



## PREPARING FOR FATHER’S DAY WITH THE CHILD OF DIVORCE

By Linda Ranson Jacobs

06/11/2012

*“Can you believe he didn’t even come to his own granddaughter’s graduation?”*

With fire in her eyes my friend continued with,

*“He didn’t even bother to call or send a card. What’s wrong with a man like that?”*

This isn’t the first conversation we have had about her dad. As a grown woman what she really wants to know is,

- Why didn’t my dad love me enough to act like a dad?
- Why didn’t this man who is supposed to be my father stick around?
- Why doesn’t he call me to see how I’m doing?
- Why doesn’t he remember me on my birthday?



Why, why, why rings out in every holiday, anniversary and birthday conversation we have. And the most hurtful question of all and the one she repeats to me in agony is,

*“Why hasn’t he ever told me he loves me?”*

As Father’s Day approaches have you thought about how are you going to address the children in your group who don’t live with a dad?

Maybe, just maybe, if children’s church leaders address some of these issues today, the children won’t grow up and agonize over yesterday.

Recently I read a great Father’s Day lesson. I agree with everything this lesson said. It had some great games; well thought out lesson plan with scriptures about honoring our fathers. I mean it was really good. However, there was something missing. It did not accommodate the child who doesn’t have a father in the home.

What is the child who doesn’t live with their dad supposed to do on Father’s Day?

How can a child celebrate and honor a loving father when they don’t have one?

I’m not saying we should change how we approach the concept of Father’s Day. It is a day we should celebrate. It is good to honor our earthly fathers and we have a responsibility to tell children what the bible says about





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honoring our fathers. What I am saying is, stop and think a minute about how you are going to incorporate those children who don't have a father in the home.

### **Some ideas**

1. Find out in advance if the child will be visiting their father on Father's Day. If so perhaps you could have a simple card the child could color or write out a short message to their father. Have an envelope for the card and send it home the week before so the child can hand deliver it to their father. Many mothers are so hurt or mad that they can't or don't think about purchasing a Father's Day card.
2. Bring in a respected older gentleman from the church and allow him to serve as Christian Father for the day. For the child who doesn't live with their father or doesn't even know where their father is, pair up the child with the older gentleman for the day.
3. When you are talking about father traits and responsibilities ask the question, "If your father doesn't live with you, who do you call on to help you with your Scout projects?" (Or homework, soccer, etc.) This gives the child of divorce an opportunity to be included and feel part of the group. Include several comments about how God can become the father in your home when you don't have an earthly father living at home.

These are simple steps but they can produce huge pay offs for the child's future.

When I was talking with my friend, who was trying to cope with the fact that her dad didn't acknowledge her daughter's graduation, I shared with her a real life story about when I was leading a DC4K group. I was reading, "My Dad Forgot My Birthday!" one of the read aloud stories from the book, "Stories for Kids in Divorce". ([www.personalhelpstore.org/product.asp?sku=2169\\_DK4045](http://www.personalhelpstore.org/product.asp?sku=2169_DK4045))

In this story I read,

*"Your daddy did love you. He was just scared of being a dad. He didn't know how to be a dad and a husband. He said it was just too scary having all that responsibility. He didn't think....."*

...and about that time a fifth grade boy in the back of the group sat straight up. With wonderment he said,

*"So that's why my dad left. He didn't know how to be a dad. All this time I thought it was me. It's not me at all – it's him! He doesn't know how to be a dad."*

With that comment he relaxed his shoulders and let out the biggest sigh. With that one realization this kid's entire thought process for the future changed. It was remarkable the change in him.





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You may be thinking to yourself that you only have these kids for an hour or so once a week or every other week. You may wonder if you can make a difference. Yes, you can! It might be a comment you make. It might be that you think ahead about how to include the child of divorce on special days like Father's Day. It might be the concentrated effort you put into your prayer life when you remember to pray for the child of divorce.

It might be the hope that you give the child of divorce when you share there is a heavenly Father who loves them; who will never leave them; who will adopt the child of divorce into the family of God.

*"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:18*

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: 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. More great articles about how to successfully minister to the child of divorce in your church can be found at Linda's website [Healthy Loving Partnerships for Our Kids \(HLP4\) \[http://www.hlp4.com\]](http://www.hlp4.com). Linda also offers support, encouragement, and suggestions to help single parents and those working with single parent children. She can be reached by e-mail at [Linda@hlp4.com](mailto:Linda@hlp4.com).*

