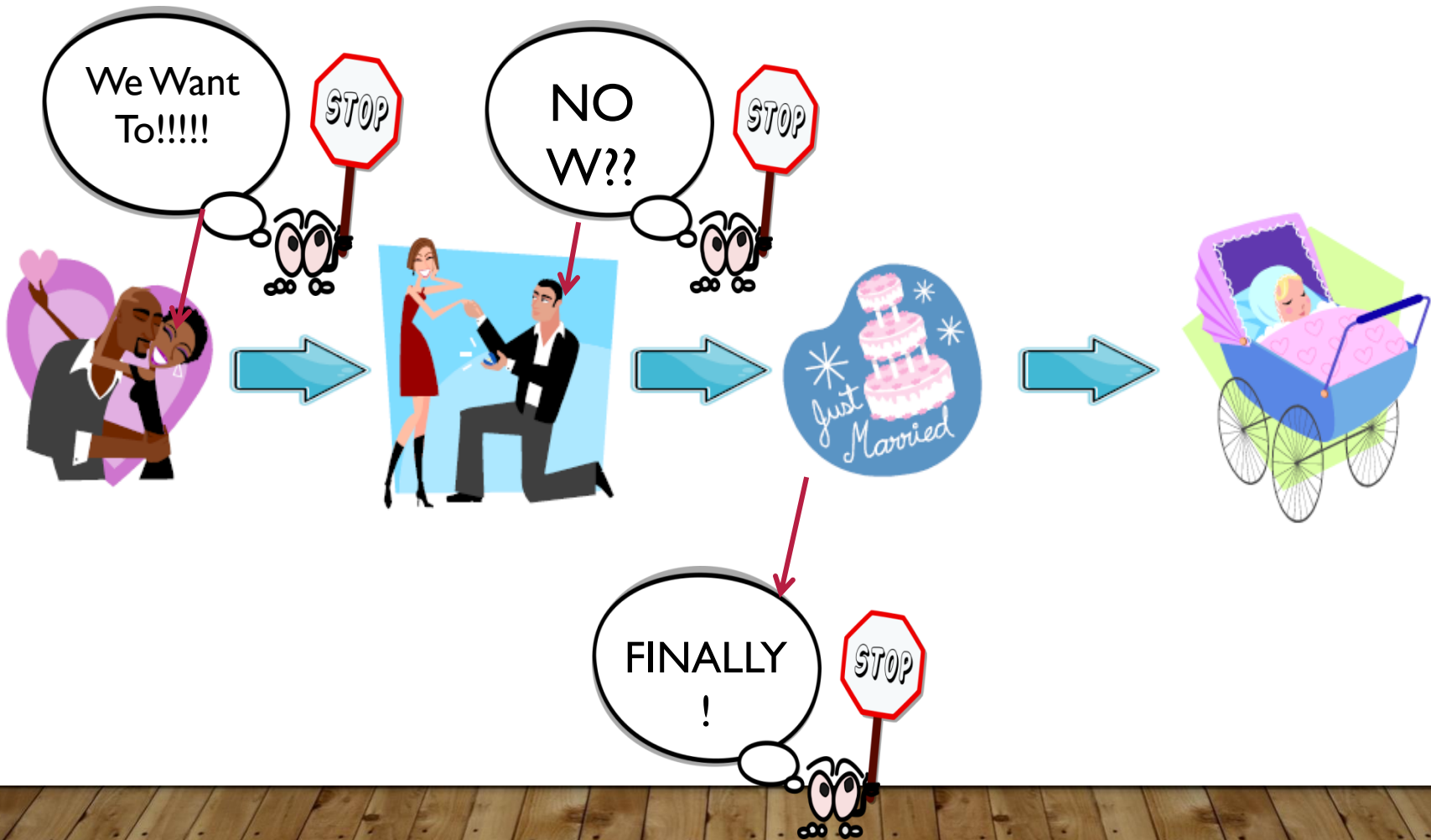


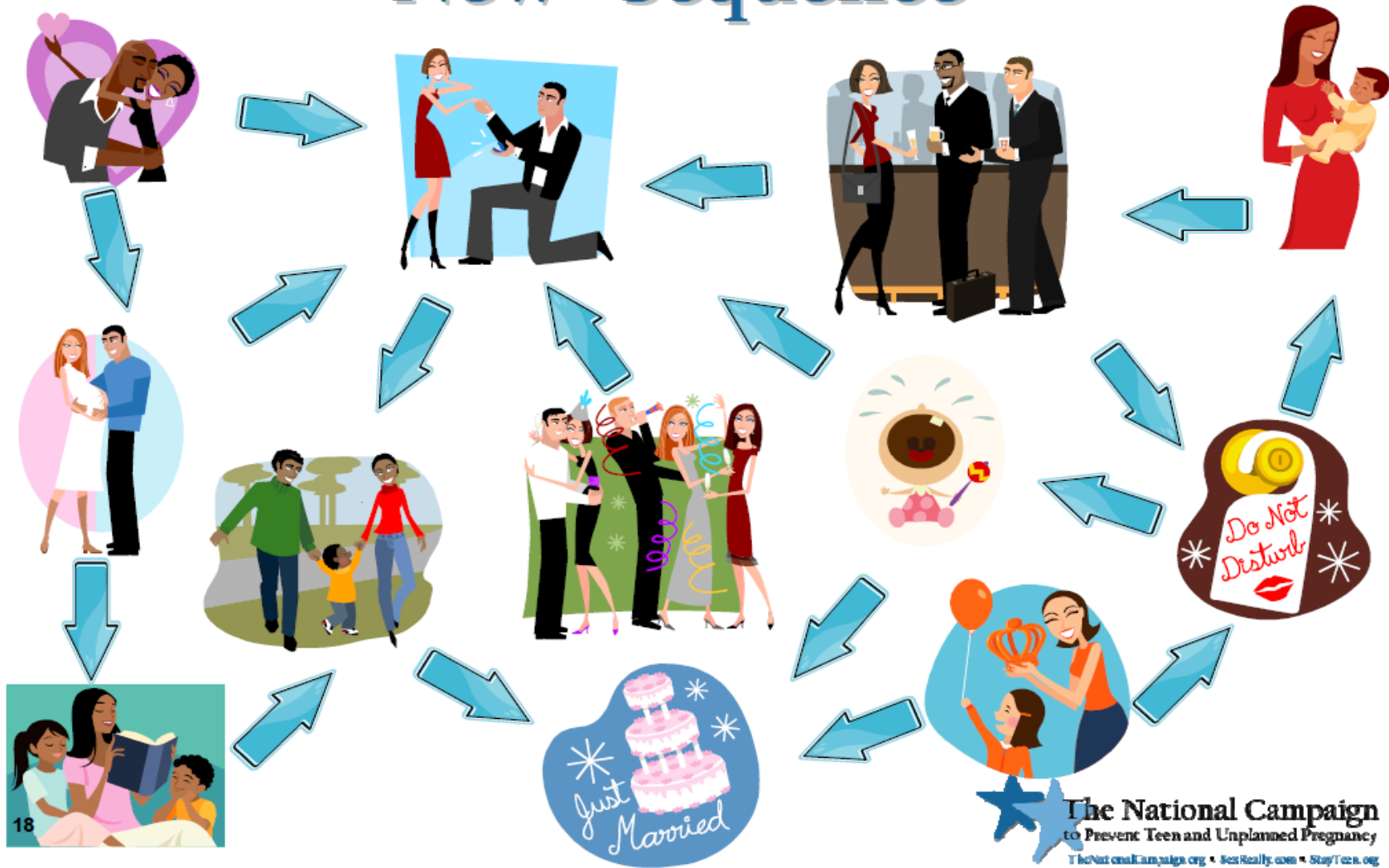
WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

*HOW FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS
CAN ADDRESS INFANT MORTALITY.*

“Old” Sequence



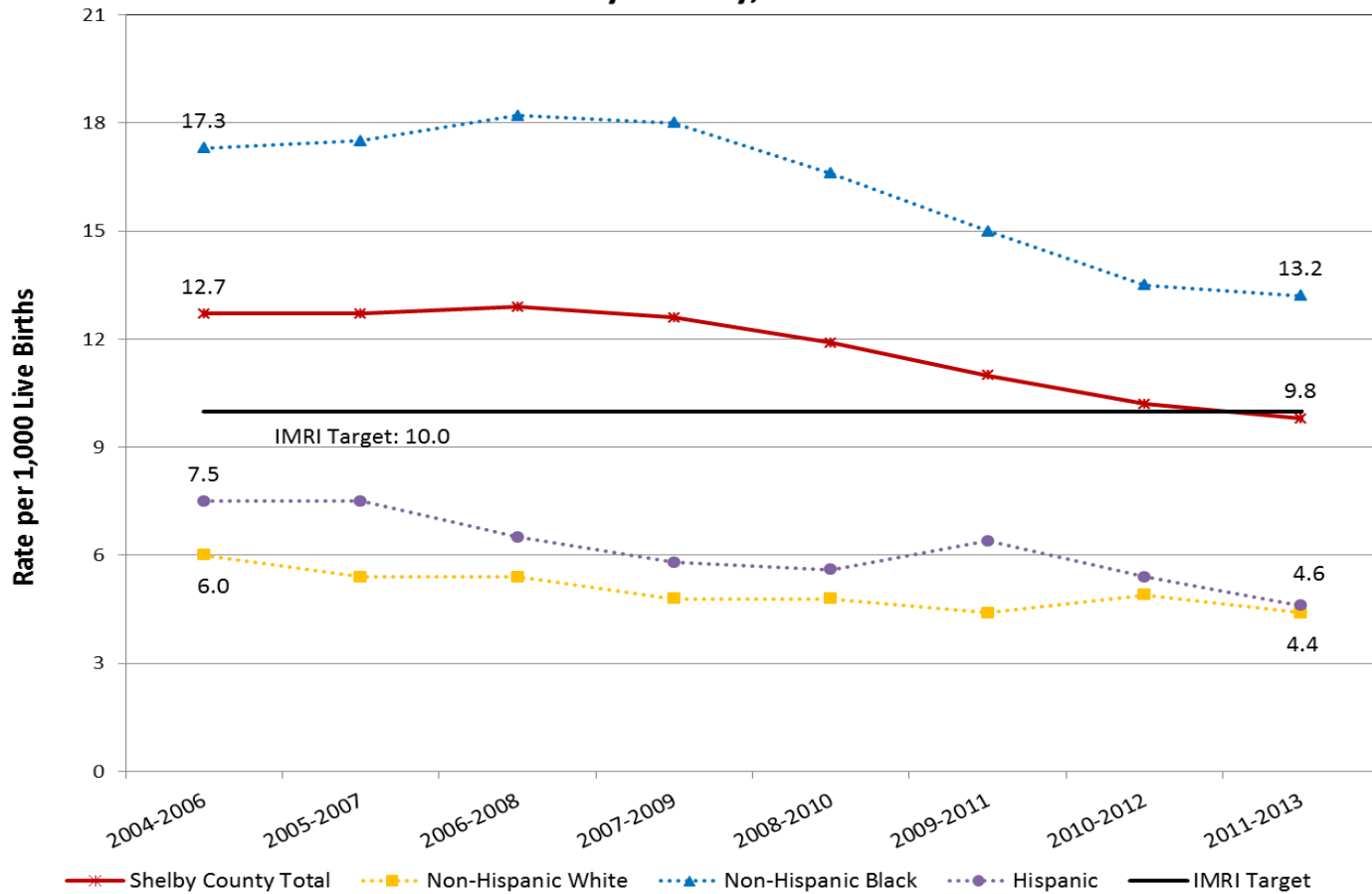
New "Sequence"



What's Faith Got To Do With It?

A study by the [Pew Research Institute](#) reports that “of all the major racial and ethnic groups in the U.S., blacks are the most likely to report a formal religious affiliation.” And while not all blacks are affiliated with a particular religion or church (12%), more than 70% report religion as *somewhat or very import in their life*.

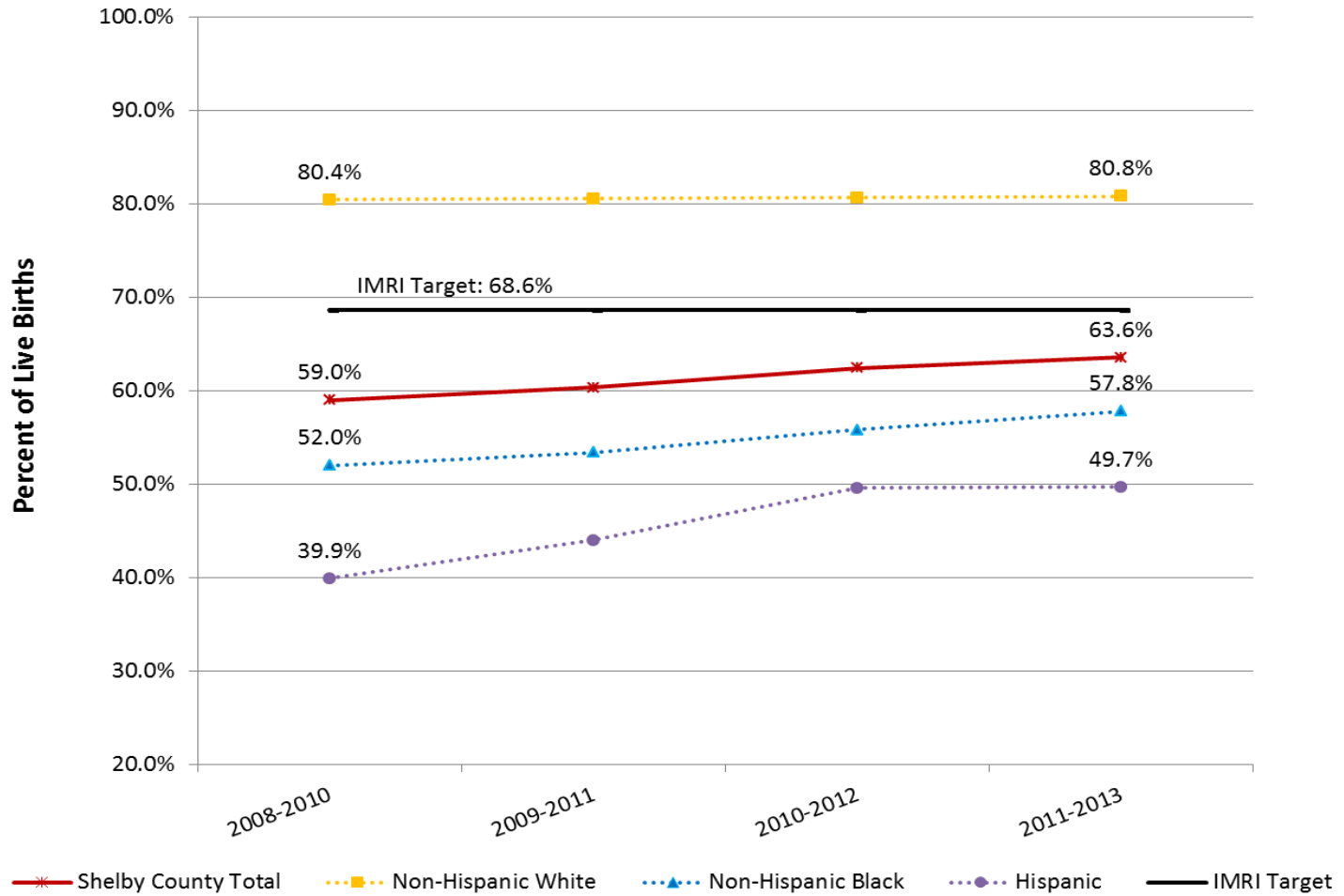
Infant Mortality Rate by Race and Ethnicity, 3-Year Rolling, Shelby County, 2004-2013



WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

- How can Faith based organizations become essential in the path toward a healthy baby.
- First, children from 0+ should be a priority
- We should each want our children to have the best possible future
- Poverty should NOT be a goal for any child

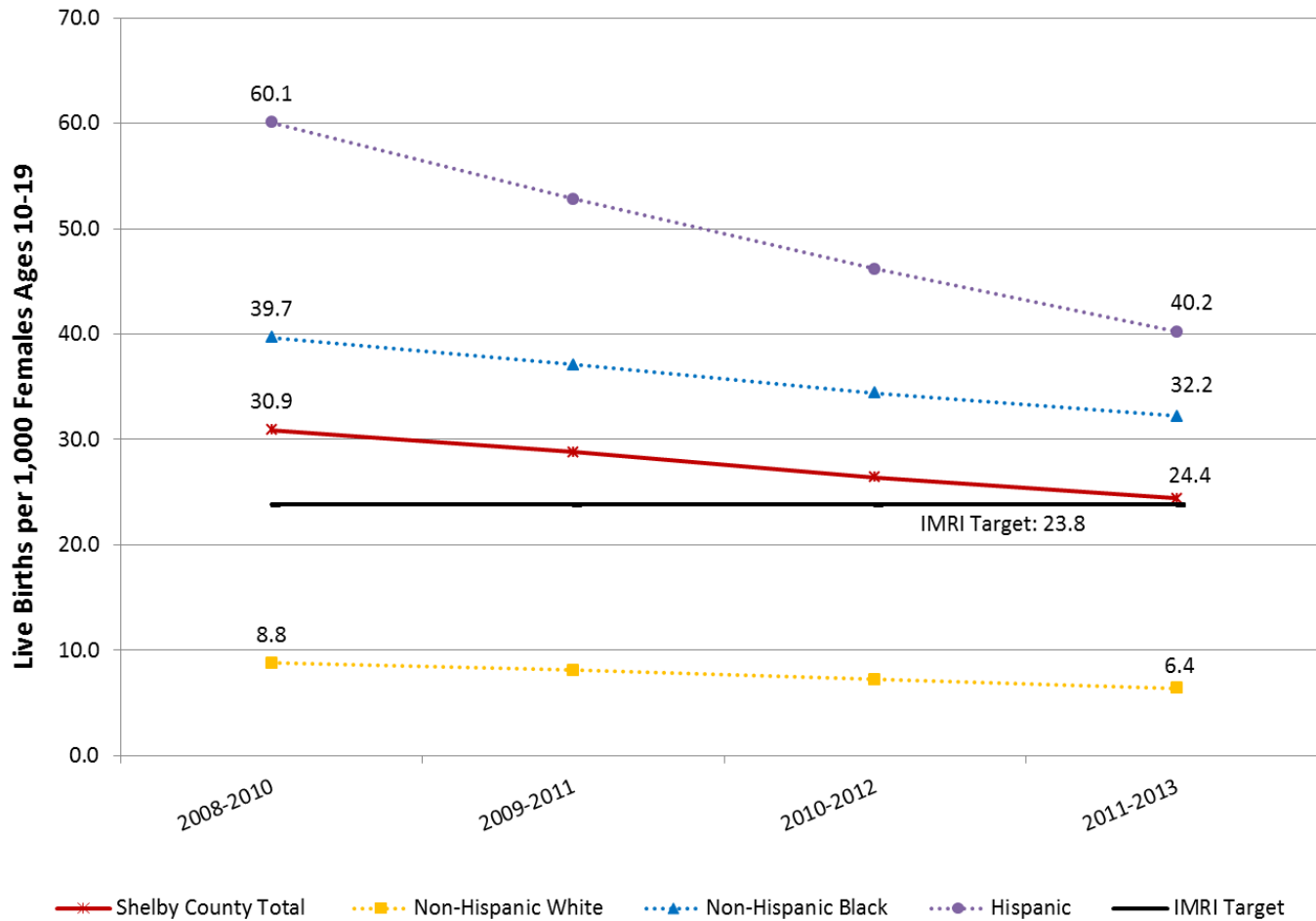
Percent of Mothers with Early Prenatal Care (First Trimester), 3-Year Rolling, Shelby County, 2008-2013



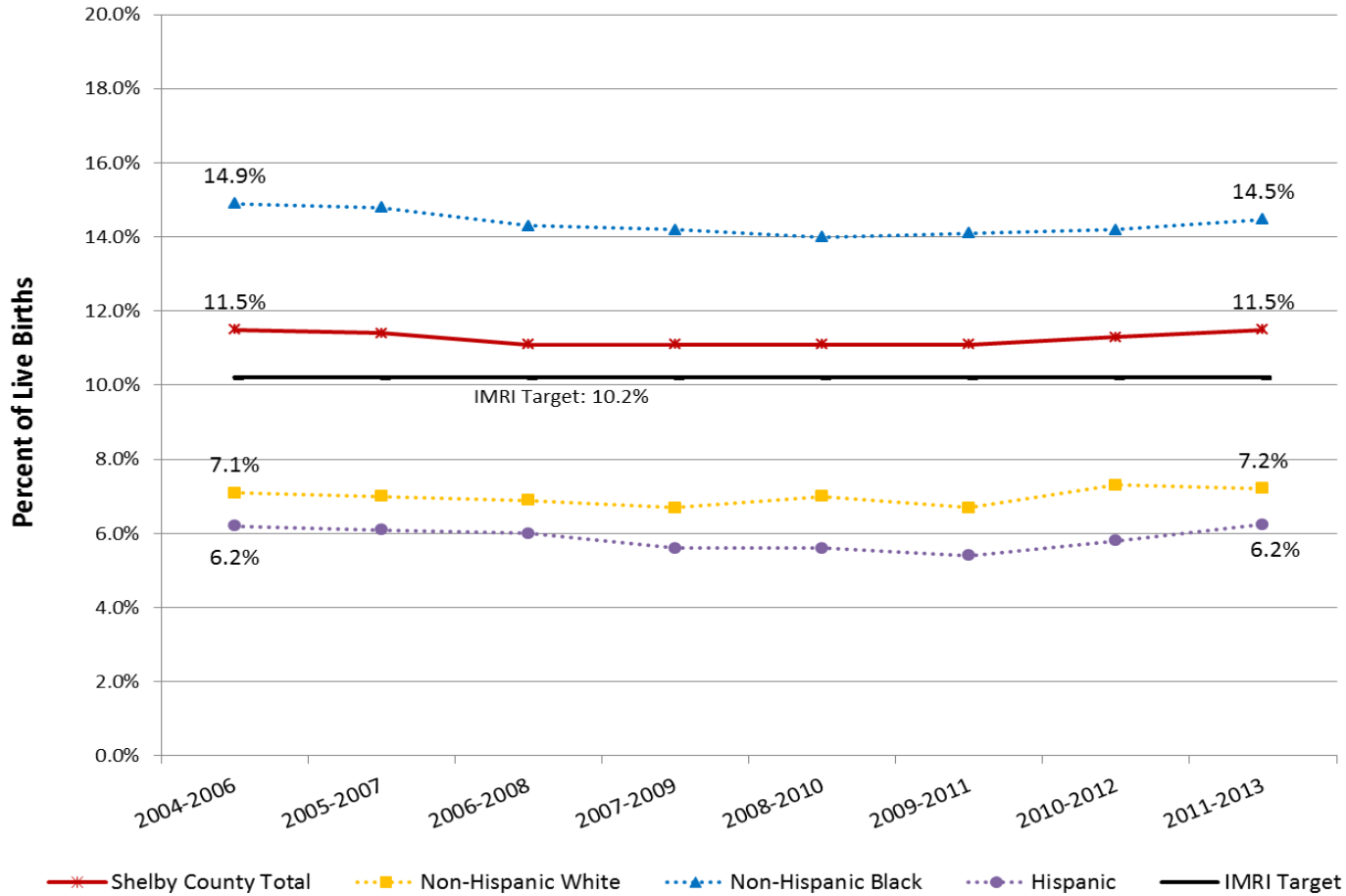
WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

- Teen Pregnancy rate....Sex Education
- Low-Birth Weight rate....Health Committee Advocacy
- Infant Mortality rate...Health Ministry, Prayer Ministry

Teen Birth Rate Ages 10-19, 3-Year Rolling, Shelby County, 2008-2013



Percent of Births that are Low Birth Weight (<2500grams), 3-Year Rolling, Shelby County, 2004-2013



A BABY IS BORN...

- Celebration (all Faiths)
- Circumcision (Judaism)
- Naming Ceremonies (Judaism)
- Baptism (Christianity)
- Multiple customs(sacrifice, circumcision, head shaving (Islam))

The AA's Of Pregnancy By Faith Based Organizations

- ATTITUDES

- Happy vs. *Sad*
- Celebration vs. *Disgust*
- “Their parents must be so happy!” vs. “*They should have listened to us*”

- ACTIONS

- Welcoming vs. *Shunning*
- Baby Shower vs. *Nothing*
- *Baptism*

WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

- **Strong Families**: The Black Church has been at the vanguard of promoting strong family life, and teen and unplanned pregnancy prevention should be framed as such.
- **Trusted Messengers**: Even if the teens and young adults we ultimately need to reach are not in the church, their mothers, grandmothers, and trusted messengers are. We need to develop messages to reach them.
- **Forgiveness**: We need to make grace and mercy real for teens and young adults.
- **Safe Space**: The church should be a safe space for conversations about teen and unplanned pregnancy.

WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

- 1. Create time and space.**
- 2. Create a concrete space for teens or young adults to talk.**

(This may be a special Saturday session at church, or a Friday teen night. Focus the conversation around relationships. Discussions should be grounded in the true connection between teens and adults, mutual respect and love—and that's why the church is one of the best possible places for these conversations.)



WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

2. Create an environment where people can be candid.

(Make sure you have an environment that lends itself to openness and honesty. This may mean limiting the number of adults in the room so that teens can freely share their thoughts and feelings.)



WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

3. Listen first.

(Young people often hear adults teaching, preaching, or talking about teen and unplanned pregnancy.

- What they don't often have is someone to listen to them. Build relationships with the young people in your life/ congregation by listening to their thoughts, ideas, and concerns. Some questions to kick things off might include:
 - How do you define your self-worth? What makes you special?
 - What are some of your dreams in life? What is your passion, and what do you think your purpose might be?
 - How can we, as a church, help you fulfill your purpose?
 - How might having a teen or unplanned pregnancy impact your purpose?
 - How can I pray for you?)

WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

4. **Balance instruction with compassion.**

(It is possible to address the moral standard that the Bible has on sexuality and at the same time extend compassion to those who have not always met that standard. Remember to avoid shaming teens and speak truth in love. Conversation points might include: • “It is important to delay sex until marriage. The Bible says this and your parents say this. If you do not delay, or have not delayed already, it’s important to avoid pregnancy—because pregnancy really does impact your life in ways you may not see.” • [For those who are already pregnant] “We support you and we want you and your child to thrive. Let’s talk about resources to help you, and let’s talk about making a plan to delay future pregnancies as well to give you and your baby the best possible shot.”)



WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

5. Lead with personal vulnerability.

(It is perfectly okay to let young people know in appropriate ways that the teacher has not always been perfect—and that the teacher has also had the same questions at some point in his/her life. • “I have not always been perfect. In fact, I have had the same questions that you have at one point or another in my life. You are not alone.”)



WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

6. Point to concrete resources.

(Don't leave young people hanging! Whether or not teens or young adults are pregnant, there are concrete resources they need to succeed. It is important to provide a next step when beginning this conversation.)

WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

7. Help teens control their futures!

- Help teens take control of their own futures by helping them make decisions that are in the best interest of their future.
- Some of the following numbers might be helpful in sharing the reality of teen and unplanned pregnancy.
 - Remember: fewer than half of all high school students have had sex. If they are not having sex, they are not alone!
 - Births among Black teen girls have declined 49% since 2007 and 73% since 1991.
 - But nearly one in 10 Black teen girls still get pregnant every year, which is higher than other racial/ethnic groups. Let's make more progress together.



WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

1. Show love, compassion, and forgiveness
2. Churches should not shy away from talking about SEX
3. All messages can and should be biblically based
4. Mentor young mothers/families to insure healthy baby
5. Tour neighborhood and know service locations
6. Keep social and health services list updated
7. Involve men and women of the church as mentors

WHAT'S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Contact Information

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Thanks to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and the Shelby County Health Department for the data, recommendations and graphs.