

# DIVORCE: SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION

## **Small Group Activity (5 Minutes)**

**Divide the class in half. Ask them to come up with three reasons why people get divorced, and three ways divorce could be prevented. Briefly share answers after 3 minutes, but don't get into a big discussion.**

## **SHOW THE VIDEO (16 Minutes)**

## **Small Group Questions (10 Minutes - 5 per group, assign 3 or 4 questions)**

1. How has divorce affected you or a friend?
2. How do you feel about your parents?
3. What do divorced parents do to try to "buy" the favor of their children (like buying lots of gifts or maybe not being strict with their kids when they come to visit)?
4. Do you think you were part of the reason your parents divorced? Why?
5. Have you ever told your parents how their divorce has affected you?
6. Why is it important for you to forgive your parents?
7. How do you look at marriage for your own life? Are you pessimistic or cynical, or just determined to make it work?
8. How can you support a friend whose parents are divorced?

## **Group Activity (10 Minutes)**

**Share what students said about having divorced parents, Then ask why it is important to forgive our parents. Forgiving others is an important part of getting rid of anger, living your life, and moving on.**

## **Share the following facts with the class and ask for their comments:**

- Most children of divorced parents end up divorced themselves. Oftentimes the children stick with bad relationships because they are determined to make them work (not like their parents, who failed). Once they get married and find they are unhappy, they have children, which makes them happy for a little while. Then the relationship gets so bad they decide to divorce, and the cycle continues.
- Children of divorced parents tend to either date excessively and become very physical (they look for love and the intimacy they lacked in the home) or they don't date at all (skeptical of relationships). Many also have a hard time relating to a boyfriend or girlfriend on more than a superficial level.

# DIVORCE: WRAP-UP

## **DIVORCE IS YOUR PARENTS' CHOICE; IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT!**

- Your feelings of anger and loss, "maybe it's my fault", wishing it were different, etc. are real and normal. Divorce is no fun and it hurts!

## **DIVORCE IS AFFECTING YOU!**

- Divorce can seriously affect your ability to have a healthy relationship with a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- It affects your outlook on life, marriage, and family in a negative way.

## **YOU CAN'T CHANGE YOUR PARENTS OR BRING THEM BACK TOGETHER.**

- You can't change your situation but you can change your attitude. Think about having a new attitude where you can have sympathy for each of your parents. They didn't get married so that they could get divorced. They both are hurting!
- Talk to a friend, teacher, school counselor, youth leader, or professional counselor about how you feel. You need to work it out with someone who will listen and help. Find a mom or dad "substitute" and talk it over with them.

## **YOU'VE GOT TO DEAL WITH IT.**

- Share your feelings with your parents (together, if possible). Write them a letter stating how you feel about them and their divorce. Start the letter with kind words, like "I just want both of you to know I really love you and appreciate all you have done for me..."

## **BE A GOOD LISTENER. ENCOURAGE A FRIEND WHO IS AFFECTED BY DIVORCE.**

- Let them know you care about them by just listening.
- Try to be positive; don't make them feel worse by being negative.
- If you feel you can't help them with their attitude, encourage them to talk to a counselor, youth leader, or other adult who might be able to help them.

# HOMework: DIVORCE

## **HOMework Project: The Impact of Divorce**

**Using a notebook to record responses, interview several people who have parents that have been through a divorce. Consider the following questions:**

1. What was your role in the divorce? (divorcee, child from a divorced family, adult child from a divorced family)
2. What were the causes of the divorce? (adultery, money, drugs/alcohol, etc.)
3. What changes and effects has divorce had on your life and the people close to you?
4. What has been helpful for you in coping and recovering from those changes?
5. How has your opinion of marriage changed because of the divorce?
6. In what way would you like other people to support or help you?

**Now, report on your findings and include at least the following questions in the form of a two to four page paper:**

1. How does divorce affect a teenager in terms of their feelings of security?
2. What common theme is there in the causes of divorce?
3. How do the attitudes about marriage differ between those who have experienced divorce in their family and those who haven't?
4. What impact is divorce having on society overall?

## **HOMework Project: Divorce Resource**

**Search through a telephone book and make a list of groups and organizations that help young people deal with divorce, such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, counselors, etc. Choose three places and interview a staff member from each organization. Use the following questions and record their responses in a notebook.**

1. What services do you provide to help young people deal with divorce?
2. What does a teen deal with emotionally when the parents get divorced?
3. Are children in some way responsible for the divorce?
4. What are the main reasons why people get divorced?
5. How can a teenager help a friend who is feeling the bad effects of a divorce?

**Write a paper about your findings. Include common themes of causes of divorce, as well as what role teenagers play in a divorce. Offer ways you can help someone who is affected by divorce, and conclude with your ideas on how divorce can be avoided.**