



PARENT PAGE

SESSION SEVEN

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.

Developing new relationships

This week's goal:

To help your children know it's okay to develop new relationships and realize that former relationships may change because of the divorce.

What the experts say:

You may be thinking that new relationships mean dating. You may be looking forward to having a new dating relationship, but, with few exceptions, your children are not. Make a point to truly look at this issue from your child's point of view. A new dating relationship can be scary, confusing, and uncomfortable for your children. Your own perspective on a new relationship is nothing like the perspective of your children. Take time to let both you and your children heal from the divorce before entering a dating relationship. Give your children an opportunity to adjust to being in a single-parent home. Help them develop strong relationships with friends, extended family, and your church family.

This week in DC4K:

We helped the children realize it's time to look at Mom and Dad differently and see them as individuals living in separate homes. We discussed that it's okay to keep in touch with the parent the child doesn't live with. We discussed how relationships with others change because of divorce. The children were encouraged to make new friends.

One family's story:

One non-custodial dad decided to make some big

changes when he went through a divorce. Out of desperation, he began attending church. At first, he only went when his son wasn't with him. Then over time, he realized his son needed to meet his new friends, so he took his son with him to various events. This child became accustomed to meeting new people, and he enjoyed seeing how happy his dad was with his new friends. The son wasn't worried any longer about his dad feeling alone when the son couldn't be with him.

This week's Scripture focus:

1 Samuel 20:42: "Jonathan said to David, 'Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD'" (NIV).

Building family strengths:

It's important to build safe relationships for you and your children. Find other single parents who have children similar ages as yours. Invite that family over for a meal or a movie. Attend church functions together and sit together at church services. Ask your church to plan social functions that include children. Friendships happen when people invest time in cultivating friendships. Make it a goal to call another single parent this week.

If your children haven't had contact with both sets of grandparents, then have your children call their grandparents and make plans with each set of grandparents. Even though it may not seem fair to you, it's important that children be allowed to have contact with all extended family members. Encourage your children to remember their grandparents on birthdays and holidays. Your children will benefit from this contact, and you will be teaching them to build solid foundations for family relationships.

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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