



THE POWER OF BEING INTENTIONAL

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By Linda Ranson Jacobs

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Many children's church workers and volunteers fall into ministering to the child of divorce. What do I mean by that? These kids show up at your church, and before you know it you are trying to figure out how to minister to them. You are usually doing it on the spot and you might not feel very confident in your ability to impact this child. You want to help them. You know you should help them. You want to bring the love of Jesus to these kids. You understand what the Bible says about the orphans. So you fall into ministering.

Have you ever thought about the power of being intentional? And I don't mean a far Eastern religion or the power of intention mind-set that you find all over the Internet. You know if you just think on this and intend for it to happen it will happen and how much inner energy you get from the power of intention.

I'm talking about

- The power of purpose
- Having an aim
- Having a goal
- Using a plan
- A resolve
- Being deliberate

What if we take all these phrases and apply them to ministering to the child of divorce and separation?

What does it mean to be intentional in ministry? To me, and for the purpose of being intentional in ministry to the child of divorce, it means:

- Educating myself and learning all I can about the child of divorce. Learn what they are feeling and how they are processing the divorce. Learn about the shock the child may be feeling; about how scared they might be and how confused these children are.
- It means being prepared for when they do show up in one of your groups. Perhaps you tell yourself in advance that when you learn a child's parents have separated that you take a deep breath, be in the moment and you pray over the child quietly. You also keep shock from registering on your face. This is especially true if the child is one of your regular attendees and their parents have just separated. It means not having pity on them but empathizing with them.





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- It means having a purpose and being determined to allow the Holy Spirit to be in control of you - what you say and how you approach the child of divorce. This means you need to pray in advance for the Lord to send the children in your community to you.
- It means having a resolve to reach out and help the child feel accepted and loved. Many children of divorce will tell you they are embarrassed when their friends find out their parents are separated or divorced. They will also tell you they don't feel accepted at church because of the divorce. While this might not always be true, it is their perception because the divorce overwhelms all of their thoughts and takes over their world. In their mind, everything becomes measured by the word "divorce." You will hear them refer to, "before the divorce" and "after the divorce."
- It means being deliberate in actions, words and deeds. This might mean you are a little more understanding when a child acts out or hides over in the corner or just doesn't want to participate. It means taking into consideration that they may have just come from the other parents home and they would really rather be at home, sitting on the couch snuggled up next to mom. It means you reach out and give them a hug, a touch on the arm or you hold their hand during prayer.
- It means you stop, think and react like Jesus did when the children came to Him.

Imagine if you were ready for this child. You were prepared. You were actually waiting for the child. Wow, can you imagine how much calmer you would be? You would be confident. You would be able to project and feel love for this child. It means you would actually extend love to the child. It means you would see the best in the child, not in the family feud. You would actually see the child in a different light and through a different lens, which could mean that you might be just a little more tolerant of his or her misbehaviors and antics. You would realize they are crying out for attention from an adult who cares and from a Heavenly Father that will never leave them or forsake them.

When you stop and think about it, I believe you will realize there actually is energy in the power in being intentional because the Holy Spirit:

- Equips you
- Empowers you
- Makes you ready
- Gives you excitement
- Instills joy in your soul

I don't know about you but I feel stronger and more energetic just thinking about all of this.

As soon as I pray, you answer me; you encourage me by giving me strength. [Psalm 138:3 (NIV)]



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He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. [Colossians 1:28-29]

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>).

