article](#) (pdf)
- [Why Marriages Matter Snapshot article](#) (pdf)

Option 3: Factors Leading to Divorce

Present the information on [factors leading to divorce](#) (pdf). In small groups, discuss the problems and factors that contribute to divorce. Have the small groups fill in the [Divorce Listening Guide](#) (pdf).

Option 4: Personal Problems Associated with Divorce

Discuss the [Personal Problems Teacher Information](#) (pdf) with the students.

Option 5: Coping with Divorce

Brainstorm with the class why couples divorce. List the reasons on the board, then discuss the provided [teacher information on coping with divorce](#) (pdf) with the students.

Option 6: Video from YouTube

Show the video(s) on how divorce affects children:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlhXbOiDE28>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jUPwZp5OE4>

#### Option 7: Guest Speaker

Have a marriage counselor as a guest speaker for this lesson. Please use caution in the selection of a guest speaker. Remember, we are not promoting divorce, but trying to help students live with and resolve current situations.

#### Option 8: Adjusting to Divorce

Discuss the [teacher information on adjusting to divorce](#) (pdf) with the students as they add notes to those in the student information sheets.

#### Option 9: Book

Read the book *Daddy Doesn't Live Here Anymore* and discuss it with your class. The book is by Betty Boegehold, ISBN 0-307-12480-0, A Golden Book, Western Publishing Company, Inc. Racine, Wisconsin 53404. Possible discussion questions:

Why didn't Casey want to come home?

Casey thought it was her fault that her parents got the divorce. Why?

Why did Casey think being sick would bring her daddy back?

How do you help children deal with stress?

#### Option 10: Panel

The day before this lesson is to be given, ask students whose parents have divorced if they are willing to identify themselves and participate in a group lecture with you. Let them share their personal experiences, how they cope, what their parents could have done to help them better adjust, etc. If you have no students in this category, you may want to bring in other students or ask students to share what they know of other people's experiences they may be acquainted with as you discuss this lesson.

#### Summary/Evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on participation in pairs and class discussions and thoughtful completion of "prenuptial agreements."

Divorce affects the lives of many people. It affects the lives of the couple involved, the children, the extended family and friends. It is one of the most disturbing events that can happen in life and it may take many years to feel a return to normalcy. Divorce rarely solves problems, but rather is an exchange for a new set of problems. By educating ourselves about the problems associated with divorce, we may be better prepared to avoid this problem.

#### Authors

[CTE LESSON PLANS](#)