

ParentLife Magazine(November 2003)

Celebrate Adoption

Few can claim the privilege of having received direct orders from the President of the United States. But every year the President issues a proclamation declaring November as National Adoption Month. The President calls on Americans to observe this month with programs and activities to honor adoptive families and participate in efforts to find permanent homes for waiting children.

People in the adoption arena are making valiant efforts to carry forth this proclamation by suggesting activities that celebrate adoption. Take this opportunity to celebrate the gift God has given you.

Ways to Celebrate

Try the following ways to celebrate your child's adoption:

- Create yearly rituals to honor his adoption. You may travel to a special place, cook a special meal, or donate time together helping others.
- Let her celebrate her native culture. Read books about the child's culture. Prepare ethnic meals.
- Create a "life book" that tells of God's special plan for making you a family. Include everyone's story in the book.
- Look at Web sites about adoption and pray that God will provide the right families for the featured children.
- Pray together, being open to the fact that God may be calling your family to adopt.

Talk with Your Child

No matter how you decide to celebrate your child's adoption, let him know how much you love him and how thankful you are that God brought you together as a family.

Give your child the opportunity to express his feelings. Some times of celebration surrounding the act of adoption evoke perplexing thoughts within adopted children. These

are not to be taken as unthankful statements but natural thoughts as your child wonders about his birth family.

For example, it is okay for your child to say, “I am so happy that I have a forever family, but I am sad that I lost my birth family.”

Your child may verbalize these feelings, but often children do not. Therefore, the following are some steps you can take to be sensitive to what your child is feeling:

(1) Celebrate adoption collectively as a family rather than singling out adoptees. Use the opportunity to celebrate your family, not just one part of it. Let the entire family enjoy a variety of ethnic meals.

(2) In larger settings, be mindful that your child may not always want it disclosed that he is an adoptee. Some parents may go to their child’s school and make a presentation on adoption without taking into account their child’s feelings about being singled out as an adopted child.

(3) Make decisions to honor adoption as a family. Involve your adopted child fully in the planning of events. Be sensitive to his feelings by asking questions:

- What does it make you think about when we talk about celebrating your adoption?
- Would you like me to prepare a meal like those from your homeland?
- How would you feel about making a “life book” together?