

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AND THE CHILD OF DIVORCE

Page 1 of 2

*By Linda Ranson Jacobs*

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This week our church has had Vacation Bible School, or as it is known in church circles "VBS." Rooms throughout the church are decorated from top to bottom. Teachers have been trained. Supplies, snacks and treats are ready to go. Music videos have been practiced, and the gospel has been adequately presented. Every day kids come in with big smiles on their faces. They have laughed, danced, sung and shouted out the scriptures. As they leave each day we high five, do a fist bump and even hug many of them.

There has been one thing missing from our VBS though - there are very few children from divorced homes attending our VBS. I know these kids are in our community. After all, they are in every community. So, why aren't they at VBS? I imagine most of your VBS programs are experiencing a similar dilemma.

Have you taken time to check your registration forms to see what the family make up is for the kids attending your VBS? More than likely you'll discover that kids from divorced homes are largely missing. Why are there not more children from divorced families attending VBS nationwide? Have you ever wondered about it?

Years ago when I operated a child care in Oklahoma, I offered to transport children in our program to a local church for VBS. While the parents wanted their kids to attend VBS, they were working during the day and couldn't take off from work to get them to and from the church. The most appreciative parents were those of the kids in single parent homes. Many of these parents didn't attend church themselves, but they wanted their kids to go to VBS.

What a powerful experience it was for these parents on family night during VBS. For many of them, it was the first time in years they had entered a church. For some, it may have been the only time. The leaders made sure the parents felt welcomed. They complimented their kids, and they gingerly invited the parents to come back and visit.

In another church I attended in North Carolina, they had their VBS in the evening. They did this because they knew there were many children who wouldn't be able to attend if VBS was held during the day. Several kids



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Page 2 of 2

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from divorced homes were able to attend this VBS. Plus several of the single parents in our church got to volunteer.

No matter what time of the day or evening you have your VBS, please consider reaching out to the children in your area who come from divorced homes. You can ask the families in your church to think about a divorced family and consider offering to bring those children to VBS. Or, start a bus program and offer to pick up children from the neighborhood and bring them to and from VBS. If your VBS is during the day, work with day cares in your area to arrange to have them bring the children they watch after to your VBS.

The concepts and scriptures these kids are exposed to at a VBS can influence them for years. It is another way to demonstrate to the child of divorce that God loves them and that He will never leave them or forsake them. It's another opportunity to pour the scriptures into their active minds and their hearts. And, it is several hours during their week where they don't have to worry about what is going on between their parents. They can get caught up in the moment and the excitement of the day. You might say they get to experience another way of life, a peaceful, exciting and stress free life for their week in VBS.

Don't they deserve this opportunity to learn about our Savior?

Speaking about those in mourning Isaiah 61: 3b says:

*"...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair."*

*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).*

