



USING MUSIC TO SOOTH THE SOUL OF CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

Page 1 of 3

By Linda Ranson Jacobs

03/01/2013



When working with the child of divorce many people make the mistake of thinking these children are always sad, angry or confused. We forget that they are still children who want to laugh, run, jump, play and laugh. We tend to forget they need normal childhood activities.

Children will grieve in spurts, and they will take breaks in the grieving process. Divorce is a long grieving process, and for some children research shows it make take up to ten years to truly process the divorce of their parents. There are many things we can do to help these children during the shock part of the process and also during the longer grieving period.

One idea is to use music to help these children. We know from the many popular praise and worship songs that many people truly worship

through music. Sometimes a tune or melody can remind us of happier times in our life. Or it can help us get through rough patches. For years I have said that music has the ability to soothe the soul. This is never truer than when working with the child of divorce.

Because most of these children live high stress lives, music can be used to lessen or relieve some of that stress. Music can have a positive impact on a person's mood, and it can actually alleviate depression in some people.

One way to lessen stress is to have kids listen to music that is set to 60 beats a minute. This is the normal heart-resting rate. Use this type of music when children are entering your group or class. Once kids are calm you can boost up the beat, rhythm and tempo creating an excitement to the class. Get the kids moving and in their movements teach them to cross from one side of their body to the other side. Cross lateral and cross midline movements will stimulate their brain so thinking and processing information will come easier.

Research in studying the brain and how music affects the brain is revealing some interesting data. We now have reason to believe that musical harmonies actually have the capacity to rewire the brain, creating connections between different regions of the brain.





USING MUSIC TO SOOTH THE SOUL OF CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

Page 2 of 3

By Linda Ranson Jacobs

03/01/2013

Some research shows that listening to music can boost memory, attention and learning. I'm fully convinced that anything you want to teach a child can be taught through music.

Other ways music helps the child of divorce:

- Music can convey important ideas and concepts.
- It can relay messages children might not otherwise hear.
- As pathways in the brain become secure, the children will crave the music.
- Music can be lively or soulful.

Anchors and Sails, an online newsletter from Canada by Bev Smith, tells about three studies on the effects of singing. They have concluded that singing:

- Reduces pain perception
- Facilitates deep breathing
- Increases energy and confidence
- Reduces stress and depression
- Improves posture and the immune system

Dr. Grenville Hancock performed a study of members of the Canterbury Christ Church University College choir (Canterbury, England), found that

- 87% benefited socially
- 49% reported spiritual benefit
- 75% reported emotional benefit
- 58% reported improved lung function, improved mood and reduced stress

The Senior Singers' Chorale at Levine School of Music in Washington, D.C., found that among those singers over 55,

- Their voices did not age as quickly.
- Their legs hurt less.
- They had better posture.
- They had better breathing than those their age who did not sing.



USING MUSIC TO SOOTH THE SOUL OF CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

Page 3 of 3

By Linda Ranson Jacobs

03/01/2013

A research group at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany, studied secretions of the stress hormone cortisol among choir members on days they sang and on days they only listened to singing. On “singing days” stress hormone levels were reduced.

When ministering to and working with the child of divorce, don’t we want to reduce their stress hormone levels?

Music is powerful. Music is honoring. Music is contagious. Music is empowering. Music brings joy to our hearts. Music draws us closer to God and that is where we want to bring the child of divorce – closer to the Heavenly Father and to a relationship with Jesus Christ.

It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High. (Psalm 92:1)

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>).