



PARENT PAGE

SESSION THREE

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.

Facing my anger

This week's goal:

To develop healthy ways for each person in your family to deal with angry feelings.

What the experts say:

Children may need to be reassured they are safe and that you will be there to take care of them. They also need to recognize that being mad is a normal reaction to the breakup of the family. Explain to your children that it's okay to be mad, but it's not okay to hurt others when they are mad. Children rarely know how to express their anger, and they may need to be given permission to say, "I feel mad," without their parent becoming upset or defensive. As a divorced parent, you must make a conscious effort to set aside your own pain in order to help your child.* Dr. Archibald D. Hart recommends that you make sure you and your child get enough physical activity. He says, "Physical activity strengthens muscles and bones, reduces fatigue, builds a stronger cardiovascular and respiratory system, and helps to release important and natural tranquilizers in the brain. Psychologically, it builds a feeling of confidence, makes a person more resilient, and helps to reduce frustration."† Angry children need physical activity to help them work through their anger.

This week in DC4K:

We talked about how to recognize the signals their bodies send when they are getting angry. The children were taught how to relax their bodies through breathing and stretching exercises. They were given examples of

how to use their anger to be helpful, not hurtful. They were told to admit when they are mad and to tell others.

One family's story:

Tess was the mom of two rambunctious boys. It seemed the boys were always getting into trouble because of their angry, aggressive behaviors. Tess decided each evening they would have "table talk." At dinner, everyone had to tell three good things that had happened that day. At first it was hard because the boys were so angry about everything. But the only way they were allowed to talk about something negative was if they also explained how they could have changed their behavior into something good. They could say things like, "Today Sal took my pen and I hit him. But the next time Sal takes my pen, I will take a deep breath and say, 'Sal, when you need a pen, ask to borrow it. I'll let you use it when I'm through.'"

This week's Scripture focus:

Proverbs 15:1: "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (NIV).

Building family strengths:

At your next family meeting, decide to do something fun that involves physical activity. It could be going on a walk or hike, skating together, or playing a sport together. Whatever you decide to do, promise each other that you are going to set aside all the frustration and anger and just have fun together. Children need to know that it's okay to express their anger, but they also need to take a break from grieving the divorce and have fun.

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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* *Children and Divorce* by Dr. Archibald D. Hart, (Word Publishing, 1989), pp. 106–107.

† *Stress and Your Child* by Dr. Archibald D. Hart, (Word Publishing, 1992), p. 115.