



## RESPITE CARE AND CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

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By Linda Ranson Jacobs

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Most of us never think of children needing respite care. When I owned a child care facility we provided "respite child care" for foster care moms and dads. Some of the kids had so many issues that the foster parents needed a day away from the kids. They needed time to regroup and regenerate themselves. Some just needed a day to rest.

The foster care children came to us for the entire day. After a full day of activities with people that knew how to help them, how to keep them in control and stimulate their creativity, they went home to a rested foster care family. It worked out well because the kids got a break and the families got a break.



In case you are wondering exactly what the word respite means, I looked it up for you. The meaning that makes sense for us in regards to children of divorce is, "Respite: An interval of rest or relief."

After Thanksgiving and along with the up and coming holidays, some children of divorce are going to need a place of respite. They are going to need to feel the hands of Jesus encircle them. Ask if they would like a hug. Many will reciprocate. They are going to need to hear the voice of loving Christian souls speak soothing words to them. They need an interval of rest or relief from their hectic, chaotic and confusing world. Your Sunday morning group can provide the respite some so desperately need.

Many children of divorce will come to you after a very hectic Thanksgiving weekend. Some of these children will have been shuffled from house to house. Some will have indulged in three or four Thanksgiving meals. They may be stuffed from food but empty in their hearts.

Other ideas to include in your place of respite:

- You can do this by talking to them. Ask about their weekend.
- Don't be afraid to ask how many houses they had to go to over the weekend.
- Ask what they thought about all that moving around. Don't ask them how they felt about it. Most kids, especially younger elementary children, won't have the words to describe how they felt.
- You can provide them with a calming environment.
- Provide some fun and comical antics to get them laughing.

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- Give them special scriptures you have looked up just for them. Put them on a post it note or a card and tell them to post them on their mirrors at home. You might even think about giving them two of each item so they can take one to the other home with them.
- Think about a special bible story or storybook about children of divorce and have it available for the kids to read.

After thinking and praying about this I'm sure you'll come up with many other ideas to help the child of divorce survive this season.

*"Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." Proverbs 16:24*

*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](mailto:ljacobs@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>).*