



HOW WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE A SINGLE MOM TO TALK ABOUT THE GIRLFRIEND

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By Linda Ranson Jacobs

08/02/2013



Recently I got a text from a single mom. She is just starting the divorce journey. She has moved into an apartment and is making great strides in developing a healthy single parent home.

This mom does not want the divorce but sometimes things are out of one's control. Her kids are going with their dad to another state to visit the girlfriend. Mom wanted to know what she should tell her kids before they leave with the dad.

The children do not know about the girlfriend. They don't know why their parents are getting a divorce. The boys love both parents, and they still want to live with both parents. The mom is wise to only give them the truth on their developmental level. She is also being smart not to run down the dad or the girlfriend. She continues to tell them they are going to be okay.

Her text was, "Tomorrow the boys are going to meet my husband's girlfriend. Should I say something or tell them before they meet her?" This is a tough situation for any single parent.

The boys do not know they are going to meet someone new. My suggestion was to sit the boys down and talk to both boys at the same time. Use a matter of fact and calm voice. Here is what I suggested she say:

- Remind the boys that both parents still love them even though they no longer love each other.
- Tell them now that you and their dad are separated and living in different homes that there will be new people coming into their lives – like new friends.
- Do not tell them they are meeting the girlfriend this weekend. This is the dad's responsibility.
- Tell them divorce is an adult problem and not their fault.
- Tell them how proud you are of how they are handling the move to an apartment.
- Tell them you are going to miss them while they are out of town with their dad.
- Tell them a few things you are going to do this weekend. For example, "I am really tired so this weekend while you are gone I'm going to take a nap in the middle of the day and relax. I might unpack some more boxes too."





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I explained that it is important to let the children know what she was going to be doing while they are gone so they won't be worried about her going out to meet a "new dad". Unfortunately this is how many children think after a divorce. Or they worry about their parent being alone and missing them.

I've worked with hundreds of children of divorce. As adults we don't realize the trauma these kids experience. One of the parents falls in love with someone else and they automatically think the kids will feel the same way about the new person as they do. For an adult the love for the other parent dies but for a child, they will continue to love both parents.

I hurt for these boys. However, they have a strong Christian mother and this will help them as they learn to live in two separate homes.

As a children's minister or someone who works with children of divorce, how would you advise this single mom?

Linda Ranson Jacobs is one of the forefront leaders in the area of children and divorce. She developed and created the DivorceCare for Kids programs. DC4K is an international program for churches to use to help children of divorced parents find healing within the arms of a loving church family. As a speaker, author, trainer, program developer and child care center owner, Linda has assisted countless families by modeling and acting on the healing love she has found in Jesus Christ. Linda offers support, encouragement and suggestions to help those working with the child of divorce. She serves as DC4K Ambassador (<http://www.dc4k.org>) and can be reached via email at ljacobs@dc4k.org. You can find additional articles from Linda on her blog at <http://blog.dc4k.org/>.

Free articles and devotions for single parent families in your church can be found at Linda's website Healthy Loving Partnerships for Our Kids (<http://www.hlp4.com>).

