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## 'Tis The Season



*'Tis the season to  
celebrate Fathers (June 19)!  
But let's also remember  
those "Dads" who may not  
Be fathers but still leave a  
loving imprint on a child's heart.*

**Happy Dad's Day**  
By Matthew E. Morgan

*"Happy Father's Day to the Best Dad in the World."*

I smile as I open the card and read the cute punch line. The bright, inquisitive eyes of my children seem to expect praise for their mother's thoughtfulness. "Thank you Bob and Tilly," I say, using that slow deliberate manner in which one speaks to a two-year old. I pet their heads, scratch behind their ears and set bowls full of food on the ground for each of them.

Don't call children's services. My "children" are my cats, and every year my wife buys me a Father's Day card from them, helping fill the yearly void. My wife and I cannot have children due to biological reasons. Since we are not independently wealthy, we cannot adopt. Thus we, like many other couples, simply plod onwards, dealing with the absence in our hearts.

One of the best bandages I know is a reminder that not every father is truly a "Dad." A father is the name on the birth certificate. "Dad" is the name a child calls just before the villain from the movie he was not supposed to watch breaks through the window in his nightmare to hurt him.

A father pays money to support his child. Dad takes the children out back and throws a ball to them until his arm falls off – or until the grounder pops up and hits his son quite uncomfortably.

A father may even write his children letters. But Dad holds his daughter in his arms after Mr. Single-Digit-IQ dumps her. And Dad never says, though he is thinking, "I told you so."

I have come to terms with the fact that I may never be a father, and I know I'm not the only one. But all of us men can be Dads in one form or another. So here is a "Happy Dad's Day" to the unique Dads out there.

### **BIG BROTHER DAD**

Happy Dad's Day to the mentor. Boys need you – a strong role model to whom they can ask questions or express themselves. The mentor, having passed some of the scarier points of his life, helps the younger man through awkward times, answering the frightful question, "Is it normal when...?"

Thank you for working with local boys' programs, scout troops, or youth groups. You may not be the wild and crazy teenager anymore, but by being yourself and being real, you connect with children and youth.



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#### UNCLE DAD

Happy Dad's Day to the man who spends time with his nieces and nephews. Sure, they have a great dad (you have to say that about your brother), but a pair of "dads" deals a lot more damage. Thank you for giving up your precious weekends to get to know your family better: hiking, fishing or pelting them with paintballs.

#### JUNGLE GYM DAD

Happy Dad's Day to the man bravely stepping into the world's most dangerous arena – children's ministry. Typically, women run the children's ministry – especially in smaller churches. The jungle gym Dad stays out of their way, but allows the children to run around him, jump over him, and climb up him as he bravely sacrifices slacks, shirts, and shins.

#### WORKING DAD

Happy Dad's Day to the mentoring Dad who understands that youth learn their skills from others. He helps the young man interested in his field, taking a little extra time to teach the younger man how to change the oil, light the grill, or change the router bit. The Working Dad knows every minute is an investment in the future life of a young man.

I'm not minimizing you biological fathers at all – Happy Father's Day to you! Make sure you thank the ones who brought you here – your children. But for those who have taken the different road to Dad-hood, thank you. And Happy Dad Day!

Matthew E. Morgan works as an automation systems programmer while volunteering as a youth pastor for a small church. He and his wife, Martha, are protected nightly by Bob the Watch-Cat and kept warm by Tilly the Needy-Cat. You can write to Matthew through the Letters' page of this magazine.

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