GOD'S GOT YOU COVERED:

Stories and Advice about Divorce



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ave you met Chamy? She's good friends with Liz and the whole Kids Corner gang. She loves science and studying order in the world. Though she is not a Christian, she thinks about things in logical ways, and often talks about God with her friends. But right now, Chamy is experiencing a problem that science and logic cannot seem to help: her parents are getting a divorce. You may have opened this ebook because your family or someone you know is going through a divorce.

Divorce is a painful experience. When God created people, he wanted them to live together in loving relationships. He created marriage and families to be safe and supportive places for people to grow in their love for each other and for him. But the world changed when Adam and Eve sinned. They broke not only their relationship with God, but also their family relationships. Marriages and families have been broken ever since. But the Bible is clear that God does not give up on broken relationships. In fact, it shows us that he even works through hurting people to restore his world.

Chamy's family is experiencing brokenness. She feels it, her parents feel it, and even her friends feel the pain it causes. Chamy tries to deny that it is happening. She tries to find something safe to believe in. She tries to fix the relationship herself. She experiences a whirlwind of emotions that she doesn't always know what to do with. All along the way, her friends are by her side, trying their best to support her.

In this ebook, you will join Chamy on her journey. Each section is linked to a Kids Corner episode and includes 1) Listen, 2) Read, 3) Think, and 4) Do sections. When you are experiencing the brokenness of divorce, it's helpful to listen to other people's experiences, think about how those experiences and what the Bible says relate to what you may be going through, and then take action and do something to make things better. Some activities you can do by yourself, and some are for you to discuss with your parents. As you work through this ebook, remember God's unchanging grace and how he works out good plans in spite of broken relationships.

EPISODE#1: HEART OF GRACE

"But God had special plans for me even before I was born.

So he chose me through his grace."

GALATIANS 1:15, ERV

LISTEN



kidscorner.reframemedia.com/listen/heart-of-grace

Chamy has always liked to be in control, but now events in her life are becoming unpredictable. Join Chamy as she tries to figure out what she can believe in.

EPISODE QUIZ

(See answers at the bottom of page 7)

- 1. How is Chamy trying to find order and predictability?
- 2. What miracle is Chamy looking for?
- 3. What did Prof. Peabody tell Chamy about one of her favorite scientists, Sir Isaac Newton?
- 4. After she meets Johnny Anole, in what special place does Chamy look for Lucille?





Something I've counted on is broken. What can I trust?

In this episode, Chamy admits to Lucille that her parents are separating. Her family, a place that is supposed to be safe and stable, is coming apart. She tells Lucille, "I thought I knew the right place for it all, but everything is changing... I just don't know if anything anyone says is true anymore." Chamy is trying to find what and who she can trust in her life.

Chamy has always relied on science to show her order and structure. The laboratory is a place where she can control all the parts of her experiments and predict what will happen based on rules that do not change. So when her life starts feeling out of control, she tries to go to that safe place. She conducts familiar experiments. She takes comfort in the predictable movement of the solar system. But then people try to tell her that *God* is in control of the unchanging scientific rules she relies on. Professor Peabody even tells her that her favorite scientist was a Christian! Chamy is flustered. Suddenly she doesn't know what to believe!

Chamy also starts doubting her friendships. Her parents no longer get along and have decided to separate. What if her friends decide to do the same? What relationships in her life are safe? Lucille seems like her friend, but there is something huge standing between them: Lucille believes in God and Chamy does not. Almost without realizing it, she starts to test the friendship like a science experiment: Does it matter to Lucille that Chamy isn't a Christian? Does Lucille want Chamy to change in order to stay her friend? Will Lucille continue to love her if she refuses to change? Fortunately, Lucille gets help from trusted adults and God that allows her to show unconditional love to Chamy. She understands that Chamy is looking for something solid to believe in.



Can you understand Chamy's confusion and fear? After a lot of conflict and pain, Chamy's parents want something different and have decided to end their marriage. It's not something Chamy has any control of and doesn't even want to have happen. It seems like the rules she trusted are changing. So she starts trying to figure out what things in her life will change and what will stay the same. Chamy decides to turn to science: something that has always been predictable and orderly in her life. You might too find yourself diving into something that makes you feel safe. Sports, hobbies, familiar books, video games, movies or TV shows—even school work—can be comforting places where you know the rules and can control what happens.

You might also find yourself testing other relationships to see what is still safe. Chamy questions her friendship with Lucille. Have you tested relationships with teachers, parents, brothers, sisters, other family members, coaches, or youth group leaders? It's normal to ask questions or want to behave differently to see if people will still love and support you. It can also be tempting to test that the rules still apply with your parents or to see if you can get special treatment from one or both of them. But if you know your relationship with God is solid and that it will never change, it's easier to trust others in your life.

The memory verse from this episode says: "But God had special plans for me even before I was born. So he chose me through his grace" (Galatians 1:15). So, if you're wondering who you can trust, know that God chose you before you were even born. You didn't have to do anything to make God love you and you can't do anything now to make him stop loving you, or love you more. When your parents separate, it can be very scary because you do not have control. However, it helps to know that God is in control, and that he is with you, even when things are broken. Do you know who else had special plans for you before you were born? Your parents! And that also has not changed either. Their love for you, like God's love, will be the same no matter what changes the family goes through. God's good plan includes them too!

The God who makes the laws that control the universe, that keeps oxygen flowing to muscles, and that makes hearts rejoice in happy endings, that same God is in control of your life! He can change many things in this world, but he himself will not change. He promises to be with you in the difficult times of your life. That is a truth you can trust.



Psalm 121 is a beautiful reminder of the unchanging God that you can trust in times of uncertainty and change.

I lift up my eyes to the mountainswhere does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over youthe LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

Find a large smooth stone. On one side write or paint the words "God is my Rock." On the other side, write or paint your favorite image from Psalm 121. Keep the stone in your room as a reminder of God's good plan for your life.



Parents, talk with your children about the changes that are happening in your family. Kids, tell your parents how those changes make you feel. Now, talk together about what won't change. Agree as a family on at least four "constants" that you will try to keep the same.

Fill out the "promise sheet" below together. (Print a copy for each child. You can refer to the Rights and Responsibility Contract at the back of ebook for any help.)

What are things I can rely on?

God loves me, God's plan for me is good.



My parents love me.



Other constants we will try to keep the same.

Examples: Contact with extended family, Rules/Discipline, school, church, etc.











EPISODE#2:

CHAMY'S CATASTROPHE

"Be humble in the presence of God's mighty power, and he will honor you when the time comes. God cares for you, so turn all your worries over to him" 1 PETER 5:6-7, CEV

LISTEN



http://kidscorner.reframemedia.com/listen/chamys-catastrophe

Chamy's parents' divorce will be final on Friday. Chamy doesn't believe it-there's got to be something she can do to bring her parents back together before it's too late!

EPISODE QUIZ

(See answers at the bottom of page 13)

- 1. What do Chamy's parents do for a living?
- 2. What was Chamy trying to recreate in her first experiment?
- 3. What did Chamy drop on her dad's head to make him stop complaining about her mom?
- 4. What is Chamy's dad allergic to?
- 5. What did Lucille tell Chamy to do when she has no control over things?





When Chamy's mom tells her that the divorce will be final on Friday, Chamy is angry. She doesn't want her family to change. Even though she is sick of her parents fighting, at least it's familiar. Surely there's something she can do. She decides to take control: she is going to make her parents fall in love again. Lucille argues that love can't be forced, but Chamy tells her that it's all science and science is what she's good at. Determined to fix this, Chamy, with the reluctant help of Liz and Lucille, tries to devise ways to bring her parents together in hopes that they will decide to be a couple again.

Instead, everything seems to get worse: her parents fight more, her dad complains about her mom, and her mom complains about her dad. Lucille gently tells Chamy that it might be time to admit that she cannot control her parents' decisions. Frustrated and angry, Chamy tries to push Lucille's friendship away.

Chamy's final plan turns into a disaster, her house catches on fire and her father has an allergic reaction which sends him to the hospital! Despite their disagreement, Lucille comes to the hospital to be with Chamy. Chamy feels like a failure. She tells Lucille, "I really thought I could use science to get them to change their mind—instead I made everything worse."

She apologizes for how she treated Lucille—one more thing she messed up. Lucille and Liz remind Chamy there are things she just doesn't have control over—and that's hard to accept sometimes. Liz and Lucille have learned that when you trust God, it's easier to give up control because you know that he is working everything out for the best, especially in bad situations. They remind Chamy of times-even in their friendship-that God was in control. Safely out of the hospital, Chamy's parents tell her that they understand what she was trying to do. They explain that the divorce is still going to happen, but that they both still love Chamy very much. Still worried about the future, Chamy prays for the first time, asking God not to fix things, but to help her get through the hard times ahead.



When Chamy hears that her parents' divorce will become final so quickly, she feels upset and powerless. Have you ever felt that way? This isn't the way things are supposed to be! This is destroying my family and I can't do anything about it!

Or, maybe you hope you can get your parents back together. Chamy thought "IF" she used the right science experiments her parents would remember why they fell in love. Maybe, like Chamy, you're stilling trying lots of "IF"s:

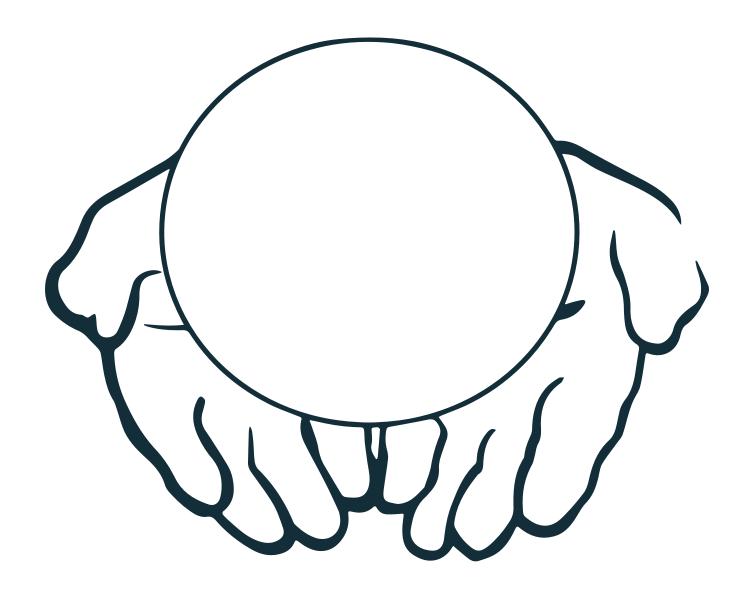
IF I do better in school, maybe my parents will stay together. IF I do all my chores without asking, maybe my parents won't get a divorce. God, IF you let my parents stay together, I promise to read my Bible every day. IF I get sick or lost or am in danger, my parents will come together to save me and realize they shouldn't break up the family after all—just like a happy-ending movie.

The problem with all of these "IF"s is that you are not in control of them. Your parents' divorce is not your fault, which means there's nothing you can do to fix it. As Lucille tells Chamy, "... you can only control your own decisions. Make your own choices. You can't make your parents do anything they've already decided not to do... There comes a point where we just have to trust God—to leave whatever problems we have in his hands and trust that he'll work through them." But accepting that you don't have control is hard.

Remember that all-powerful unchanging God we talked about in the last episode? He loves and cares for your family! I Peter 5:6-7 reminds you to "Be humble in the presence of God's mighty" power, and he will honor you when the time comes. God cares for you, so turn all your worries over to him" (CEV). Humbling yourself means giving up control. It's like getting out of the driver's seat of a car. God will guide you through whatever mess you are in and get you to where he needs to you be. Your job is to stop trying to grab the steering wheel away from him. "With all your heart you must trust the Lord and not your own judgment. Always let him lead you and he will clear the road for you to follow" (Proverbs 3:5-6, CEV). Your family may never again be the way it was, but God will bring the best for all of you out of this broken situation. And you may find that when you let go of control, you will feel relief from worrying and trying to fix things. At the end of the episode, Chamy says she will think about what Lucille told her, and she prays to God for help. Will you do the same?

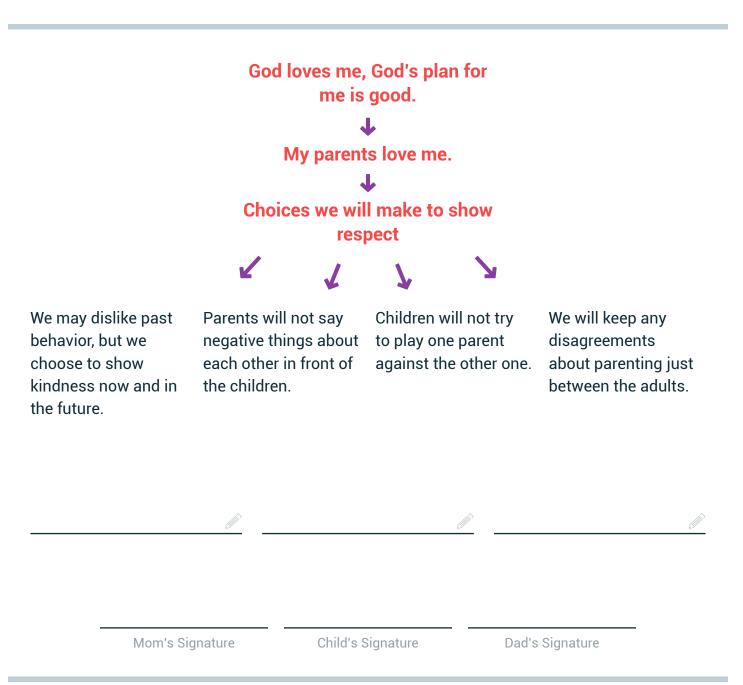


Draw a picture of your family in God's hands. Keep the picture posted where you and your family members can see it to remind you that God is in control.





Parents, talk with your children about the choices you have made. Kids, tell your parents how those choices make you feel. Now, talk together about the choices you can make together to continue to show respect to each other. Agree as a family on the following four choices, though you can add more. Fill out the below "promise sheet" together.





EPISODE#3: CHEER UP CHAMY

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

LISTEN



http://kidscorner.reframemedia.com/listen/cheer-up-chamy

It's time to rally the troops! Liz and Lucille and the whole gang try to cheer up Chamy after her parents' divorce. But how exactly do you do that?

EPISODE QUIZ

(See answers at the bottom of page 19)

- 1. What Bible verse does Spike share with Chamy?
- 2. Chamy tells Spike that she deals with facts,
- 3. How does Kayla try to cheer up Chamy?
- 4. What is Spike trying to do during Chamy's phone call with her parents?
- 5. What helps cheer Chamy up?





Dealing with Feelings

Chamy's parents have finalized their divorce and everyone is trying to figure out how the new family arrangement will work. Chamy wants to rely on solid "facts" to make sense of things, but her feelings keep popping up. She feels sad that her family has changed, ashamed because she wants to be logical instead of emotional, embarrassed because she's crying, angry because she feels like a referee between her parents, and guilty because she is not keeping the peace! In addition to all of this, she feels like no one will understand, so she tries to keep all her feelings bottled up and pretend like everything's alright. It's a wonder she doesn't explode!

Chamy's friends sense some of these emotions. They want her to feel normal and happy, so they try to distract her from her feelings. They try to "fix" things, just like Chamy has been trying to do. What they find, however, is that science, shopping, compliments, and even parties don't make things better.

What does make things better is, oddly, something that could have made Chamy feel even worse: being stuck in an elevator. Yet again Chamy has no control in this bad situation, but this time, she is not alone. Spike is with her (in more ways than one): he is stuck in the elevator and he also knows what it feels like to have his family change. When Chamy finally shares some of her feelings and frustrations, Spike stops trying to "fix" her situation and just listens. He bravely shares some of his experiences about his mother leaving when he was younger. That helps Chamy to see that she is not alone after all—that other people do understand. In the end, Chamy feels better, not because she forgot about her problems for a while, but because she was able to honestly share them.



Do you sometimes feel like you are caught in a big storm of emotions? You're experiencing a big change in your life. You might feel surprised, angry, guilty, sad, relieved, frustrated, happy, ashamed, responsible, or lonely! Some feelings you may be able to predict: like a roll of thunder that comes after a flash of lightning. Other emotions may seem to come out of nowhere. Sometimes, feelings you thought you had gotten over may come back again. Feelings can be difficult to manage at times, but they are nothing to be ashamed of. Chamy wanted to hide her emotions and think only about facts. It's good to understand facts, but you don't need to be afraid of feelings. The key is to understand them and share them in helpful ways.

God created human beings to be in community with each other and with him. Sin breaks that community, and can break families too. That brings all sorts of unpleasant feelings. Like Chamy, you may feel like no one will understand, but you may be surprised. Even the short verse that Spike shared with Chamy shows that: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). When his friend Lazarus died, Jesus felt the pain of separation that death brings. If the perfect Son of God can be sad about the loss of a friend, he understands the feelings around the breakup up a family. Talking to Jesus can keep your relationship with him strong. Remember from the previous episodes that Jesus is unchanging and trustworthy and he wants what is best for you. Staying close to Jesus will make it easier for you to give him control over your family. It also might help you deal with some of those negative feelings.

The other way to restore relationships is to talk to other people. Again, you might be surprised who understands. Chamy would never have thought to talk to Spike about her problems, and Spike was nervous too, but both were brave enough to share their facts and feelings. When that happened, Chamy felt less alone, and Spike experienced some of 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 as he was able to "... comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves received from God."

God brings us comfort so we can share that comfort with others. Talking and listening to others builds relationships. Sharing your facts and feelings with friends, parents, counselors, or support groups may seem scary, but it helps us rebuild relationships God's way. Your family may have changed, but God and his plans have not. You can be a part of those good plans.



Try this activity to keep track of some of your emotions:

Keep some long colorful strips of paper with you in your desk, backpack, car, and house. When you feel a strong emotion, write it down on one of the strips of paper. Add a new strip for every new emotion or for an emotion you feel again after it has gone away for a while. You don't need to feel bad about any of the emotions, just write them down. Keep the strips of paper with you throughout the day. At the end of the day, connect the emotions like a paper chain.

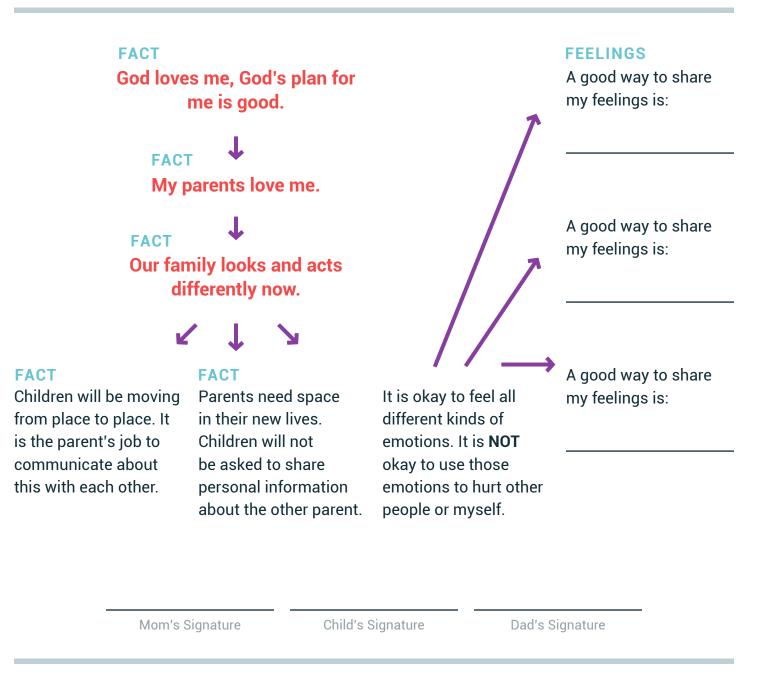
What's important is that you see that all the emotions are connected. You may notice over time that certain emotions get repeated a lot, and then go away for a while, and then might pop up again. Are there emotions that always seemed to be linked together? Talk to God about your feelings. Ask for his help to express them in helpful ways. Be brave and show your chain to another person. It could be a parent, a counselor, a youth group leader, or a friend. See if they have experienced some of these emotions too. How did they deal with them? Listen to their stories and share your own.



Look at the facts about your new family life. Parents, share with your children some of the emotions you have around those facts. Kids, tell your parents how you feel as well.

Now, talk together about good ways to express those emotions.

Fill out the below "promise sheet" together.



Here's a summary of the three promise sheets. Please review each point together and sign the contract at the bottom as a promise to each other.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES CONTRACT

- Parents and children should treat each other with respect. We may dislike past behavior, but we should choose to go forward with kindness.
- Parents should strive to maintain a co-parenting relationship that is supportive and cooperative.
- Parents should agree to never say negative things about the other parent in front of the children.
- Parents should share information directly without pulling children into the middle of their conflict.
- Big decisions should involve both parents—as partners in parenting. Children should not play one parent against another.
- Children should agree to share their thoughts and emotions with and seek support from an adult when struggling with feelings related to the divorce. Feelings may include being surprised, angry, guilty, sad, relieved, frustrated, happy, ashamed, responsible, or lonely!
- Children have the right to be loved by both parents and have regular contact with each parent and as well as their extended families.
- Disagreements about parenting should be kept between the adults. Both parents should agree to never threaten to withhold support or cut off the child's access to the other parent.
- Talking about difficult family issues is best done in a safe setting, such as a
 counselor's office. All family members will refrain from complaining in public. Parents
 will refrain from seeking information about the other parent from the children. Each
 spouse is entitled to privacy after the divorce.

Mom's Signature		Dad's Signature	
Child's Signature	Child's Signature	Child's Signature	Child's Signature



Q HOPE FOR HURTING KIDS, hope4hurtingkids.com

Hope 4 Hurting Kids provides ideas, resources, and advice for children and teens dealing with hardships to help them move from a position of hurt to one of hope and healing. Check out their blog and their "My Feelings Workbook."

Q BANANA SPLITS RESOURCE CENTER, bananasplitsresourcecenter.org

Banana Splits provides literature and activities for kids who have experienced divorce or the death of a parent. They also recommend books for professionals and parents.

□ MY FAMILY'S CHANGING ACTIVITY BOOK, tsoshop.co.uk/gempdf/Cafcass_MFC_Older.pdf

From England, this 16-page pdf talks to kids about their feelings about divorce.



Family Fire Articles for Parents FAMILYFIRE.COM

- CHILD-CENTERED LIFE AFTER DIVORCE: 7 WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN
- **Q** RESPECT, LOVE AND CARE EVEN AFTER DIVORCE
- Q DIVORCE WITHOUT DESPAIR





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