

DEALING WITH THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON KIDS

A Guide to Dealing With Feelings of Confusion

CONFUSE: to perplex or bewilder; to make unclear or indistinct.
(from dictionary.com)



Confused and Bewildered!!! Divorce causes confusion in the lives of children. They wonder if their parents ever loved one another and, if not, whether that means that they never loved them either. The very source of their identity crumbles before their eyes, and the two people who defined their very existence oftentimes can no longer stand to be in the same room together. Roles change, homes change, schools change and routines change. The chaos that is the life of the child of divorce leads to confusion which can lead to despair. They are left wondering what went wrong and why it ever had to happen in the first place. Divorce leaves children confused and with nowhere to turn for answers.



GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START

A lot of the confusion that kids ultimately feel about a divorce comes from a general lack of information. If you are getting a divorce, it is critical that you tell your kids in the best possible way to minimize their confusion. Here are some suggestions:

- ✓ Be certain that there is no chance of reconciliation before telling the kids.
- ✓ If at all possible, tell your kids together with your spouse and all at the same time.
- ✓ Discuss ahead of time with your spouse what and how you will tell the children.
- ✓ Be honest and forthright with your children. Do not try to dodge questions.
- ✓ Make sure your children understand that divorce is between a mom and dad and does not affect a parents' relationship with their children.
- ✓ Explain clearly why the divorce is happening (without using unnecessary or age inappropriate details) and make sure your children understand it is not their fault.
- ✓ Remain calm and avoid expressing feelings of anger, blame, guilt, etc.
- ✓ Encourage and answer any questions they might have.
- ✓ Be clear and specific about any changes that will happen in their lives.
- ✓ Respect their reactions and feelings when you break the news.
- ✓ Reassure children of your love and that it doesn't change because of the divorce.
- ✓ Give your children time to react and adjust to the news.

RECONCILING TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS

"Panic and confusion often result when children are expected to adopt their parents' differing values and lifestyles." ([Explaining Divorce to Children](#), Joyce Shriner)

Children from intact families rely on their parents to reconcile their differences and present a united front in raising the kids. That all changes when parents

get divorced. Children are left to work out the differences in parenting styles, rules, morals, expectations, consequences, and requirements. On top of all of the other changes going on in their lives, children of divorce must navigate the confusion of trying to reconcile their parents' now separate and different worlds.

Scripture References About Confusion

Ps. 23	Jn 8:31-32
Ps. 119:130	1 Cor 13:12
Prov. 20:24	2 Cor 4:8
Prov. 25:2	Phil. 4:8-9
Ecc. 11:5	2 Tm 2:7
Jer. 29:11	Heb 13:8
Luke 12:2	Jms. 1:5

