

DEALING WITH THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON KIDS

A Guide to Dealing With Feelings of Chaos

CHAOS: a state of utter confusion or disorder; a total lack of organization or order.
(from dictionary.com)

Chaos Reigns!!! No matter what you might have heard from your kids, children like structure and predictability! There is comfort and familiarity in structure. It's like a security blanket that keeps them warm and comforts them. Divorce changes all that. The structure that children have grown up with and come to expect is suddenly and dramatically changed. Parents leave. Belongings are packed up. People move. Schools change. Money dwindles. Time shrinks. Relationships change. Church becomes a thing of the past. Divorce brings two houses, two schedules, two sets of rules and too much for a child to keep up with. Rather than living under the security blanket of routine and structure, kids are thrust into a whirlwind of chaos and confusion. These feelings of chaos often lead to stress and other emotional reactions in children of divorce.



Scripture References About Chaos & Peace

Gen. 1:2	Mt 11:28-30
Ps. 23	Jn. 14:27
Ps. 37:1-5	Jn. 16:33
Ps. 42:11	Rom. 5:1
Ps. 119:50	1 Cor. 14:33
Is. 12:2	1 Cor. 14:40
Is. 26:3	Phil. 4:6-7

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- ✓ Create routines for your kids
- ✓ Be flexible and adaptable
- ✓ Be consistent between kids
- ✓ Spend alone time with each child
- ✓ Keep a calendar
- ✓ Maintain clear rules and structure
- ✓ Enforce the rules
- ✓ Have everything your child needs at each house
- ✓ Make sure kids feel "at home" in both houses
- ✓ Keep kids aware of, and involved in, the calendar
- ✓ Allow time between major changes
- ✓ Communicate with your kids and ex
- ✓ Minimize chaos in your own life
- ✓ Co-parent effectively and calmly
- ✓ Don't fight in front of your kids
- ✓ Let kids be kids

IDEAS FOR WORKING WITH KIDS

The bond you have with the child of divorce in your church, school or ministry may be the most stable relationship that child has during a divorce. You can be a source of stability and consistency for them in the midst of the storm they are going through.

The single most important thing you can do is point the child to God and remind them that God creates order out of chaos. The second most important thing you can do is listen to them. Help them to express what they are going through and feeling. Sometimes just talking about it will help to alleviate the feelings of chaos that they are experiencing.

Finally, make sure that the child knows that you love them and that you aren't going anywhere. Make a long-term commitment to helping the child, and stick with it!

Causes of Chaos:

- Loss of a parent
- New homes
- New schools
- Less money
- Loss of friends
- New church
- Lack of rules
- Loss of routines
- Increased responsibility
- Lack of information
- Two sets of rules
- Loss of rituals
- Loss of identity
- Loss of predictability
- Lack of consistency
- Arguing parents
- Differing expectations
- Lack of planning
- Step Parents
- Step Siblings
- Half Siblings
- Changing parental figures

