



CELEBRATE SINGLE PARENTS ON SINGLE PARENT DAY

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By Linda Ranson Jacobs

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Single parents are hard working people. Basically they are doing the job of two people. This is especially true if there has been a death in the family or if there is no other parent on the scene. They could be parenting alone due to death, desertion or a never married situation.

Sometimes the other parent will live in another part of the country or they have no interest in staying connected to their child. Other single parents who are divorced share custody with the other parent. Even though they share custody, having the sole responsibility in your own home is still difficult.

Single Parent Day is March 21st. This day doesn't get as much attention as the regular Mother's Day or Father's Day and yet it is a very important day for many single parents.

According to Jennifer Wolf on [About.com Single Parents](http://About.com/Single-Parents) this day is set aside for "honoring the single parent who is basically doing double duty" and "giving them some respect." She says the idea for this day started back in 1984.



For years I had no idea there was a national "Single Parent Day". When I heard about it I went to the church I was in and asked if they could celebrate the single parents when March 21st fell on a Sunday. I was met with rejection and questioning of "Why would we want to celebrate people who are divorced?" Let alone that not every divorcing single parent wants a divorce. It only takes one person to get a divorce in this day and age. And also what about the single parent that is parenting alone because their spouse died?

Over the years I've thought long and hard about the attitude that particular church had. I believe things have changed over the years and church ministers and leaders have a better attitude toward single parents. I know this is not the case in many churches because I run into church leaders who still don't recognize that single parents need the local church. When one in three children in the U. S. lives in a single parent home, it is time to recognize the importance of supporting this population. That equates to more than 14 million parents raising their children alone. And most of them do it outside the church and without a church family.

It takes gumption, fortitude, energy, dignity, courage, guts, nerve, strength, grit, stamina, determination and staying power to survive parenting alone. I know. I did it myself. My children were 8 and 12 when their dad left. Today they are wonderful adults contributing to our society and raising children of their own. My daughter is a Master Sergeant in the Air Force. Two years ago she was deployed to Afghanistan. She served her time there with dignity and honor for our country. My son is a doctor in Denton, TX. Both are married.



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While every single parent can celebrate Mother's Day or Father's Day, many times they are not with their children on those special days. For many single parents those days are hurtful days. I know for myself Mother's Day was the one day out of the entire year that I dreaded the most. I remember more than one Mother's Day sitting in church totally alone and standing in the church parking lot watching happy families head out to celebrate the mother in the family at a local restaurant

Why not celebrate a single parent you know on March 21st. You can do this by:

- Give them a call and thank them for raising their children alone
- Hand them a card that says, "Thank You" or "Happy Single Parent Day" (you may have make up your own card)
- Hand them a gift certificate for a local fast food place or nice restaurant
- Take them out for lunch this Sunday (even though SPD is Friday, most will be very happy with a celebration on Sunday)
- Send them a plant or bunch of flowers
- Hand them a rose or carnation at church this Sunday
- Offer to take the kids for a day so the single mom or dad can have a day to himself or herself. Many single parents are on 24/7 with no help and no break.

Get creative and think of a way you can celebrate the life of a single parent in your church. Share your idea with the rest of us in the comment section.

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. You can find additional articles from Linda on her blog at <http://blog.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>).