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## **“Father of the Year”**

by  
Cara Walter

- What** In this sweet and endearing monologue, a single father gives his acceptance speech after receiving an award naming him the Father of the Year.
- Themes: Parenthood, Death of a spouse, Father’s Day, Monologue
- Who** Dad—(40’s), widower and single father of 3 children
- When** Present
- Costumes and Props** Business casual attire  
Podium or microphone on stand  
Small “award” (certificate, medal, plaque, or trophy)
- Why** Exodus 20:12, Ephesians 6:4
- How** Played for realism, Dad is alternately surprised, humbled, and moved as he accepts his award and tells his story at a community event. The actor will occasionally find and speak directly to his daughter, Amy, sitting in the audience. He should take his time with realistic reactions and discoveries, enjoying the moments of lighthearted humor, alongside the tender memories of loss. Throughout the speech we can see that he is a man of integrity who loves his children; work to find the genuine smile of hope among clouded memories that used to bring despair.
- Time** Approximately 3 minutes

*Dad holds up the award to study it, and then bringing it down to his side (or placing it on a podium), he faces the audience and begins speaking into the microphone.*

**Dad:** Uh... I'm stunned. Father of the Year—*(sigh)* uh... Thank you for this honor... I don't think I deserve it; but I am very proud of my daughter, Amy, and her award-winning essay. *(gesturing to the award)* Thank you for this, Sweetheart. It means the world to me, coming from you.

Really... this is so unexpected. I was told I was coming tonight to represent one-parent households and to share my thoughts on being a single dad... but this? Wow.

I can't say being a single parent has been a picnic, not by a long shot. I lost my wife, Gayle, 2 years ago after a three-year battle with cancer. She was my everything... I couldn't understand how God could take her from me... I almost gave up on church for good. *(small smile)* But then Bobby really wanted to be a shepherd boy in the pageant, and Jason insisted on going to summer youth group... If it weren't for my kids, I don't know if I'd even be here today. But they needed me, and it turns out, I needed them more... *(looking up to God)* Thank you for not giving up on me.

When parents find themselves single again, whether it's through death or divorce, it feels like you're walking a minefield. You're in pain, the kids are hurting, and there's a hole in the household that has to be filled somehow. I really don't know how we made it through the first year. Jason was 14, Amy was 12, and Bobby had just turned 7. On the upside, they were old enough to learn some new chores and they were willing to pitch in. On the downside, they were also old enough to witness their mother dying and we all had a lot of... I was angry... Jason started cutting school... it was really tough...

Then there was the learning curve. I can't remember how many shirts I ruined in the laundry—shrinking, staining, scorching—you name it, I did it. It also didn't help that the only two things I knew how to cook were spaghetti and pancakes. We must have gone through a couple of gallons of maple syrup and Ragu sauce in that first month alone. And don't even get me started on Bobby's "Happy Meal" toy collection!

The biggest surprise though, came when I started getting nasty calls from bill collectors. I just didn't make the connection. Gayle had also always paid our bills, managed our books, and organized our taxes. The single Dad has to be everybody... mom, dad, cook, housekeeper, gardener, handyman, homework helper, nurse, accountant, birthday party planner—guess who forgot to order the cake for Bobby's 8th birthday?

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Still, as hard as it's been, my kids and I have grown a lot closer. I always tried to be there for my kids: I coached Jason's little league team, drove Amy to dance lessons and camped out in the backyard with Bobby so he could get his tiger cub patch. We've started praying together too, and it's helped...a lot. But ever since Gayle's death, my kids and I really talk. I listen better, and they share more. I don't always understand them. Amy especially confuses me these days, but I guess as she wrote in her essay, "things will be better than ever once we both get through puberty." Jason's driving now and has become quite a chef, and Bobby is an animal lover who enjoys reading and drawing cartoons.

I'm very proud of my kids; they're cool people. I'm their dad first, yes, but I'm also glad to be their friend.

*Lights out.*