

DEALING WITH THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON KIDS

A Guide to Dealing With Feelings of Grief



GRIEF: keen mental suffering or distress over affliction or loss; sharp sorrow; painful regret.. (from dictionary.com)

GRIEF...A HEALING PROCESS. The first reaction of most children of divorce upon hearing that their parents are going to split is one of shock. Ultimately though, children will find themselves embroiled in a grieving process similar to one they might experience when a parent dies. However, it is important to remember that the grieving process for children of divorce, while similar in terms of stages and reactions, can also be markedly different from the grieving associated with death. Unlike with death, the grief support structure often dissolves as children navigate the grief associated with their parents' divorce. Unlike death, other people do not generally share in, or understand the grief associated with divorce, and many are afraid to say anything or get involved for fear of making the situation worse. While grief is not a pleasant road to travel, it is a necessary and critical step in the healing process.

A TREASURY OF PSALMS

The God of the Bible is a God of comfort! The Bible itself is full of comforting verses for those experiencing grief, and many of those verses are listed in the scripture section to the left. However, the Psalms particularly are chocked full of verses relevant and comforting for those experiencing any kind of grief and can be shared with children of divorce as they process the grief that comes with their parents' divorce. These Psalms will serve to remind children of the truth of God as revealed in His Word:

✓ Ps. 9:9 ✓ Ps. 34:18-19 ✓ Ps. 73:26
✓ Ps. 18:1-5 ✓ Ps. 38:8-15 ✓ Ps. 116:5-6
✓ Ps. 18:28 ✓ Ps. 46:1-11 ✓ Ps. 118:1-14
✓ Ps. 23:1-6 ✓ Ps. 56:8 ✓ Ps. 119:50
✓ Ps. 30:2-5 ✓ Ps. 62:11 ✓ Ps. 142:2
✓ Ps. 31:9-10 ✓ Ps. 72:12 ✓ Ps. 147:3

HOW TO HELP A CHILD WITH GRIEF

- ✓ Give them someone to talk to
- ✓ Don't be afraid to talk about the loss
- ✓ Help them find words for their feelings
- ✓ Allow them to be honest with you
- ✓ Listen to them
- ✓ Don't force the conversation
- ✓ Be patient with them
- ✓ Be prepared to share with them over and over
- ✓ Try to understand what the child is thinking and going through
- ✓ Be a good role model
- ✓ Keep your own emotions in check
- ✓ Watch for behavior changes
- ✓ Pray for them
- ✓ Consider counseling/therapy if necessary

THE FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF

- 1. DENIAL** (Children are convinced that their parents will change their minds and reunite.)
- 2. ANGER** (Kids want to blame someone for the divorce and may blame one parent, siblings, themselves or may just be angry at the world.)
- 3. BARGAINING** (Children try to exert some control by bargaining with parents to stay together.)
- 4. DEPRESSION** (Kids experience a great sense of sadness and loss. In this stage they come to the realization that nothing will stop the divorce.)
- 5. ACCEPTANCE** (This stage does not equate to happiness, but kids begin to move past the feeling of loss.)

A Recurring Process

Unlike grieving the loss of a loved one, the grief over divorce tends to reoccur in children of divorce as:

1. They enter the different stages of development and life.
2. They move back and forth between homes reminding them of the loss of their intact family.
3. They experience events like birthdays, graduations and weddings that temporarily bring their parents back together.

Scripture References About Grief

Is. 26:3 Jn. 14:1
Is. 41:10 Jn. 14:18
Is. 43:2 Jn. 14:27
Is. 46:9-10 Jn. 16:33
Is. 49:13 Rom. 8:18
Is. 53:4 2 Cor. 1:3-4
Jer. 31:13 2 Th. 2:16-17
Lm. 3:31-33 Heb. 4:16
Mt. 5:4 1 Pt. 5:6-7
Mt. 11:28 Rev. 21:4
Lk. 6:21



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