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HOW TO CONTACT US

DivorceCare for Kids (DC4K) exists as a ministry to help you as you help others. Feel free to contact us with questions, problems, and success stories.

Phone: **1-800-489-7778** (US and Canada); **919-562-2112** (Local and international)

Fax: 919-562-2114

Mail: DivorceCare for Kids
P.O. Box 1739
Wake Forest, NC 27588-1739

Email: **info@dc4k.org**

Web: **www.dc4k.org** and **www.dc4k.org/leaderzone**

ONLINE ACCESS

LEADERZONE

The online LeaderZone is a resource hub for “leaders-only.” **All the forms and worksheets referred to in this book and in the Lesson Plans book are available for download and reprint on the LeaderZone, www.dc4k.org/leaderzone.** The LeaderZone also features the following:

- Downloadable DC4K logos and advertising art
- Leaders’ Forum
- Find a Group database maintenance
- Leadership store
- Articles, forms, agreements
- Promotion tools: Promo videos, logo apparel, banners
- Latest DivorceCare news

LEADERS’ FORUM

Communicate easily and regularly with other DC4K leaders and our DC4K consultants through this online forum. You can ask questions, share ideas, make prayer requests, and react to messages posted by other Forum members via web or email. To begin participating in the Leaders’ Forum, go to **www.dc4k.org/leaderzone**.

All DC4K forms and worksheets can be downloaded and printed from the LeaderZone Library, www.dc4k.org/leaderzone.

STORE

Visit the DC4K Leadership Store, **dc4k.org/store**, to order additional Activity Books, brochures and posters, kit replacement items, and other supplies for running your DC4K group.

BEGINNING YOUR DC4K MINISTRY

The tools in this Leader's Guide, plus those on video and online, will help you launch an effective ministry. If you're new to DC4K ministry, don't let these materials overwhelm you. You'll learn as you go—by your successes and mistakes. The most important thing you can do is to get started. There are children of divorce out there who need your ministry.

In this section, we'll share some key principles important to the success of a DC4K ministry. You'll find flexibility to form a ministry that fits your church and community. We encourage you to experiment and innovate, then share your experiences so others can learn and benefit.

What to Expect

You might be wondering what kind of response to expect if you announce the availability of a DC4K group. Every church and community is different. There's no precise way to predict how many children will come to your first group. Factors such as the demographics of your church membership, the availability of other divorce help groups in your community, and the effectiveness of your publicity will have an effect on attendance.

Even with these variables, it's possible to offer some guidance about what to expect:

Your DC4K group will draw children from outside your church: It won't be unusual for the majority of your participants to come from outside the host church. Some children won't be active in any church. Others will come from churches where there's no DC4K ministry. Many of the children in your group might not be followers of Christ, creating an extraordinary outreach and evangelism opportunity.

Your group size is likely to be small when you begin: If only one child or a small number of children show up at your first session, be encouraged! These are the children God has led to you for ministry. The nice part about a small start is that it lets you and your leadership team fine-tune your program and work on the rough spots.

Your DC4K program will likely grow larger over time. *The keys to growth are consistency, prayer, and a warm, accepting environment.* As word gets out that practical help and support are available, families will be drawn to your program. The most effective publicity for your DC4K group will be word-of-mouth invitations and testimonials from your current and previous DC4K children and parents.

Church members will refer people to your group: Everyone knows a divorced family, but many people don't know how to effectively help them, so they'll be glad to learn there's such a ministry in their church. Be sure to publicize DC4K effectively within your congregation.

Expect to be especially busy at first: Every new project, whether it's a start-up business or a new ministry, needs a "champion," someone who's passionately committed to seeing it through to success. It's likely you're that person in the initial phase of your church's DC4K program. Be sure to create a leadership team to help you as your group begins to grow.

Expect to be stretched, challenged, fatigued, and often blessed! Ongoing care ministry can be emotionally draining. If God has called you into this ministry, He'll sustain you through it. Best of all, as you help others, you'll find that you're being deeply blessed, fulfilled, and refilled.

Anticipate testing, trials, and temptations. This phenomenon isn't limited to DC4K ministry. If you are effectively doing the work the Lord leads you to do, you are likely to face some opposition from the enemy. Paul addresses this issue in Hebrews 12:1–2 and suggests an antidote of perseverance. In verse one he urges: "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." In the second verse, he gives us a focal point: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus."

Who Will Come

The children in your group might be from divorced, separated, or never-married families. No two groups will be identical, but the following mix is representative of many groups:

Christians: Some of the children who come to your group will be young, growing followers of Jesus Christ.

Non-Christians: A significant percentage of your group might have little or no church background and don't have a personal relationship with Jesus. DC4K gently points children toward Christ as the source of help and hope through the trials their family is experiencing.

Children who have completed at least one DC4K cycle: Children are encouraged to repeat 13-week cycles. As a child repeats the sessions, he or she will experience the DC4K materials from a new perspective and benefit from levels of information that might not have been relevant at an earlier point. As a leader, you must be able to differentiate between children who are genuinely benefiting from the repetition and those who might be staying for other reasons. In most cases, a child shouldn't participate in more than three 13-week cycles.

Children from a variety of life circumstances: It's very likely your group will include a mixture of children from families that are:

- Divorced
- Separated
- Never married

The DC4K material is carefully designed to simultaneously meet the needs of children from each of these categories. The overarching principles presented in the material are relevant to all of these family circumstances.

ESSENTIAL STEPS TO STARTING YOUR DC4K GROUP CHECKLIST

Now that you have inspected your DC4K materials, you might be wondering where to begin, what to do first. Here is a strategy for digging into the material in a logical, helpful sequence. These steps are a conceptual overview of what each director and Safekeeper* (what we call a DC4K leader) needs to do to become familiar with DC4K.

- ❑ **Visit the DC4K website, www.dc4k.org.** Explore each of the sections. They will provide an excellent overview of the ministry. Pay particular attention to the **Start a Group** section, which includes excerpts from the videos, children's Activity Book, Lesson Plans, and Leader's Guide. Visit the **ParentZone**, which contains articles that will help parents of children who participate in your DC4K group.
- ❑ **Preview the Leader Training DVD.** (It's the orange disc, Disc 4, in your DVD package.) This video summarizes the best path to becoming an effective DC4K Safekeeper. Following the steps outlined in this video material will help you have a successful ministry. If you have time, watch all of it now, but be sure to watch it in full with your Safekeepers as part of the training experience. Pages 27–30 have an outline and discussion guide to use when training your leadership team with this video. Using this outline and discussion guide will make the training much more effective and help create a bond within your ministry team.
- ❑ **Read through the DC4K Leader's Guide** and become familiar with its contents. It is the "resource of resources" and will direct you to the material and answers you need. The Leader's Guide references everything a Safekeeper needs to know to start an effective DC4K group. Be sure to highlight points to remember. (Note: You can page through the Lesson Plans book, but it's not necessary to dig into the lesson details at this time. Instead, focus your time on looking at the Running a Weekly Session section on page 33 in this Leader's Guide.)
- ❑ **Register on the LeaderZone, www.dc4k.org/leaderzone.** It's important that each current Safekeeper and future Safekeeper connected with your DC4K ministry have access to the LeaderZone. **The LeaderZone serves as the online epicenter for DC4K Safekeepers.** It is a password-protected website exclusively for leaders and church staff. The LeaderZone contains all the downloadable forms and worksheets needed to lead your group. It has important articles, advertising materials, and other valuable resources to help you provide a successful ministry. Also be sure to explore the online, moderated **Leaders' Forum** where you can interact daily (via web and email) with other DC4K leaders around the world. Once you're registered, you'll be automatically signed up for our Leaders' Forum that's delivered daily to your email inbox. This is an essential step in getting all of your Safekeepers connected.
- ❑ **Preview the children's Activity Book.** Please note that the Activity Book pages are protected under U.S. copyright law and may not be photocopied.
- ❑ **Preview at least one story in the *Stories for Kids in Divorce* book (hardcover storybook).**

*The Safekeeper concept has been reproduced/adapted from the following with permission from Loving Guidance, Inc.:
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❑ **Preview at least one set of the *Kids Like Me* and the *Stories from the Bible* videos.**

Session 1	The Kids Connect	Jesus Calms the Storm
Session 2	The First Act	The Woman at the Well and the Children
Session 3	Trey to LA	Jonah Gets Angry
Session 4	Ill Will	The Mother and Son Who Had to Leave
Session 5	Moses Is in the House	A Boy Alone
Session 6	Pastor Tim Visits	God Provides for a Young Girl
Session 7	It's Not Fair	Mephibosheth's Needless Worry
Session 8	A Simple Prayer	A Widow, Her Sons, and the Oil Jar Miracle
Session 9	Breakable Jay	Welcome Home
Session 10	Facing Uncle Scott	Jesus and the Lunch Box Miracle
Session 11	Will to Forgive	Joseph Forgives His Family
Session 12	Dress Rehearsal	Josiah, the Eight-Year-Old King
Session 13	Your Time in the Son	Jesus Calms the Storm

❑ **Listen to a song from the DC4K CDs.**

❑ **Promote your group meeting.** Promote your group meeting on our free, Find a Group online search engine on the main DC4K.org website. People in your community and church need to know your group exists. This free promotional tool enables website visitors to search by zip/postal code, city & state, or country to find the DC4K group nearest them. Your free listing includes all the details parents need to know, such as when and where your group meets, cost for children to participate, and whom to contact for additional information. Plus, it automatically displays a short preview video! To customize your online listing and promote your ministry, go to the LeaderZone, My Church section, and follow the guidelines on that page.

❑ **Connect with the DC4K headquarters team.** Our consultants and support team members are experienced and qualified in helping leaders succeed as they start and sustain a DC4K group. Remember, there is no charge for this help. It is yours for the asking! One of our consultants will be contacting you soon and assisting you as you launch and grow your group for a successful future. We have a Welcome email letter to send you containing lots of tips for leading a DC4K group. Our church support associates are dedicated to helping you with your orders and general inquiries. Feel free to call or email anytime, Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. (eastern time), **800-489-7778** or **info@dc4k.org**.

❑ **Pray for leaders (we call them Safekeepers).**

DC4K is designed to be run by lay leaders with a compassionate and loving heart and a call to this ministry. Pray for wisdom and guidance as you begin the volunteer recruitment process and for God to prepare the hearts of those you'll ask to serve. Take a look at pages 16–24 in this Leader's Guide to help you build your leadership team along with these two practical articles in the LeaderZone Library: "Where Do You Find DC4K Leaders?" and "Recruiting a DC4K Team."

How many leaders will you need?

Recruit a minimum of three leaders to start any size group; then use a ratio of three to four children per adult leader after that.

Maximum group size: Groups should be no bigger than 20, but 12–15 is more manageable.

NOTE: If you have a large registration of 20 or more children, consider forming two DC4K groups instead of one large group. Be sure to keep siblings together.

Ongoing

- Act as a liaison with the congregation and church staff about the ministry
- Work with leadership and church staff to develop ongoing and comprehensive ministry plans
- Work with the pastor or staff assigned to the ministry
- Interface with other leadership teams in your church (DivorceCare, Single & Parenting, etc.)
- Contact and stay connected to your free DC4K consultant
- Continue to identify and enlist potential leaders for your leadership team
- Give your leadership team and church staff feedback

WEEKLY THEMES, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

Weekly Thematic Units

One unique aspect of our program is the weekly theme. The weekly themes are reflected in the session titles. These themes complement the adult DivorceCare program's themes. Parents should be strongly encouraged to participate in DivorceCare. Because parent and child will both be on the same or similar topics each week, this will create an opportunity for parent and child to have meaningful conversations about the issues they face. They'll be learning at the same time about their emotions and how to handle each emotional phase.

Themes, Goals, and Objectives

All of the weekly themes, goals, and objectives are designed to accommodate the outcome objectives (see page 85 for a list of DC4K outcome objectives: immediate, intermediate, and final). Below you'll find a copy of the 13 weekly themes and goals for each session along with samples of the objectives needed to obtain the goals.

SESSION 1 – What's Happening to My Family?

Goal: To help the children of divorce find comfort and relief from the anxiety of what's happening in their families.

Scriptural objective: To demonstrate a "Christ-like" image for the children as they enter the door and begin the DC4K journey of healing.

This session will help the children:

- Know they're safe in this place
- Learn and understand what is going to happen each week at DC4K
- Have fun and connect with new friends

SESSION 2 – God Loves Children in All Kinds of Families

Goal: To assist the children in realizing that everyone's family situation is different and to help each family develop a healthy single-parent home.

Scriptural objective: To help the children discover that when their earthly parents disappoint them or leave them, they can ask God to become their heavenly parent.

This session will help the children:

- Discover that there are other kids like them in similar situations and that they're not different

- Understand how all families are different and unique
- Realize it's okay to miss people and things

SESSION 3 – Facing My Anger

Goal: To help the children understand that anger is part of the grief process when parents divorce and to learn how to deal with these feelings in a healthy and acceptable way.

Scriptural objective: To help the children understand that anger is an emotion from God and that God is “slow to anger” (Psalm 86:15). We want to help the children realize that God doesn't get mad when they're angry with Him. Instead, He has unconditional love for each child.

This session will help the children:

- Recognize when they're mad
- Understand it's okay to be mad, but not okay to be hurtful when they're mad
- Learn they are God's STARS

SESSION 4 – Journey from Anger to Sadness

Goal: To acquaint the children with the sadness phase of grief in the divorce process and to help them learn how to process this in a healthy emotional way.

Scriptural objective: To help the children realize and understand that sadness is an emotion everyone experiences, even people in the Bible.

This session will help the children:

- Realize the difference between being mad and being sad
- Recognize when they're sad and how to respond to their sadness
- Realize they'll get through this sadness and even though they might be sad again in the future, they'll be okay

SESSION 5 – I'm Not Alone

Goal: To help the children realize they're not alone and that there are people, including a heavenly Father, who care about them and love them.

Scriptural objective: To bring God's presence to each individual child.

This session will help the children:

- Understand that everybody feels alone at times
- Develop coping skills for when they feel lonely
- Realize there are people who care about them and love them

SESSION 6 – God's Plan for Me

Goal: To give the children hope and comfort in knowing that God always loves them and will meet all their needs.

Scriptural objective: To introduce the children to the truth that God has a plan for every child.

This session will help the children:

- Realize they have choices to make
- Realize it's okay to say “no” and to set boundaries for themselves
- Learn to talk to God

SESSION 7 – Developing New Relationships

Goal: To help the children realize their relationships with Mom and Dad and others are different since the divorce and to help them learn to develop new relationships.

Scriptural objective: To help the children discover how to develop a new relationship with Jesus Christ and to show them a compassionate God whom they can go to with every problem in life.

This session will help the children:

- Realize they have to look at Mom and Dad differently—as individual parents living in separate homes
- Understand that other relationships (grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends) have changed
- Develop a positive attitude about changes in relationships

SESSION 8 – Developing Money Smarts

Goal: To help the children understand various aspects of budgeting and spending that will help them and their families.

Scriptural objective: To help the children become aware that God wants to supply all of their needs.

This session will help the children:

- Learn about expenses at home and how they can help
- Understand what child support is and how it is to be used
- Make good choices in earning and spending their money

SESSION 9 – It’s Not My Fault

Goal: To communicate to the children that divorce is an adult problem between the two parents and to assist the children in comprehending that their parents’ divorce isn’t their fault.

Scriptural objective: To show the children that God loves them unconditionally.

This session will help the children:

- Understand that it’s okay if they’re sad about the split in their family
- Find out it’s not their fault or any other kid’s fault in their family; it’s between the parents
- Respect both parents

SESSION 10 – Telling My Parents How I Feel

Goal: To help the children learn how to go to their parents and talk about how they feel in an honest, yet respectful, manner.

Scriptural objective: To help the children be able to pour out their hearts to God, their heavenly Father, and to know that He accepts all their burdens.

This session will help the children:

- Communicate how they feel to different people
- Explore ways to express themselves so others can understand what they’re saying
- Realize they can’t be their parent’s best friend

SESSION 11 – Forgiveness

Goal: To help the children understand what forgiveness is and how to forgive others.

Scriptural objective: To help the children become acquainted with the God who forgives our sins.

This session will help the children:

- Define forgiveness and forgive their parents for divorcing
- Learn about God's forgiveness for them
- Take responsibility for their actions and attitudes

SESSION 12 – Loving My Parents

Goal: To help the children discover that their parents still love them and to help them express love to their parents.

Scriptural objective: To help the children realize that Jesus is God's Son and in order to be adopted into God's family, they need to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

This session will help the children:

- Realize their parents don't love each other the same way they used to, but their parents still love them
- Explore ways to show their love to each parent
- Accept love from their heavenly Father

SESSION 13 – Moving On: Growing UP and Closer to God

Goal: To help the children realize that life goes on after divorce and their futures can be healthy and happy.

Scriptural objective: To help the children understand that God wants them to be joyful and happy and it's okay to be happy even though their parents are divorced.

This session will help the children:

- Realize there's life after divorce
- Realize they are individuals with their own talents, hobbies, and interests
- Realize they have their own relationship with God

RECRUITING AND TRAINING LEADERS

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DC4K TEAM BUILDING

Never do ministry alone; it takes a lot of volunteers to build a great ministry. Think about who needs to be on your DC4K team, then begin the recruiting process by advertising your needs in your worship bulletin, on your church website, through announcements during worship services, and through networking with church staff, current volunteers, and congregational connections. Forming and building relationships within your church and community is your best ongoing and effective method for recruiting DC4K team members.

You can begin your DC4K group by recruiting Safekeepers: a primary Safekeeper and two additional Safekeepers. As your program grows, ask other people to join the team and help with tasks like administration, publicity, food, registration, etc. Adapt the structure of your leadership team to meet the needs of your program and church.

There's no best way to organize these kinds of responsibilities. Create an organization that works effectively for you!

Overall Ministry Team

- **Pastoral staff:** Be sure to include the Children's Pastor.
- **Church receptionist:** Will likely be the first point of contact, so he or she should have access to current schedule and contact information.
- **Custodial/AV staff:** Room and equipment setup, unlocking of rooms/restrooms, cleaning before and after, and AC/heating control.
- **Child care staff:** Paid or volunteer child care staff to care for children of volunteers and for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers of DivorceCare and Single & Parenting participants.
- **DivorceCare and Single & Parenting leadership teams:** Communicate with each of these groups about DC4K and coordinate schedules accordingly.

DC4K Team

Core team

These team members will relate directly with participants. (Remember: You'll need a minimum of three Safekeepers to start your group. For groups of 12 or more children, add an additional Safekeeper for every additional three to four children.)

Director: Person who coordinates/directs the DC4K ministry.

Primary Safekeeper: Lead person who will run your DC4K group every week.

Safekeepers: People who work closely with the primary Safekeeper to run the group (start with a minimum of three Safekeepers and add from there, making sure you have one Safekeeper for every three to four children).

Apprentices: People in training and learning the role of Safekeeper.

DC4K helpers: Teenagers who serve as helpers to Safekeepers, but with limited responsibilities. Students are required to have an adult with them anytime they're with the children.

Helpful Hint

Consider purchasing logo apparel for all of your Safekeepers so they're easily identifiable every week. You can view logo items on the LeaderZone in the Promotion Tools section.

Helpful Hint

DC4K can be successful with both small and large groups; however, if your group becomes larger than 20 children, we recommend you purchase an additional DC4K Kit at a reduced price and add an additional room so optimal safety, teaching, and healing can take place.

Prep team

Publicity coordinator: Organizes and creates promotional materials (website, newsletters, etc.).

Registration coordinator: Handles Registration Forms, Child Information Forms, name tags, and Activity Book purchases; handles the money for fees; welcomes participants when they first arrive.

Administrative coordinator: Ensures the room, equipment, and supplies are ready.

Snack coordinator: Prepares and delivers the two snacks for each week.

Child care coordinator: Coordinates the child care program.

Prayer coordinator: Coordinates a prayer team and distributes prayer requests.

Signage crew: Sets up directive signs at the meeting site.

Parking lot crew: Directs people to the building and oversees safety in the parking lot.

Security crew: Monitors hallways and building interior to keep participants safe.

Note: These team position ideas are just suggestions for your program. You might be starting this ministry with a team of three, and that's okay. Your DC4K ministry will still work for you! See the DC4K LeaderZone Library for "Job Titles & Descriptions."

Keeping Your Group Healthy

- Pray for your Safekeepers; ask God to protect and hold them accountable to Him and the other Safekeepers. Also pray for protection and guidance for each child.
- Understand your purpose is to provide a safe place for children of divorce to encounter God as their Savior and healer.
- Being a successful Safekeeper means being consistently present, trustworthy, and showing care for each child who comes, regardless of his or her mood or behavior.
- Recruiting Safekeepers throughout the year is key! Recruit Safekeepers-in-training, and use as "backups" when needed.
- Maintain church connections by keeping your pastor and/or children's ministry leader informed of what's happening. An excellent way to do this is to email them each week after the session with details of attendance, program highlights, and reports of salvation and healing.
- Maintain consistency by setting up the room the same way each week and having the same Safekeepers. Children of divorce often deal with constant change and long for consistency.
- Between sessions make sure to pray for each child, stay in communication with the DivorceCare and Single & Parenting leaders, email or call the other Safekeepers, and establish communication with parents so they can let you know if there's a change in schedule.
- Celebrate at the end of each 13-week session with a graduation or party that acknowledges what the kids have learned and what God has done.
- Encourage the children to come to your next session and to invite their friends who are from divorced families.

"This ministry is so deep and important, and there is a mountain of information to help you prepare your leaders to do this ministry."

Leader, OR

For more information on organizing your materials, go to the DC4K LeaderZone Library and see the "Organizing Your DC4K Materials" article.

LEADER TRAINING

Equipping your DC4K team for success is critical, so make sure all volunteers go through the DC4K training so they feel confident in what they'll be doing. Training will also communicate the mission of DC4K and help cast the vision of how your church's DC4K ministry can continue to reach out to people in your church and community.

Orientation

Each new leader should go over the Essential Steps to Starting Your DC4K Group Checklist with the primary Safekeeper or DC4K director to become oriented with the DC4K materials and program. In order to complete the Essential Steps, each volunteer should have his or her own Leader's Guide and children's Activity Book, plus access to the videos, CDs, and storybook. (You can download a copy of the Essential Steps from the LeaderZone Library, or direct them to page 7 in their Leader's Guide.)

Leader Training Video

The Leader Training Video (orange DVD) is designed to give you an overview of what it takes to run a successful DC4K ministry. It's an essential tool for training all DC4K volunteers at your church.

This is the foundational training path that is the key to being an effective Safekeeper. Safekeepers who have watched this video and carried out its action points have gone on to have successful and effective ministries. Watch the entire video (pages 27–30 have an outline and discussion guide to use when training your leadership team with this video).

Keep in mind, as valuable as the Leader Training Video is, the information in your Leader's Guide is another part of the foundation for a successful ministry. Ignoring it will limit your effectiveness. So be sure to read your Leader's Guide and watch the Leader Training Video.

The video presentation on this DVD can be used in three different ways:

1. Individual Viewing – If you have overall responsibility for DC4K in your church or if you are the person starting a new DC4K ministry, use this DVD to help you formulate a strategy and foundation for your ministry.
2. New Leader Training – Make it a priority to go over this DVD content and related material with each new person you recruit to your leadership team. You should not hand off the Leader Training Video to individuals to view on their own. Rather, all new leaders should see this DVD with their director or primary Safekeeper in order to process the discussion questions after the video and answer any further questions. This will help ensure the consistency of your program.
3. Leadership Training Sessions – The Leader Training Video can also be used as a valuable resource as you train and equip your Safekeepers (both veteran and new leaders). Annually, you and your leadership team will want to review the Leader Training Video.

Helpful Hint

It's a good idea for veteran volunteers to attend leader training annually. It'll help spark concepts they might have forgotten and renew their enthusiasm for the vision and mission of the program.

The Leader Training Video, located on Disc 4 in your DC4K kit (on the orange DVD), is designed to stimulate interactivity and discussion within the DC4K leadership team. There are three individual segments that comprise the video training material. We've designed the format so that you'll view a segment, and then use the discussion questions to help your group apply the concepts presented on that segment. You can use the videos in one of two formats:

1. Schedule three separate team meetings, viewing one video per meeting, followed by discussion and planning.
2. Plan a longer training session (such as a Saturday morning), and go through all of the material in a single session. If you elect this option, be sure to include time for discussion/planning after the viewing of each video.

Whichever format you choose, reserve time to pray for your ministry, for the people who will come as participants, and for your leadership team.

Suggested outline for two-hour DC4K leader training

Allow leaders to look through the DC4K materials.	5 minutes
Have trainees form breakout groups of two to three people. These breakout groups will remain together for the remainder of your training time.	
Watch Part 1 – What Is DC4K?	10 minutes
Answer questions on Part 1	15 minutes
Watch Part 2 – The Eight Success Tips	15 minutes
Answer questions on Part 2	15 minutes
Sample snacks for Session 1	10 minutes
Watch Part 3 – DC4K Room Setup and Session Schedule	10 minutes
Answer questions on Part 3	15 minutes
(Optional) DC4K session run-through	15 minutes
Conclusion / Question & answer session	10 minutes

Helpful Hint

To help your leaders become familiar with the schedule and materials for a typical DC4K session, choose one of two options:

1. Have your Safekeepers run a mock DC4K session, going through the different aspects of a session. Be sure to include at least one activity and craft.
2. Have your Safekeepers read through the Running a Weekly Session section (p. 33) together:

DC4K SCHEDULE

We've designed two streamlined methods to help you get your DC4K group up and running as quickly as possible. The model used and preferred by the majority of DC4K groups is a two-hour schedule. An alternative 90-minute schedule is also available.

A basic session schedule is below to help you choose what will work best for your time frame.

SESSION OUTLINE – Session Title	2 hours	90 minutes
GREETING	15 min.	15 min.
OPENING CIRCLE TIME	15 min.	15 min.
KIDS LIKE ME DVD DRAMA	15 min.	10 min.
STORYBOOK TIME	15 min.	15 min.
BATHROOM BREAK	5 min.	5 min.
SMALL GROUP INTERACTION	20 min.	15 min.
FOCUSING ACTIVITY	10 min.	0 min.
STORIES FROM THE BIBLE ON DVD	15 min.	10 min.
CLOSING CONNECTION CIRCLE	10 min.	5 min.

Each week it's important to read through the complete session in advance, including the Leader's Notes and Lesson Plan (see the Lesson Plans book, which includes detailed instructions for the leaders, an outline for each of the 13 sessions, and a weekly Preparation List). In the Preparation Lists, we have a list of items to prepare and collect ahead of time and another list of things to do 30 minutes before the children arrive. We suggest that you go over the next week's session before you leave each week. This way, decisions can be made as to who will be responsible for various items. It's important to always include the essential pieces of DC4K:

- Activity Book pages
- Weekly Scripture and prayer
- *Kids Like Me* video
- *Stories from the Bible* video
- Music
- Scripture Decoder

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WHAT IS DC4K?

DivorceCare for Kids is a biblically based, Christ-centered ministry tool designed to bring healing to children of divorce. It points them to God and introduces them to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It's a comprehensive 13-week program designed to run concurrently with the adult DivorceCare program in your church; although, DC4K can run as a stand-alone program if your church doesn't have an adult DivorceCare program. DC4K is set up to run 120 minutes but can easily be adapted to accommodate a 90-minute schedule. A 90-minute schedule is provided at the beginning of each Lesson Plan.

DC4K can also be an outreach program for your church. It provides an opportunity for your church to help children in your community who've experienced the divorce of their parents. DC4K can be a wonderful bridge between your church and community, providing a way for you to share how the love of Jesus can heal the hurting and the brokenhearted.

DC4K is a program geared to introduce and walk children through the grieving process that's brought on by the death of their once-intact family. It's a curriculum designed to give children the tools to develop healthier relationships within their own families.

Target Audience

The target audience for this program is children 5 through 12 years of age. The program materials are designed to accommodate children who are reading or learning to read. Since this program is set up for children who've entered school, we strongly encourage you not to include preschool-age children in your group. While the preschool-age children might find some of the material interesting, they might not be able to keep up or participate in many of the group games and projects. This could hinder the other children's progress as well as frustrate preschoolers.

Many churches have asked about including older children in DC4K. This will depend on how you structure your group, the number of younger children in your group and the maturity level of the teenager. You might find that your program will be able to accommodate a young teenager, such as a 13- or 14-year-old. Churches will need to determine what's best in their specific situations.

The DC4K LeaderZone Library has articles, Forum posts, and book/program recommendations for ministering to teens, including suggestions from DC4K leaders who've created their own teen programs. To access this information, go to the www.dc4k.org/leaderzone.

What DC4K Is Not

DC4K isn't a counseling service or a one-on-one program; it's not a Sunday school or a Vacation Bible School. DC4K is designed to help children from divorced homes heal in a group setting. It's designed to bring children of divorce into the loving arms of a church family and to feel God's love surrounding them.

DC4K OUTCOME OBJECTIVES FOR CHILDREN

In developing DC4K, we considered the negative effects of divorce and developed positive outcome objectives. This chart lists the immediate, intermediate, and final outcomes for children who participate in DC4K. DC4K is all about bringing healing and positive outcomes for both now and the future.

IMMEDIATE	INTERMEDIATE	FINAL
<p>short-term learning, children will:</p>	<p>medium-term action, results in:</p>	<p>long-term impact, will produce:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop positive interactions with parents • Realize they're not unique in their situations • Develop friendships with other children of divorce • Understand visitation schedules and other changes • Become involved in less family conflicts by developing positive attitudes • Recognize the various phases of grief in divorce • Develop skills to cope with current life-changes • Gain a better understanding of financial matters affecting their families • Improve positive communication skills with noncustodial parents • Develop healthy attitudes about relationships, church, the Bible, and God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in behavior problems in schools and daycares • Increase in scholastic achievement scores for elementary-age children • Reduction in absenteeism rates in elementary-age children • Less children being retained in school • The incidence of crime rates related to drug and alcohol use drop • Dropout rates for high school students drop • Increase in the number of students graduating and enrolling in college • Reduction in the number of children attempting suicide • More children develop personal relationships with Jesus Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults who have the ability to develop and sustain healthy relationships and lifestyles • Praying adults who turn to God when problems occur • Adults who want to help meet the needs of people who are hurting (2 Corinthians 1:3-4) • People committed to a growing relationship with Jesus and a desire to live out their faith daily

COMMUNICATING WITH THE CHILD OF DIVORCE

When children are emotionally struggling or hurting, they might appear withdrawn, quiet, or unwilling to engage in group conversation. Look for opportunities to engage in conversation with children in your group, such as during snack time, while kids are at stations, or during other less structured times. Use open-ended questions that will encourage conversation rather than a quick “yes” or “no.”

Feeling Safe

Children might be apprehensive about attending DC4K. Many children don't feel safe when one parent moves out of the home, and they experience a great deal of anxiety as a result. During Opening Circle Time, introduce the Safekeeper concept.¹⁴ Tell the children that this is a safe place. Tell them you are the Safekeeper and it's your job to keep things safe. Explain that all of the leaders are Safekeepers. Tell the children it's their job to help you keep things safe.

We understand from brain research that children under tremendous stress have a hard time taking in information and learning. We also know that children must feel safe in order to learn.¹⁵ Do everything you can, therefore, to help each child feel safe and comfortable. Create a warm, nurturing environment. Have someone available to greet each child personally as the child arrives. Take time to calmly show each child around; don't appear to be rushed or flustered.

Spiritual Guidance

Children might come to your DC4K program with little or no exposure to church or the Christian faith. DC4K can be a wonderful tool to open the doors of faith to children for the first time. Each week look for ways to share the gospel and open the windows for children to make discoveries about God and faith.

In regard to salvation, your first consideration is to help the children learn to feel safe. These children are hurting. In order to help them come to know a loving heavenly Father, you'll want to help them feel comfort from their pain. The Holy Spirit can use their hurts to propel them to the Father, but you must help them apply the salve to the wounds of their hearts. This can be done through your nurturing and loving witness. The saying “You might be the only Jesus this child sees” might be true for many of the children who attend your DC4K program.

Your second purpose is to expose God's unconditional love to them throughout the entire 13-week program and point them to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The DVDs, Activity Books, and the other materials introduce the children to Jesus and to the Bible. Each child's situation is delicate and unique, and we recommend that leaders prayerfully work with each child on an individual basis. Introducing children of divorce to the plan of salvation will be a special process.

When working with an individual child, take him or her to the children's Activity Book and point out the plan of salvation (Activity Book, p. vi). Read this through with the child. Take time to stop and ask questions to make sure the Holy Spirit is prompting the child to make this decision. Give the child ample opportunity to ask questions. Respond truthfully and go to the Bible for answers. Then pray with the child as the child asks Jesus into his or her life as Savior and Lord. Here is another simple way to present the gospel to children:

- God created us and loves us.
- We've all disobeyed God (sin). But God sent Jesus, His Son, to earth to save us. Jesus took our place and was punished on the cross.