



## ASK ME NO QUESTIONS AND I'LL TELL YOU NO LIES

Page 1 of 3

By Linda Ranson Jacobs

09/13/2013



Unfortunately children of divorce have a lot of questions to ask but many times they don't know whom to ask. When they do ask, many are told lies or maybe not really lies but half-truths. Children need the truth not lies or made up stories.

I have always advocated that children be told the truth on their developmental level. Never should they be told sordid details about the other parent. Single parents need to protect the child and the other parent's image. The other parent is just that – the child's other parent. The child is not the one divorcing you or the other parent.

When parents are in the throws of divorce it is hard not to criticize the other parent to anyone who will listen. Children do not need to be listeners for their parents. What they need are simple and truthful answers to their questions, not a list of all the wrongs committed for the past many years.

Recently I've been reading the book, "Generation iY" by Tim Elmore (Poet Gardener Publishing). I highly recommend this book for anyone working with children and teens today. In this book he talks about the lies adults have been telling this generation. He gives a list of reasons why adults tell lies.

Among them are:

- Because we're insecure
- Because speaking the truth takes time and work
- Because the truth can be painful
- Because facing the truth makes us responsible

All of the above can apply to divorcing parents. Many divorcing parents are insecure. They worry their child won't love them as much as they love the other parent. These are the single parents who want to be their child's friend. They make things up so the child will love them and like them better than the other parent. "I'm going to take you to Disney World and we are going to have so much fun. You just wait and see."

A parent may be busy, stressed and worried so when a child asks a question it might seem easier to just lie or maybe not tell the entire truth. The parent doesn't want to give up the time it might take to explain things in detail. "Not now sweetie. I'm busy. We'll talk about it soon. I promise." And they never get around to talking about it.





## ASK ME NO QUESTIONS AND I'LL TELL YOU NO LIES

Page 2 of 3

By Linda Ranson Jacobs

09/13/2013

Many times a parent may be trying to protect their child from experiencing any pain. The parent thinks if they color the truth just a little bit it will protect the child. The problem with this is someday the child may find out the truth and it will be more painful in the long run. The child asks, "Dad does mom have a drinking problem?" and the dad answers, "Hey buddy, you don't need to worry about such things. Mom is fine. She just needs some space."

Some single parents simply don't want to be held responsible for their actions so they lie to their children. "Whatever gave you the idea that Leesa and I were dating? She's your mom's best friend and her and I have been friends for a long time too."

While single parents might not mean to ignore, lie, color the truth or give half-truths to their children, their body language and attitudes shout, "Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies!" So the children suffer in silence.

What can church leaders do?

- Help the single parent realize their child is not their best friend.
- Host divorce recovery support groups such as DivorceCare.
- Counsel, coach or host classes for single parents about the developmental levels their children are on at different ages. Keep in mind some children will regress in developmental areas during a divorce.
- Host classes or support groups that specifically teach single parents how to parent alone. Groups such as Single and Parenting provide training as well as time to talk and work through various parenting issues.
- Provide groups, classes or resources that are equally dad friendly and mom friendly.
- Provide sermons and talks on forgiveness along with scriptures single parents can study, pray on and digest when alone.
- Provide seminars that encourage and give hope to the person parenting alone.
- Provide healthy two-parent families that can come alongside the single parent. For example: Find families that have children the same age as the single parent. Provide guide sheets or train the mentors with helpful tips and tools. Encourage mentor families to include the single parent in holiday celebrations.

What have you done to help single parent become question-friendly to their children?

*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*





## ASK ME NO QUESTIONS AND I'LL TELL YOU NO LIES

Page 3 of 3

By Linda Ranson Jacobs

09/13/2013

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). You can find additional articles from Linda on her blog at <http://blog.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>).

