

DEALING WITH THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON KIDS

A Guide to Dealing With Feelings of Loneliness

LONELINESS: affected with, characterized by, or causing a depressing feeling of being alone.
(from dictionary.com)

Scripture References About Loneliness

Gen 28:15	Jn 14:18
Dt 31:6-8	Jn 15:15
Ps 34:18	Jn 16:32
Ps 62:1	Rom 15:4
Ps 72:12	1 Cor 1:9
Pr 18:24	Heb 13:5
Is 54:10	Jm 4:4



LONELINESS...ONE IS THE LONELIEST NUMBER THAT YOU'LL EVER KNOW! If there is one thing that marks almost all children of divorce, it is a feeling of loneliness following the divorce of their parents. Numerous studies indicate that children of divorce experience loneliness significantly more than children from intact families. As parents become more and more focused on what is going on in their own lives, children are often left to “fend for themselves.” As families are forced to move following divorces, children of divorce change schools and neighborhoods, and quite often, the friends they have grown up with. As courts decide arbitrary custody arrangements, children lose access to grandparents and other extended families. The sum total of all it is an overwhelming sense of being alone.

What Can You Do

- ✓ Be available to talk
- ✓ Encourage them to talk about how they feel
- ✓ Assure the child that you will be there
- ✓ Spend time with the child
- ✓ Give them space to be alone when needed (don't be aggressive)
- ✓ Spend time with them
- ✓ Encourage them to reach out and serve others
- ✓ Get them engaged in physical activity

SYMPTOMS OF LONELINESS

Many times, loneliness manifests itself in what might otherwise seem unrelated. If a child exhibits any of the following characteristics, consider whether or not the root cause might be that the child feels all alone.

- Unusual demands for attention from parents and others
- Constantly smiling to try keep the peace between their parents
- Withdrawal from family and friends / Spending lots of time alone
- Anger or acting out in order to gain attention
- Getting in fights or excessive arguments
- Excessive clowning around or goofing off
- Denial of reality or nostalgia for the “good old days”
- A need to overachieve to gain acceptance

A NOTE FOR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

A 2009 study * found the level of loneliness in children of divorce does not decrease with an increase in visitation with the noncustodial parent.

“If there is any single experience the unites children of divorce it is our feeling of loneliness as children. One of the most striking and far-reaching findings of the national survey is that just over a tenth of young people from intact families can identify with the experience ‘I was alone a lot as a child,’ whereas close to half of us from divorced families can. That’s an extraordinary threefold difference.” Elizabeth Marquardt Between Two Worlds



Divorce Ministry 4 KIDS

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* SOURCE: Civitci, Civitci, Asim, and Fiyakali, “Loneliness and Life Satisfaction in Adolescents with Divorced and Non-Divorced Parents.” Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice 9, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 513–525.