



PARENT PAGE

SESSION ELEVEN

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.

Forgiveness

This week's goal:

To model forgiveness to the children in your family and help mend the hurts that fester due to unforgiveness.

What the experts say:

Exposing your children to forgiveness can be the most precious gift you give them. Grudges and unforgiven hurts can keep them from being free to enjoy an abundant life in the Lord. Children will find comfort in knowing that God is fair, just, and loving and that living together in the spirit of forgiveness is the secret to a joyful Christian life.* Forgiveness is something you need to choose, apply, and practice. You can make it a lifelong habit by training your mind to reject thoughts that cause you to harbor unforgiveness, resentment, or blame.

This week in DC4K:

We discussed what forgiveness is and how to ask for and grant forgiveness. We learned about God's forgiveness, and we encouraged children to take responsibility for their actions and attitudes.

One family's story:

One brother and sister often got into horrible fights with each other. They would yell, scream, slam doors, and retreat to their rooms, turning up their music loudly. The stressed single mom would sigh and try to find out who started it. But her intervention seemed to make matters worse. After studying forgiveness in DivorceCare, she decided to start working on forgiveness at home. She sat the kids down one day and asked them to forgive her for intervening in their

disagreements. The kids were a little shocked. She told them she would no longer become involved unless they needed her. But they could only come to her when they had calmed down and were ready to tell her they were sorry for disturbing her peace. Then she would forgive them. In a short time, this household calmed down considerably.

This week's Scripture focus:

Colossians 3:13: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another" (NIV).

Building family strengths:

Most parents work with their children to say "I'm sorry," but often forget to teach them the rest of the apology: "Please forgive me." How often do you ask your children to forgive you when you have wronged them, even if it's just a bump or an irritated voice? Are you teaching forgiveness in your home? Or are your children's hurts festering and you don't know how to help them heal? Try forgiveness. If children start by forgiving small things, it will become easier to forgive large hurts, wrongs, and misunderstandings as they grow.

Another suggestion is to extend grace. In other words, let the children off without a consequence for certain misbehaviors. You might give them a few coupons with the word "grace" written on them. Explain that they can redeem these coupons when they are facing a consequence for their actions. Isn't that what Jesus did for our sins when He died on the cross? What better way to learn about grace and forgiveness than from your own earthly parent!

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

