



JACK'S STORY: CHILDREN OF DIVORCE AND THE PEACE OF GOD

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By Linda Ranson Jacobs

02/08/2013



Every so often I feel it is important to bring a kid story to the forefront. This week I thought I'd share something that happened in a DC4K group I was leading.

A six year old boy in our group had been diagnosed with PTSD. We'll call him Jack. For the most part, Jack was pretty out of control each week when he came to DC4K. We could usually get him in control but it normally it took some time for Jack to transition from his chaotic home life to DC4K. Most of the time, he simply brought the chaos from his home life right into our group.

One week, Jack wasn't in class. When he came the following week, he was raring to go. Jack was in the fight/flight mode of his brain. He hid his head in the hood of his coat and refused to make eye contact with anyone. His mom dragged him up the stairs of the church and through the door. She looked at me somewhat exacerbated and mouthed, "Good luck" as she almost pushed him into our room.

I took a deep breath to stay calm and said,

"Well, look at you. Your head is hiding in your hood like this."

I imitated him. I was describing Jack's actions. See, when a child is in the lower level of the brain (the fight or flight part of the brain), it is important to describe their actions. I didn't say,

"Come on, quit being silly. Let me see that smiling face."

Many times we "kid people" try to "happy up" a child. In cases like Jack's though, he didn't have much to be happy about. However, in describing a child's actions you can cause the child to look to see what you are doing.

As my little friend peeked out, I said,

"I really missed you last week, and I sure could use one of your special hugs if you want to give me one."

I described his action, and then when he looked at me I gave him a choice. He came over and gave me a quick hug. It was a simple gesture, but it was enough to pull him up out of his fight or flight mode. He quickly got into the activities we had set up, and soon it was time for our circle up. He came right over and sat down on the floor





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next to me. After our video, I was going to skim through the read aloud story. I rarely read the entire story word for word.

On this particular evening this little guy's sister sat on the floor just on other side of me. Both of these siblings were virtually sitting on top of me. The sister started to read right alongside of me. She corrected me every time I left out even the smallest word. It was an amazing experience. I could feel the Lord taking over. The entire room got quiet as I read the long story. You could have heard a pin drop it was so quiet. None of the kids were fidgeting or moving around.

Since we were sitting on the floor Jack started scooting down next to me until he ended up lying on a little pillow with his head right next to my leg. I laid my hand on his back and started patting him gently as I read the story. You could feel the peace of the Father take over. Later, one of the other leaders from our group told me,

"I wish you could've seen his face when you started patting his back. A complete peace came over him and you could see it on his face. I've never seen anything like that before."

Jack went right to sleep as I kept reading the story with his sister tracking me.

In that moment, the thought occurred to me,

"What better place to sleep than in the Lord's house and in His arms."

After the story was over, I grabbed a blanket and threw it over him as the rest of the group continued on with the evening's activities. This little fellow who never sleeps soundly at home, slept the entire evening. We had one of our teen helpers pick him up and carry him to his mother's car after our session. The next week, Mom told me that she took Jack in the house that night, put him to bed, and he didn't wake until the next morning. Peace – blessed peace!

Many times as leaders we have a set agenda, or we think we know how things should go. I think sometimes we quench the movement of the Holy Spirit because of our own agendas. We have to read a story; do a project; sing a song; make sure every kid is listening.

I realize there are going to be people who will criticize me for allowing this child to sleep. There are others that are thinking, "I'd let him sleep just to keep him out of my hair!" This child needed some rest. He felt safe. He felt calm. I'm sure he felt loved and cared for. More than anything I think he felt the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst.



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“When children are part of a close-knit group, they feel safe and know they are not abandoned. They enjoy life in the shadows of taller people who genuinely care about what happens to them.” Dr. Wess Stafford, “Too Small To Ignore” (Waterbrook Press)

I hope you will look for your own kids of divorce stories this next week. If you have a kid story, please share it in the comment section below.

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.

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>).