Single Parents Come in Three Distinct Stages

As single parents navigate parenting by themselves, they go through definite stages. These stages can be grouped into three distinct phases—surviving, transitioning and emerging.

by Linda Ranson Jacobs

Over the past several years I have had the honor of watching single parents try to parent alone in a very complex world. At first I watched from the sidelines thinking, “I am so glad that’s not me. I don’t have to be in their shoes.” Don’t get me wrong: I prayed for them, but I didn’t understand them. I had sympathy for single parents, but I didn’t have empathy. Actually I had a rather self-righteous attitude about the whole single parenting thing. It was sad if you were parenting alone due to a death. But the whole divorce and never-married scene wasn’t within my realm of comprehension. Then one day I woke to find myself parenting alone.

As I strived to make sense of my world and my life, I began to empathize with every single parent I’d ever known. I have lived it, and I have walked with many others through the troubling times of parenting alone. In my observations I have developed a theory about single parents. As single parents navigate parenting by themselves, they go through definite stages. I believe these stages can be grouped into three distinct phases—surviving, transitioning and emerging.

For more on Stage One: The Surviving Stage, go to www.dc4k.org/parentzone. Click on “ParentZone Library.” Click on “Single Parents Come in Three Stages, Stage 1.” © MMV by the author and/or Church Initiative. All rights reserved. Reproducible only when used with a Church Initiative ministry program.

Linda Ranson Jacobs is the DC4K creator and developer. For more information, email info@dc4k.org. To discover more about DivorceCare for Kids or to find a DC4K group near you, go to www.dc4k.org.