



# Support for the Single Parent

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## Our Aim

- Frame up unique challenges of single parenting.
- Consider how a single parent can navigate these challenges.
- Identify support that can be offered in these situations.

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## Unique Challenges

Single parenting can come in many different forms.

**Consider challenges in following areas:**

- Emotional (fear, anger, guilt, grief)
- Relational (changes, perspectives, conflict, isolation)
- Spiritual (presence of God in suffering, brokenness)
- Physical / Financial (fatigue, time, funds)

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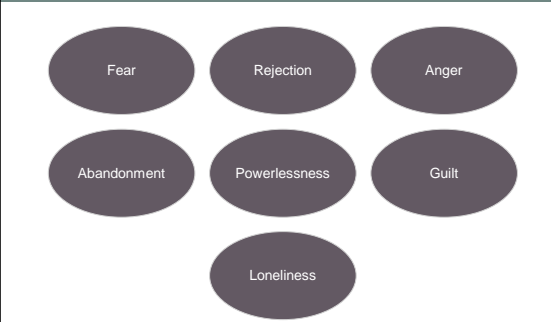
## Navigating Single Parenting

- Focus on being a mother or father.
  - Challenge the pull to be a “big sister”, “buddy”, or “entertainer.”
  - Let go of what you are not and turn toward what you can influence.
- Let your child be a child.
  - Don’t force to take on parental role (or arbitrator role).
- Be open and honest with your child.
  - Use the framework of the Gospel.
  - Don’t talk bad about your former spouse in front of your children.
- Recall good things from the past and talk about them.
  - Minimize disruptions in areas that offer a child safety and security.
- Notice how your child is adjusting through transitions.

Adapted from Growing Through Divorce (1995) - Smoke

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## Common Feelings for Children in Single Parent Situations



- Fear
- Rejection
- Anger
- Abandonment
- Powerlessness
- Guilt
- Loneliness

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## Stewarding Fears in Children



- Abandonment – “my parents are leaving me alone.”
  - Listen and allow the venting of feelings.
  - Provide assurance.
  - Keep promises.
- Self-Blame – “This was all my fault.”
  - Regularly emphasize your love.
  - Teach about disappointment.

Adapted from When The View Breaks (1993) - Kissel

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## Stewarding Fears in Children

- Peer Pressure: "What will my friends say?"
  - Find opportunities for appropriate sharing.
  - Keep open communication with teachers.
- Anxiety about the Future: "What will happen to me now?"
  - Share in advance the plans of care for the child.
  - Seek age-appropriate involvement of the child.
  - Keep family traditions and rituals.

Adapted from When The View Breaks (1993) - Kroskram

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## Supporting Single Parenting

- Support their personal stewardship
  - Think emotional, relational, spiritual, and physical aspects
  - Consider that needs will change based on stages of transition and life.
- Coach them on:
  - Validation
  - Acceptance
  - Speaking truth to self
  - Expectations and Reality
  - Asking for help/support
  - Rest

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## Questions for a Single Parent to Consider

<u>Who am I now?</u>	<u>Where am I going?</u>
<u>How will I get there?</u>	<u>Who will help me?</u>

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