



DO YOU KNOW A SINGLE PARENT WHO IS TRYING TO FIT INTO OLD WINESKINS?

By Linda Ranson Jacobs

05/20/2014

One spring day I was walking in my neighborhood. As I rounded the curve I noticed a little girl that looked to be about 5 years of age, playing outside while her mom was working in the yard. When I came back around the next time the little girl was dragging out a large tub. As I passed by her house she began to pull out the garden hose.



The third time around the block, the hose was in the bucket, water was spilling out over the sides and the little girl was nowhere to be seen. In just a moment she came running out of the house and had on what appeared to be last year's swimsuit. Evidently she had grown quite a lot over the winter.

She gleefully jumped in the tub of water. She tried to sit down in the tub. She stood, got out of the tub and walked around looking at it. With a look of determination she took a running jump and headed for the water again. No matter how hard she tried, she no longer fit in that small tub.

The little girl with her too little swim suit and the tub she could no longer fit into reminded me of a lot of single parents that have experienced a change in their lives. Some continue to try and go back and fit into their old life. Perhaps you have some single parents like that in your church. They have experienced a divorce and they just can't quite accept how their life has turned out. They continue to try and fit into a life that no longer fits.

Holding onto the old life

There are many things that keep a new single parent from moving on.

- They continue to talk about the divorce and they talk to anyone who will listen.
- They stay mad all the time.
- Because they live in stress everything is all about them.
- They are always late. When people are extremely stressed time is of no essence.
- Their children are usually out of control. Kids take their cues from the parent.
- They continue to try and have a relationship with the departed spouse even though the other person has moved on and is in a new relationship.
- Many times they use the children as pawns in order to have continued conversations with the other parent.





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Even though many of you work with the children, make no mistake you also work with the parent – the single parent.

What can you do?

- Encourage the single parent to find one or two confidantes with which to talk. The more people they talk to the more information confusing situations can become.
- Very carefully and gently point out how their anger is affecting their life. If possible and if they will accept it provide comforting scriptures for them.
- Forgive them when they seem selfish and self-centered. If you can be supportive and accepting, it will help them to move forward.
- When their children are out of control, deal with it in the class. Do not call in the parent. Most of the time the parent is stressed and clueless as to how to help. If you have a policy where you send the child to the parent or you don't allow the child to attend the next week because of their behavior, please think through this consequence because this will only serve as an excuse not to attend church.
- Encourage them to register in a [DivorceCare](#) group.
- Pray over them and with them.
- Be patient with them.
- Above all love these single parents in the Lord.

In Matthew 9:17 it says, "Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." Jesus brings "newness" to life. He doesn't want single parents to try and fit into their old life. He wants single parents to accept Him and He wants them to fit into a new and better life with Him.

Teach single parents that each experience they have in life grows and matures them and their life with Christ. People they meet become part of their living history. Attitudes change, trust levels change. Friends come and go. Hopefully their faith walk grows to the point they can't fit into old wineskins.

"I live by faith in the son of God, who loved and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20b

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





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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>).

