

Room in her heart

by Susan Anderson

Lisa Eades never imagined that, at 40, she'd be sitting with her new baby in the auditorium at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., watching older daughter Brooke sing on stage. They made the trip last month with the Casper Children's Chorale.

Imagine the double joy of holding your "late-in life" gift, while seeing the blossoming of your 10-year-old.

But Lisa, who has experienced an extra dose of the wonder of motherhood, has also been to a place no parent ever wants to go.

Five and one-half years ago, she had just learned that her 9-year-old son, Jason, had a brain stem tumor, that he probably wouldn't survive the year.

And he didn't.

So, as she celebrates Mother's Day with her husband Rocky, Brooke and 3-month-old daughter Skylar, she will also mark another day without Jason.

Who is she thinking of on this holiday for moms?

Brooke and Skylar — and Jason, of course.

"When you lose a child, you think about that every day," she says.

She also thinks about "the other mothers and their families who have lost children to brain tumors and other kinds of cancer."

She and Rocky saw what it cost their family to fight to save Jason, then watch him die.

"When a child dies, part of our heart dies," says Lisa. "The emptiness you feel sucks out your strength and consumes every emotion. There is an inability to make even the simplest decisions.

"Tears fall constantly and unexpectedly. Sleep is impossible. The body is weak."

Statistics fill out the picture of how tough it is.

Lisa says that within two years of losing a child, three out of four married couples divorce. Half of the parents have a serious illness.

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Lisa Eades with daughters Brooke (right) and Skylar (in her arms).