

# Mommy and Daddy are Getting a Divorce

■ by Anne Mirza (Lockwood), MSW, LCSW

MOMMY AND DADDY JUST TOLD ME THEY'RE GETTING A DIVORCE. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT A DIVORCE WAS. MOMMY SAID IT MEANS THAT THEY AREN'T GOING TO BE MARRIED ANYMORE AND THAT DADDY ISN'T GOING TO LIVE IN MY HOUSE.



I DON'T LIKE DIVORCE.  
CAN MOMMY AND DADDY DIVORCE ME?

I asked them why they have to divorce and if that happens to all Mommys and Daddies. They said that they don't love each other anymore. Will they stop loving me too? Daddy says it will be better for me because I won't have to hear them arguing anymore, but I don't mind, I just want Daddy here. They didn't say it, but I know they get mad when I don't do what I'm supposed to. Maybe that's why they have to get divorced. I told Daddy I would be really good and I wouldn't do any of the bad things that I get in trouble for if he would just stay and live with us. It didn't make him stay.

I don't like divorce. My tummy started hurting yesterday and I don't really feel like playing with my friends at school anymore. I also hit a girl in my class yesterday when she took my hula hoop. I didn't used to do that, but I'm just mad a lot now. Mommy punished me when she picked me up from school. She said I shouldn't hit. I'm trying really hard to be good so Mommy and Daddy will break their divorce, but I just have so much mad in me that it's really hard. When I went to sleep that night I had a very bad dream and even wet the bed. This happens a lot now. It didn't used to before. I don't like divorce.

I don't see Daddy very much now. Daddy said I wouldn't have to hear him and Mommy argue anymore when they got a divorce, but now I hear them on the phone. I don't think Mommy knows I can hear it, but I know they are yelling. I'm trying hard to make my brother be good so that they stop arguing, but he won't listen to me so sometimes I have to hit him to get him to listen. Mommy always reminds me I shouldn't hit, but all that yuck is still inside me and nothing is going my way. Mommy also says that God doesn't want us to say things if they aren't nice, but Mommy and Daddy say mean things about each other so they don't follow their own rule. My Sunday School teacher told me God doesn't like divorce either. Why didn't Mommy and Daddy listen to God? Does that mean I don't have to either? I told my brother that I'm never getting married because I'm never getting a divorce. I don't like divorce.

Daddy brought me to somebody called a therapist today. I just called her Anne, though. She was ok, I guess. Daddy says I should talk to her about my feelings, but Mommy and Daddy don't talk about their feelings. Why should I? Anne has a lot of toys in her office and I like that because that means I don't have to talk about my feelings if I don't want to. She says I can show her my feelings with the toys and games too. Anne asked me to draw a picture of what I want, so I drew my family together and me getting hugs from my Mommy and Daddy. I told Anne that nobody in the picture was scared that their Mommy and Daddy wouldn't love them anymore and nobody was yelling or being mean. She said that she wants to work with God to try to help my picture come true even if Mommy and Daddy are divorced. Anne said that she is going to talk to Mommy and Daddy too so they can help me with my feelings and my tummy aches. Maybe she'll talk to them about their feelings too. I don't like divorce, but maybe it won't always feel quite this way, maybe God will make it better. ■

*This letter, written from the perspective of a child, demonstrates some of the typical behavioral and emotional responses experienced by children during a divorce. Parents are often confused or overwhelmed by the changes observed in their child during or after a divorce. This letter is intended to assist parents entering into a divorce to understand how to be aware of their child's responses and to partner with them in the family's healing process.*

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