

We need to fight because babies shouldn't have to.

Before the end of this year, more than half a million babies — that's 1 in every 8 — will be born too soon in our country. Since 1990, the rate of premature birth has gone up by 20 percent in the United States. Despite medical advances that give even the tiniest babies a chance of survival, for many babies, premature birth remains a life-threatening condition.

Premature birth is the number one cause of death during the first month of life. Even babies born just a few weeks too soon can face serious health challenges and are at risk for lifelong disabilities, including cerebral palsy, lung problems, and vision and hearing loss. Millions of children have trouble keeping up in school because they were born prematurely.

Many people don't realize just how serious the problem is until they or someone they love has a premature baby. Awareness is the first step to solving the problem.

November is Prematurity Awareness Month. It's the time when the March of Dimes focuses the nation's attention on the impact premature birth has on babies, families and communities.

Get your congregation involved. Learn more about premature birth at marchofdimes.com/fightforpreemies and help us give every baby a fighting chance.

Here are some ways we all can get involved

Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant:

- Get early and regular prenatal care.
- Talk to your health care provider about ways to reduce your risk of preterm labor.
- Learn the signs of preterm labor and what to do if you experience even just one.

Everyone else:

- Visit marchofdimes.com/fightforpreemies to watch videos and read information about premature birth.
- Create a virtual band to celebrate, honor or remember a baby in your life. Your donation helps give other babies a fighting chance.
- Sign up for advocacy alerts to find out when you can make a difference for premature babies. Ask everyone you know to get involved, too!

**Make Prematurity Awareness Month Part of Your
Congregational Community Awareness**

1. Recognize babies and their families in your worship.
2. Include the subject of premature birth in your newsletter or announcements.
3. Have March of Dimes materials available for your families.
4. Ask your women's group, nurses' program, adult education class or another congregational organization to reach out to your families with information on premature birth.
5. Organize a mini health fair following the service.

For more information on premature birth and ways to get involved in Prematurity Awareness Month, visit marchofdimes.com/fightforpreemies or call your local March of Dimes Chapter at (PHONE NUMBER).



Prematurity Awareness Month 2009

**Dedicated to the half a million babies
who are born too soon each year —
and to the families who pray for them.**

