



STRESS FREE CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

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By Linda Ranson Jacobs

05/23/2014

Wouldn't it be wonderful if every little kid who had divorcing parents showed up in your class stress free? There would be no fighting, arguing or yelling. All the kids would want to be involved. They would want to form community and care for one another. The group would ooze kindness.

Impossible you say? I beg to differ. Many children who live in divorcing and stressed out families don't know how not to be stressed. It is their way of life and, like we've said before, they will bring that chaos and stress with them. However, there are things we can do to alleviate some of their stress.



I want to share a few important tips I have learned down through the years.

- Always, and I mean every time, have someone at the door to greet each child and do so with a hello ritual. That might be a high five, fist bump, hug, handshake, elbow bump or just a "Hello (insert child's name). So glad you are joining us today."
- Put on your most joyful face. Joy is contagious so feel free to share your joy. There is always more where it came from.
- If you don't have a joyful face – fake it. Even faking joyful and happy feelings will help a child with a neuron-to-neuron connection. It's called [mirror neurons](#).
- Be prepared in advance and have everything in the room you will need and things laid out in an orderly fashion. When you leave the room, the children think you are leaving them for something more important. Nothing is more important than the children.

And now the most important tip. Place a basket (or you could use a jar or a simple gift bag) on a table close to the entrance to the room. Put strips of paper, some pencils, colorful pens or glitter pens (kids love glitter pens) next to the basket. On the outside of this bag write,

"Cast all your cares upon Him for He cares for You" 1 Peter 5:7

As the children enter the room share with them that you want them to write down anything they are worried about or stressed out about on a piece of paper. Tell them to fold their note and place it in the basket. Explain that they are leaving their "cares" at the door because you want them to not worry about anything while they are in your class.

I used this last Sunday with the single parents in one of my groups. They joked about letting go of their worries. One person said they wouldn't know how to act without all of the worries being in their brain. Not once did anyone bring up any worrisome issues.



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Help children to understand God can take care of any worry or stress a child is carrying around with them. In time they will come to know and believe that this is possible.

As children begin to understand this concept

- They will be ready to be part of the group.
- They will want to be part of a community that cares for and takes care of each other.
- They will begin to see that being kind to one another helps them feel better under their skin.
- Being stress free, even if only for an hour once a week, will help the child to know what it feels like to let go of worries.
- Feeling kind means not wanting to yell, argue and fight with others.

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. 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>).