

# **FOCIS**

## **Focus On Children In Separation**

FOCIS is a 4 hour seminar about the needs of children during and after the separation or divorce of their parents. The seminar is conducted by professionals with expertise in the areas of divorce and co-parenting. The effects of divorce on children can be negative and potentially long-term if they are not given the opportunity to discuss their feelings and thoughts regarding the change in family dynamics. Children in a separated family must master an additional set of tasks, as well as those posed by normal childhood development. This seminar educates parents as to options they can utilize to help their children adjust and teaches children coping skills to handle these additional tasks.

### **PROGRAM OBJECTIVE**

The 4 hour seminar teaches parents and children positive ways to cope with the formidable challenges divorce brings to a family.

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

FOCIS is a course for parents and their children ages 5 - 17 who are involved in a divorce proceeding where there are issues involving custody/visitation. Participants attend a four-hour session presented in two 2-hour segments.

### **LOCATION:**

FOCIS classes are located at the Church of the Nazarene, Ocean Springs, MS

Directions from I-10: Take exit 57 on I-10 and turn south on highway 57. Take the first left. Follow curve to left, then take the first right. The Church of the Nazarene is at the end of the street.

Directions from Highway 90: Turn north on highway 57. Pass the Exxon station on the right. Take the first right. Follow curve to left, then take the first right. The Church of the Nazarene is at the end of the street.

### **PRE-REGISTER:**

For registration call MS. Thomas at 228-522-1965. You must pre-register to take the FOCIS class.

### **FEE:**

The cost is \$40 per parent (children are free). You must register at least 48 hours prior to the class. Pre-enrollment is required. Upon completion the FOCIS instructor will award you an attendance certificate. If you are court ordered you must forward a copy of the attendance certificate to the Court for filing.

### **The Benefits of FOCIS:**

1. Decreasing future litigation, court costs, and time.
2. Reducing the risk of adolescent drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and school dropout issues that can accompany a teenager caught in the middle of adult issues that many children and teens do not initially understand.
3. Increasing the likelihood of long term positive future relationships for parents and children.
4. Improves the adjustment period for child and parent during the separation/divorce.

**Goals of FOCIS:** Divorce is a very painful experience for everyone involved. However; children can develop problems that can follow them into their adult years. Studies suggest that the conflict between parents causes more pain and stress for children than the actual divorce.

1. To provide parents with practical information and skills which will help them support their. Children's emotional well-being during and after the transition of divorce.
2. To create a better understanding of how conflict between parents creates stress for children and ways to decrease the conflict.
3. To give children coping skills as they experience the divorce/separation of their parents.

### **Seminar Schedule:**

This is a 4 hour seminar. Classes are held on Monday and Tuesday nights from 6:30 – 8:30 pm. Please call our office for a schedule of upcoming classes. Arrive 15 minutes before class begins. Your registration and payment must be completed before class begins. No one will be admitted late due to the disruption and delay this causes.

If you do not attend as scheduled, you must re-register for the next available class. Parents have their own class. Children and youth have their own class. Both classes meet at the same time and in the same building. If you are court ordered give the Court a copy of your certificate so the judge is aware and has evidence that you completed the FOCIS seminar has required.

### **A Child's Bill of Rights in a Divorce**

1. To be told that my mother and father still love me and will never divorce me.

2. To be told that the divorce is not my fault and not be told about the adult problems that caused it.
3. To be considered as a human being and not considered as another piece of property to be fought for, bargained over, or threatened.
4. To have decisions about me based on what is in my best interests, not on past wrongs, hurt feelings, or my parent's needs.
5. To be allowed to love both my father and my mother without being forced to choose or feel guilty.
6. To know both my father and mother through regular and frequent involvement in my life.
7. To have the financial support of both my father and my mother.
8. To be spared hearing bad, hurtful comments about either of my parents which have no useful purpose.
9. To be a child and not to be asked to tell a lie or act as a spy or messenger.
10. To be allowed to have affection for the people who may come into my life without being forced to choose or feel guilty.

### **Frequently asked Questions regarding FOCIS**

#### **Who takes this class?**

Parents who are divorcing, separating, or petitioning for child related issues.

Their children ages 6-17.

Although it is court-mandated for most parents that attend, anyone may register for this class.

#### **Can I show up for the seminar or do I need to register?**

You must pre-register to attend the seminar.

**I live in another county/state, will this class work?** We allow anyone to take the class. Whether or not it will meet the requirements outside of Jackson, George or Greene

Counties of Mississippi is up to your county's court. We encourage you to get an OK from the court before registering.

**What do my children do at the seminar?** Children learn coping tasks to assist them in dealing with their parents divorcing/separating.. Children are taught in a separate room by a trained professional.

**How many classes do I need to take?** This four-hour seminar satisfies the court requirement.

**What is the cost for the FOCIS Seminar?** The cost per adult is \$40.00. There is no fee for your child to attend.

**Why does my child need to attend?** The seminar gives children and youth healthy and vital coping skills in dealing with the separation/divorce of their parents.

**For questions regarding FOCIS call Ms. Thomas at 228-522-1965 Monday, Tuesday or Thursday's from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm.**

**FOCIS is sponsored by the Jackson County Community Services Coalition**