

Family Legacy Institute

Tools For Families Building Godly Legacies

Ten Tips For Handling The Children After Divorce

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Psychologists used to believe that children were malleable, flexible, and more easily processed the hurdles inherent in divorce and remarriage. That assumption has been completely disproven. We now know that it takes children far longer to process their parents' divorce, than it takes adults. And quick remarriage makes things even more complex and difficult for children, even if they sorely miss your ex-spouse.

So here are ten short tips for you to ponder, regarding your children, if you are divorcing or divorced. Each of these tips could represent a chapter in a book. The fact that we've compressed them into four or five lines doesn't mean they're inconsequential. We encourage you to think about each item, and form a written plan as to how you will choose to handle each tip.

We suggest you write your plan down so that you can better remember it, especially during times of stress.

1. Never use the children against one another. This only serves to damage the kids, and escalate the tension between spouses. The more that parents use their children as "rag dolls" to bash one another during the divorcing process, the more damage it will cause the children, and the longer it will take for children to heal.
2. Be extremely cautious in saying anything about the reasons for divorce. Each parent naturally wants their kids to see the divorce from their perspective. But most often the kids really don't want to know why the divorce happened. Most often the kids are grieving about the end of their family system, and to dump a load of dirt onto their other parent is almost the same as dumping that load directly onto the kids.
3. Because the children's self-esteem and identity is tied to both parents, be aware that when you lash out at your ex-spouse in the kids' presence, you are harming them too. No matter how angry or hurt you may be, take the high road when around your kids. Don't play the victim role; don't dump; don't accuse or blame.
4. Encourage the children's ongoing contact with each parent. After all, the children's identities are tied up in both parents, not just one. To the very best of your ability,