



PARENT PAGE

SESSION TEN

Welcome to the DivorceCare for Kids family. Each week you will receive a Parent Page. This Parent Page will do three things: (1) make you aware of the theme for the week's session, (2) give you tips to create stronger bonds in your single-parent family, and (3) enhance the parent/child relationship. We suggest you purchase or create a journal to record stories, comments, and funny things that happen in your family. For more information about DC4K, go to www.dc4k.org. Find single-parent resources at www.dc4k.org/parentzone.

Telling my parents how I feel

This week's goal:

To encourage your children to openly acknowledge their feelings and pain and tell you how they are feeling about everything.

What the experts say:

As a single parent, it is easy to get caught up with just trying to survive. You may not realize your children need you. Sometimes children feel there is a wide distance between their parent and them. They hesitate to tell their parent how they feel; they don't think their feelings are important; or they don't want to bother the parent. Sometimes children are afraid to talk because they are afraid the parent will get mad. Even if it's not true, it is the child's perception. It's important to dispel these perceptions and keep the lines of communication open.

This week in DC4K:

The children learned to name and communicate their feelings. They explored ways to tell people, especially their parents, what they need from them. They were also told that it's okay if they don't want to share things right away. It's also okay to think about the divorce, but at some point they need to open up and talk about how the divorce is affecting them.

One family's story:

One day a teacher noticed that one of the boys in her class was really down. Upon asking what the problem was, the boy told the teacher that every weekend his dad

would sit in front of the TV and go to sleep, and it was getting very boring. The teacher told the boy that maybe he should tell his dad what he thought. The child said, "I couldn't do that. He might get mad. Besides, what would I say?" The teacher worked with the child on what to say. They wrote everything down, and the child practiced in front of his mirror every day. The following weekend, he said, "Dad, I need to talk to you. Will you turn off the TV and talk to me?" First thing Monday morning, the teacher got a call from this dad thanking her for working with his son. He said he had no idea his son was upset with him. They ended up making a list of different things to do on Saturdays. They decided to do things like shoot hoops and hang out together.

This week's Scripture focus:

Hebrews 10:24: "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (NIV).

Building family strengths:

Notice what TV shows your children are watching. Sit down and watch TV together. Use this as a time to explain why you do or do not agree with the show. This is a good way to teach moral values to your children. Go a step further and decide that one night a week for the next four weeks there will be no TV, movies, phones, computers, or other electronic devices. Plan things to do so you can connect with each other. Some suggestions: play charades, cook an exotic meal together, invite grandparents over (if grandparents are not available, then adopt an older couple at church and invite them for dinner), let the children cook and serve a meal. Connect with your children now and you will open the doors for better communication when they are teenagers.

The best way to help your children is to help yourself. Link up with a DivorceCare divorce recovery support group, www.divorcecare.org.

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