



Building Stepfamilies That Work®

The Candle Story Exercise

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Title: The Candle Story
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Applications:

- 1) This demonstration is very helpful to use with a child who is feeling “dethroned”, or that one of his/her (step)siblings is loved more than he/she is.
- 2) The author believes that the technique is effective because it addresses the subconscious beliefs that underlie the child’s misbehaviour.
- 3) Just hearing the story is a powerful intervention for anyone (child or adult) who is worried that there may not be enough love to go around.

Suggestions:

- 1) Read the story over.
- 2) Then decide if you are:
 - a) simply going to tell the story to the person who needs to hear it, or
 - b) do the demonstration with them.
- 3) Modify the narrative to fit the circumstances.

The Candle Story:

Find four candles: one to represent you, one for your husband, one for your son, and one for your daughter. Wait until your daughter is asleep and sit down at the table with your son, the candles, candle holders, and a match. Tell him the following story:

These candles represent our family. (Pick up the Mommy candle.) This is the Mommy candle. (Light the candle.) This flame represents my love. (Pick up the Daddy candle and light that candle from the Mommy candle.) When I married your Daddy, I gave him all my love, AND I still have all my love left. (Put the Daddy candle in a candle holder and then pick up the candle for your son and light it from the Mommy candle.) When you were born I gave you all my love, and Daddy still has all my love, and I still have all my love left. (Put his candle in a candle holder, pick up the baby candle and light it from the Mommy candle.) When your sister was born, I gave her all my love. You still have all my love, Daddy still has all my love, and I still have all my love left, because that is the way love is. (Put the baby candle and the Mommy candle in candle holders.) Now look at all the bright light we have in our family with all this love.

Children are usually very impressed with this demonstration. You might even blow out all the candles except his and help him light the other candles so he can see how he can give his love away and still have it.

Precautions:

- 1) Make sure the candles and matches are returned to a safe location after the demonstration.
- 2) If the child enquires about your love for his/her absent biological parent, say: "That is an important part of my love for you."

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