

ENCOUNTERS THAT HEAL: SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH DIVORCE OR SEPARATION

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The apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesian church that they are to “speak the truth in love” so that they may grow and mature in Christ ([Ephesians 4:15](#)). This can be quite the daunting task as we seek to support our children through separation and divorce. With truth comes the risk of conflict and pain, and making it seem easier to hold back from sharing with one another. But when we can work through painful family struggles, we and our children may grow in faith and be built up in love.



Informing children about a separation or divorce is a particularly uncomfortable and painful conversation, especially for them. As kids adjust to the upcoming changes, they may begin to experience an influx of emotions that they may not be able to verbalize. In fact, we may even observe behavior that may indicate difficulty adjusting. So how do we encourage our children to speak the truth in love so that they may process through their struggles and thrive? Where do we begin in having these difficult conversations?

1. **Lead by example:** We can easily read [1 Corinthians 13](#) as a laundry list of what love is and what it is not, but it goes far deeper than that. It not only provides a beautiful illustration of what love is, but also of *how* to love and how to *be*. We are to be patient. We are to be kind. We are to rejoice in the truth. By demonstrating these aspects of love toward ourselves and our children, we model for them that it is safe to be honest and to give and receive love.
2. **Teach them about emotions:** Children may find it difficult to identify their emotions. When teaching about emotions, it is important to normalize them and teach children how their feelings can be appropriately managed. Movies such as “Inside Out” do a great job of depicting various emotions in ways kids can usually relate. This can provide them comfort and reassurance that enables them to feel safer expressing and sharing their feelings with you in the future.
3. **Be quick to listen:** The wisdom of [James 1:19](#) to “be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry” is exceptionally useful in helping a child share their emotions effectively. It can be easy to get frustrated when a child acts out or is having difficulty expressing themselves. Be sure to encourage openness and allow them to share when they are ready. Your support and empathy is vital in their journey toward healing.

Speaking the truth in love can be challenging, but as you live out the way of love within your family, you can begin to heal and strengthen your relationship as you continue to grow and mature in Christ.

Want to dig deeper? Check out Family Fire's article "[Speaking the Truth in Love](#)"

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