



PARENT PAGE

SESSION NINE

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.

It's not my fault

This week's goal:

To communicate to your children that divorce is an adult problem between two adults and to help your children understand the divorce is not their fault.

What the experts say:

God designed children to rely on their parents. That is why children are naturally self-centered. Is it any wonder that over half of the children involved in a divorce think the divorce is their fault? Some younger elementary-age children think they can pinpoint the exact time and cause of the divorce. They may think that not cleaning their room caused the divorce. Or perhaps it was the time they yelled at their sibling. Or maybe it was when they ran the toy car into the wall and caused Mom and Dad to start arguing. In their creative, self-focused minds they conjure up all kinds of reasons why the divorce must be their fault. Some children even think the divorce is a punishment for some sin they have committed. Unfortunately, most adults forget to tell the children that the divorce is not their fault.

This week in DC4K:

We focused on the fact that divorce is between two adults. The divorce is not the children's fault. We discussed not taking responsibility for their parents' problems. We also talked about respecting their parents.

One family's story:

In one family, both children thought the divorce was their fault, but they kept it to themselves. At church after completing this DC4K session, the second-grade boy

went to his workbook and wrote in the margin of one of the pages, "It's not my fault." His older sister saw him writing and went over to read it and responded with, "You thought it was your fault? I thought it was my fault. I guess it's really an adult problem between Mom and Dad." Neither of their parents had thought to sit them down and explain to them that the divorce wasn't their fault.

This week's Scripture focus:

1 Corinthians 13:11: "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me" (NIV).

Building family strengths:

Realize that children are children. They don't think like adults nor should they be expected to. Tell them repeatedly that the divorce is not their fault. Think through the past week. How many times did you hug your children? How gentle were you with them? How many times did you turn and look them in the face and give them your full attention when they were talking to you? Did you touch their shoulders or arms when they were talking to you? How much physical attention are your children getting from you? People don't touch elementary-age children very often, yet the children need the gentleness of a soft touch. Jesus said in Luke 18 to let the children come to Him. Jesus was known for His healing touch. Plan ways to provide soft healing touches in your family. Hugs can do wonders for stomachaches and heartaches. You might want to start a "Family Hug Time" where everyone hugs each other at the same time. Try shouting "Family Hug Time" and see what happens.

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