



WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW FROM KIDS ABOUT DIVORCE (A Review)

By Wayne D. Stocks

10/26/2011



In my research into ministering to children of divorce, I have come across a number of people, and a number of organizations, dedicated to helping children of divorce. Not all of them approach it from the same ministry perspective as Divorce Ministry 4 Kids, but ultimately, they are all concerned about, and have the same heart for these children. Today, I want to review a product from one such organization. Make sure to read through to the bottom to find out how you can win a free copy of the DVD.

About the Organization

One such organization is Listen2Kids.net. Listen2Kids.net was founded by Sue Polan, MA LPC. According to their website,

Sue Polan, MA LPC has 30 years experience counseling with children and families. Her experience includes 12 years in private counseling practice and 18 years of school counseling. She was named 2007 Outstanding Educator of the Year for School District 51, Mesa County, Colorado.

Sue founded Partners in Parenting, LLC in 1995 to teach court-ordered divorce classes to parents. Out of that work, Sue noted that while there was a multitude of advice out there from professionals about children of divorce, there was a lack of information which provided the child's perspective on divorce. So, in 2010 she founded Listen 2 Kids Productions "To help the voices of children to be heard in the world." As Sue explains,

In all the years I've practiced and taught, I've never ceased to be amazed at the wisdom of children and how much they have to teach us.

About the Video

The video entitled, "What Parents Need to Know from Kids about Divorce" shares basic information with parents about the emotions their kids are experiencing, various coping techniques kids might use and dos and don'ts for parents getting a divorce. Each bit of advice is coupled with first person testimonials from children who have actually gone through their parents' divorce.





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The video starts with a montage of kids explaining the divorce in short terms. The vast majority of them use the word:

HARD!

One child says, "It's weird," while another summarizes divorce as "not good"

One girl says,

"It's like a complete mystery to me – like half of my life has disappeared like I don't know what happened!"

The video covers issues pertinent to children of divorce including:

- Conflict between parents
- Blaming yourself for your parent's divorce
- Making kids take sides or be an intermediary
- Balancing time with parents
- Coping mechanisms kids use
- Need for parent involvement
- How parents can help

The children in the video express common reactions to divorce like a desire for everything to be "back to normal," sadness, loss of childhood, loss of relationship, anger, guilt, withdrawal, abandonment and acting out.

The video also covers three critical things that parents should do to help their children adjust to the divorce. These include:

- Modeling,
- Ongoing involvement, and
- Tuning into their children's needs.

Promotional Segment on the Video

The following is a brief sample of what you'll find in the video:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=02j-j71cmzc





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Review of the Video

What I liked about this video will come as no surprise to anyone who has talked to me about this issue or read my articles here on DivorceMinistry4Kids.com. It is time that parents, society in general and the church all started to think about divorce from the perspective of kids. The first "official" article I wrote for [Divorce Ministry 4 Kids.com](http://DivorceMinistry4Kids.com) following the launch of the ministry was called [A Change in Perspective on Divorce](#) and argued that it was time we started to realize that kids view divorce differently than adults do.

This video does a great job of giving the viewer a first-hand look at what divorce is like to kids. The pain and anguish in many of the faces is unmistakable. If you think that "kids are resilient" and they will just "get over it" in time, watch this video for a visual reminder of the impact of divorce on kids. The personal accounts of these kids will break your heart and hopefully open up your eyes to the impact of divorce on kids.

The video presents useful information to parents and others who work with children of divorce, but the highlight is clearly the first-hand testimonials that make up most of the video.

There were a couple of things that could have been a little bit better. The production quality is a little lacking, and there is significant background noise when the kids are speaking. Eventually though, these minor issues fade into the background and the emotion of listening to children talk about how their parents' divorce made them feel.

Who Should Watch This Video?

The video is intended for parents, and they should be the first in line to watch it. That said, this video is also great for those who work with children and particularly those who work with children of divorce. Anyone who wants a glimpse into the real impact of divorce on children should view this video.

Additional Resources

There are a couple of additional resources that you can get along with the video (you save money if you buy all three) that will also help you to better understand what children of divorce are going through.

What Parents Need To Know From Kids About Divorce Activity Book For Kids

This little 19 page paper pamphlet includes 11 group activities for elementary and middle aged school students to help them explore their emotions related to their parents' divorce. If your church is offering some sort of support group, or if you work with children of divorce, this pamphlet would be a great addition to your resource library.





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Developmental Stages A Divorce

This one page summary includes a table which summarizes general responses to divorce by age and suggested ways to help each age group. As the laminated sheet explains:

While each child is a unique individual, there are patterns of behavior that tend to be seen at different ages and stages of development. Divorce is a major life event for adults, but even more so for children who have little power to alter either the divorce itself or the adult behavior. Because the adults are often embroiled in their own feelings, the children often have little support.

The chart includes Developmental Tasks, Life Experience of Divorce, Signs of Distress and Intervention ideas for each of 6 developmental stages:

1. Preverbal Infants and toddlers
2. Verbal through 4 years
3. 4-6 years
4. 6-10 years
5. Tweens (10-14)
6. Teens

Much of the research is available online, but this handy chart pulls it all together in one easy-to-read source. As an added bonus, you get the Developmental Stages and Grief chart which is printed on the back side.

How to Get a Copy?

Go to Listen2Kids.net and order. The video is available for approximately \$25. The pamphlet of group activities sells for around \$6, and the Developmental Stages chart for about \$5. According to the site, you can get all three in the "Divorce Package" for \$35 which is not a significant savings, but you may as well save a buck where you can!

