



CASTING OUR NETS WIDER

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By Linda Ranson Jacobs

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In the story in Luke 5:1-7 the fishermen had been fishing all night and they were not successful in catching fish. Jesus told the fishermen to go back out in their boat and cast their nets again. Thankfully the fishermen listened to Jesus and did what he proposed. When they listened and acted on what Jesus said they filled their nets so full the nets began to break.

There are children in every community that are feeling the effect of divorce. Children and church leaders might not realize these children are there because they are only looking in one place – inside

their church walls. For the majority of children of divorce you are not going to find them in the church. We've got to look outside the walls of our church. We must:

“Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.” (verse 4)

In the U.S. the average percentage of children living in single parent homes is 35%. Some states, especially in the southern states, that percentage goes as high as 47%. There is some research that shows only 42% of teens 14 through 18 years of age live in their original two-parent birth family. What hope do all these children have if they aren't exposed to Christian principals and to the love of the Lord?

Children are hard wired at birth to believe in a loving God. When parents divorce, unless one of the parents continues to take the child to church, the child is helpless to attend on their own. After a divorce many families stop attending their local church. This means another transition for the child. Not only do they lose their original family but they lose their church family also.

In the report “Does the Shape of Family Shape Faith,” we read,

“Children of divorce experience a disruption of the ‘domestic church’ of their home. ... With their parents, children pray at meals or bedtime, read stories, and ask questions about the nature of God and the meaning of life. In homes, they celebrate religious holidays and sacraments and participate in family traditions. When divorce affects families, these practices can be more difficult to maintain.”



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All of this says that churches must reach out to the child of divorce and the children in single parent homes. We must cast our nets deeper. Jesus knows there are children of divorce in every community. He knows these children are hurting and desperate for kind and loving people of God to find them. He also knows if we don't reach them and do it quickly that the world will reach them.

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. Linda offers support, encouragement and suggestions to help those working with the child of divorce. She serves as DC4K Ambassador (<http://www.dc4k.org>) and can be reached via email at ljacobs@dc4k.org.

Free articles and devotions for single parent families in your church can be found at Linda's website Healthy Loving Partnerships for Our Kids (<http://www.hlp4.com>).