

¡Viva la adopción!

A Guide to Adoption for
Hispanic Christians and
Their Congregations



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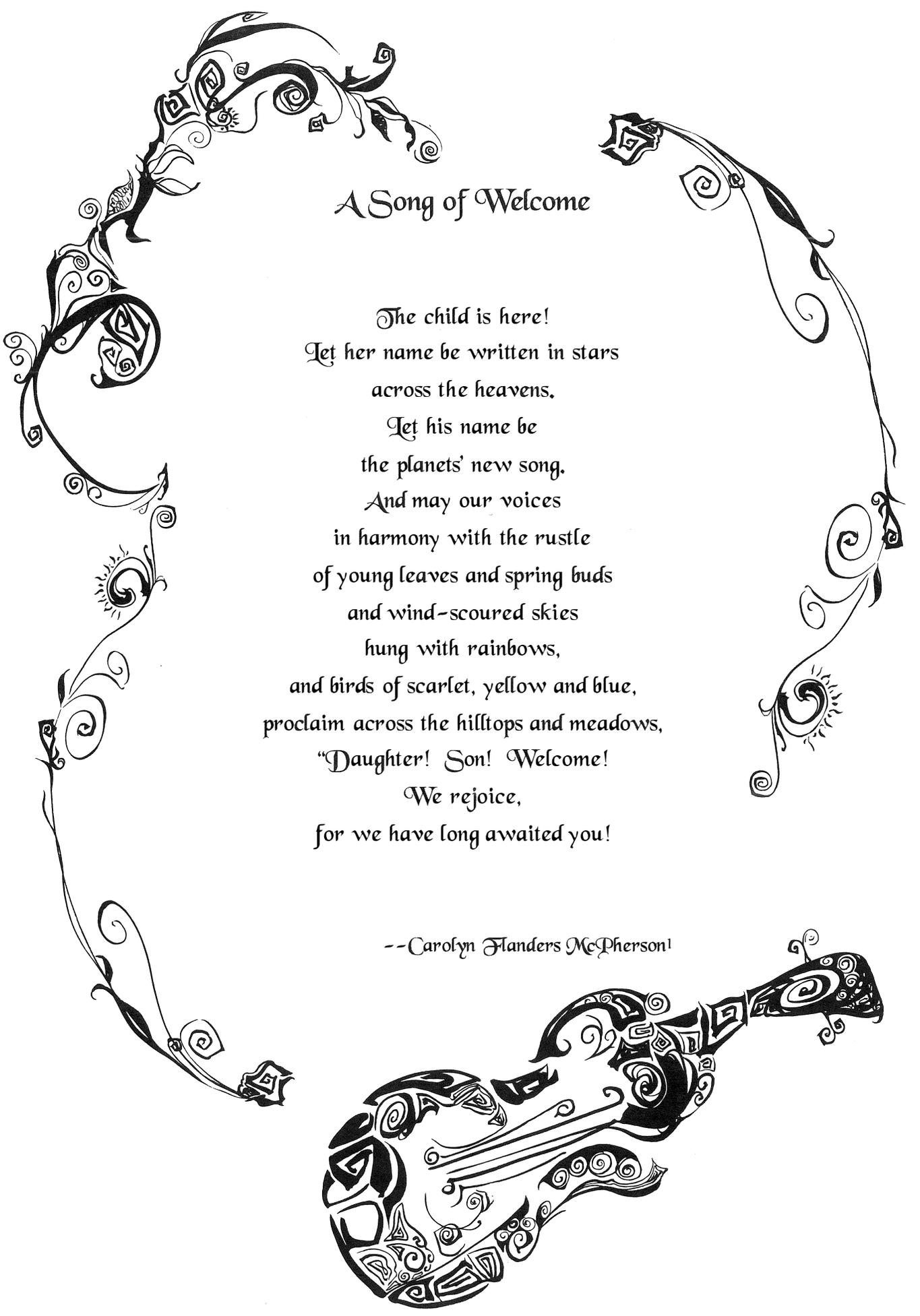
Table of Contents

What Is This Guidebook About?	2
The Changing Face of Adoption	2
Adoption Is Different--and Beautiful!	6
Adoption Is Different	6
Adoption is Beautiful	7
The Blessedness of Adoption	9
Let's Share the Joy	11
Ceremonies for Celebrating Adoption	21
Adoption-Friendly Language	22
Resources for Further Study and Support	23

Notes

Acknowledgments





A Song of Welcome

The child is here!
Let her name be written in stars
across the heavens,
Let his name be
the planets' new song.
And may our voices
in harmony with the rustle
of young leaves and spring buds
and wind-scoured skies
hung with rainbows,
and birds of scarlet, yellow and blue,
proclaim across the hilltops and meadows,
"Daughter! Son! Welcome!
We rejoice,
for we have long awaited you!"

--Carolyn Flanders McPherson!





What Is This Guidebook About?

This is a guidebook about adoption for Hispanic Christians. It is not intended to be an exhaustive study of adoption: there are hundreds of fine books and articles available to the reader with a general interest in the subject.

Rather, this is an introduction to adoption as it touches Hispanic Christians today. Those of us contemplating adoption, those of us who have already adopted, and those of us who wish to encourage and support someone who is adopting: this guidebook is for all of us.



The Changing Face of Adoption

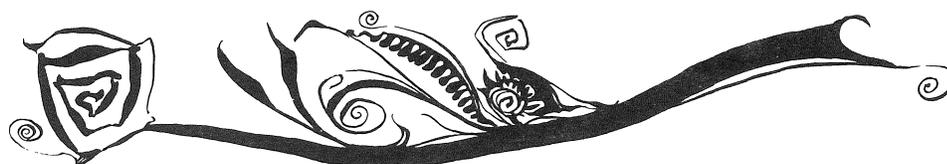
Informal adoption has existed for generations in the Hispanic community and is proof of our strong sense of family unity and our devotion to our children. Whether we are of Mexican-American, Mexican, Central or South American or Caribbean roots--whether we call ourselves "Latino," "Hispanic," members of "la raza" or any other term--most of us know children raised by their grandparents, tías or tíos, madrinas or padrinos.

These children's birth parents may have been unable to take care of them. There may have been trouble at home. Perhaps a couple with many children offered one of their children to a childless couple. Or perhaps a child was found living on the streets. Whatever the reason, the Hispanic community has responded with generous, committed people ready to be caregivers. Through informal adoption, the child can grow up in a family setting and be blessed with a sense of family continuity.

Sadly, sometimes those involved in an informal adoption have problems. It may be not be clear, for example, what the responsibilities of each of the participants are. The birth parents, foster parents, and the child may suffer anxieties and apprehensions

because of their situation's informality. The birth parents may wonder: "Am I part of my child's life or not?" The foster parents may find they are afraid to dedicate themselves emotionally to the child because of the uncertainty of their arrangement. They may worry: "When will they come to take her back?" The child may crave permanence, may ask: "Just who IS my father? And who IS my mother?"

Other, legal, difficulties may arise. As more than one observer has noted, the United States is "un país de papeles"--a country of papers--and complicated paperwork. Most people, for example, do not realize that, without the required legal documents, it is usually impossible for a padrino to enroll a child in school or for a grandmother to get emergency medical treatment for her grandchild. Travel abroad without legal adoption documents for the child may be difficult--even impossible. Then legal guardianship or formalized legal adoption may be necessary.



Formalized legal adoption has not been popular in the Hispanic community, and for a variety of reasons. Some experts believe there is a deep-seated prejudice against adoption in our community, and that adoption is not openly discussed, but rather clouded in secrecy and shame. Because of this stigma surrounding formal adoption, a teenaged mother may strongly oppose giving up her baby for adoption, even when she knows she is unable to care for her child. And because of this stigma, birth parents will sometimes hold on to a child even when it is not in the child's best interests.

Formalized, legal adoption is a legitimate, loving option that must be openly discussed by all of us committed to the well-being of our children. We must support those generous birth parents who make the difficult decision to give their child into the care of others. We must help children already living in this country achieve legal residency and citizenship. We must help families achieve permanence. We must also re-examine our views about adoption, and work to overcome the shame, prejudice, and negative language we so often see associated with adoption.

Is it difficult to adopt? In the United States, adoption is usually easy for a relative or friend who already has custody of a child with the parents' permission. But formal legal adoption for those seeking to adopt an unrelated child has changed dramatically in the last few years, creating difficulties for those hoping to build a family. Once the would-be adoptive parent has overcome personal issues of embarrassment, shame, prejudice or concerns about the weighty responsibilities adoption entails, he or she is likely to find that in many parts of this country there are few babies of Hispanic heritage available.

Yet there *are* many, many children waiting to be adopted, children in need of good caring homes. These may be biracial children, infants and toddlers born in other countries, older children, and children with special needs: abused and neglected children, children with disabilities, children whose behavior is challenging, and groups of siblings. These children may be in the custody of social services agencies or international or local adoption agencies. See page 23 for the names of several adoption resources.

Adoption offers all of us--adoptive parents, family, friends, teachers, congregation and community members--a marvelous opportunity to open our hearts and our lives to children with a wide variety of capabilities and backgrounds as we create permanent, loving families.

Piececitos

Piececitos de niño,
azulosos de frío,
¡como os ven y no os cubren,
Dios mío!

¡Piececitos heridos
por los guijarros todos,
ultrajados de nieves



Little Feet

Little feet of children
blue with cold,

y todos!

El hombre ciego ignora
por que donde pasáis
una flor de luz viva
dejáis;

que allí donde ponéis
la plantita sangrante,
el nardo nace más
fragrante.

Sed, puesto que marcháis
por los caminos rectos,
heroicos como sois
perfectos.

Piececitos de niño,
dos joyitas sufrientes,
¡cómo pasan sin veros
las gentes!

--Gabriela Mistral²



How can they see you and
not cover you--
dear God!

Little wounded feet
cut by every stone,
hurt by snow
and mire.

Man, blind, does not know
that where you pass,
you leave a flower
of living light.

And where you set
your little bleeding feet
the spikenard blooms
more fragrant.

Walking straight paths,
be heroic, little feet,
as you are
perfect.

Little feet of children,
two tiny suffering jewels,
how can people pass
and not see you!

--Translated by
Doris Dana



Adoption Is Different--and Beautiful!

Adopting a child is not the same as giving birth to a child. Yet adoption is a beautiful opportunity to build a family while fulfilling the Lord's instruction to "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18) by finding families for children who are without.

Adoption Is Different



People adopt for many reasons. They may long to be parents but find themselves unable to conceive. They may have a health problem that makes pregnancy ill-advised or dangerous. They may be motivated by a desire to provide a family for one of the world's children in need. They may be single and wish to experience the joys of parenthood.

How is adoption different from giving birth? First, many people who wish to adopt are infertile. As Michael Gold writes in *And Hannah Wept*, for many people "childlessness is like a death."³ Nowhere in any language has the pain of infertility been more movingly portrayed than in Federico García Lorca's classic play *Yerma*: "Yo soy como un campo seco," Yerma says: "I am like a parched field." Few bystanders with birth children understand the medical struggles, the sense of trying and failing, the feeling of inadequacy, the shame, and the shattered dreams of motherhood or fatherhood many who are infertile experience, or how important it is to mourn this loss before healing can occur.

For whatever reason people decide to adopt, adopting is different from giving birth in a second important way: hopeful parents can be "expectant" for years. They will

be subjected to personal questions and intense scrutiny that may seem invasive. They may feel they have lost control over their lives as they await the actions and judgments of others. A few may encounter rejection because they are Hispanic.

Those who adopt often have anxieties birth parents do not. Birth parents rarely ask themselves, "Will my child like me?" Adoptive parents often do. They may worry, too, about their child's life before he or she joined their family. "Did our child suffer traumatic experiences? Am I equal to this challenge? Can I have an impact on this child?"

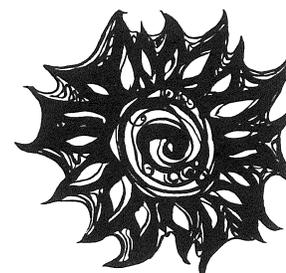
Adoption differs from giving birth in another exceedingly important way: adoptees begin their lives with other parents, their birth parents. This means that adopted children may have roots quite unlike those of their adoptive parents, including different race, ethnic background, heredity, ability and experience.

In later life, adoptees and their birth parents sometimes seek each other out. This does not mean the adoptee was dissatisfied with his or her adoptive family. Rather, it is usually a natural facet of the search that human beings have conducted throughout the ages, striving to learn "Who am I?"

Truly understanding the life-long experience we call adoption requires that we understand there are *four* parties to every adoption: the child, the birth parents, the adoptive parents, and the community. All four will have many questions. Even if the child was in the birth parents' care for only a brief time, he or she will inevitably wonder: "Why couldn't my birth parents keep me?" The birth parents will wonder: "Whatever happened to my child?" The adoptive parents will ask themselves, "How will I cope with the unknown?" Finally, the community will ask, "How can we help?"



Adoption Is Beautiful



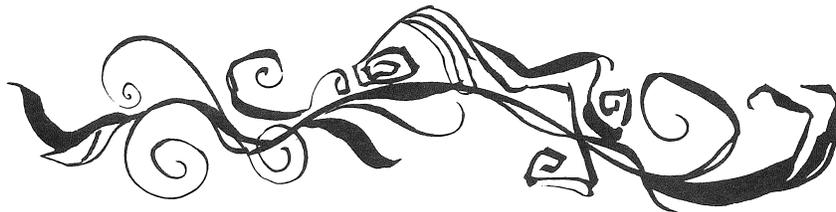
Parenthood, like all of life, has its high and low moments, its sorrow and its jubilation.

Listen to families talk about their adoption experiences. Again and again you will hear: "Adoption? Adoption is wonderful!" Parents will tell you: "We were so scared about being parents. But the day we brought Ana home was the happiest day of our lives." And: "My parents were cool to the idea of our adopting at first--Daniel's father wasn't Mexican--but now they adore him!" And: "Whatever you have to go through to adopt, it's worth it!" And, as an adoptee says, "I love my family. I never wanted to live with anyone else."

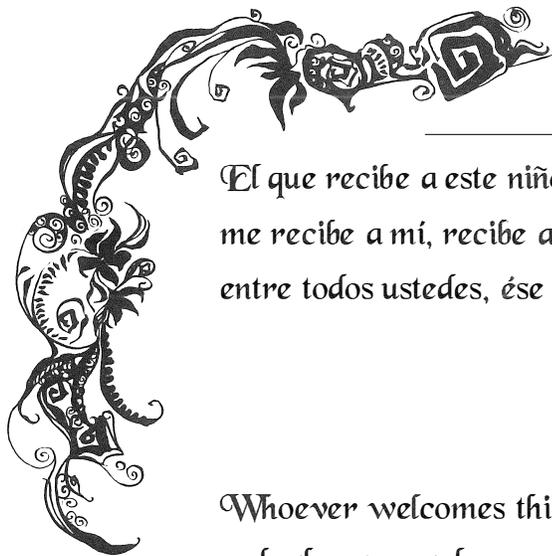
During every stage of adoption--from the moment the first thought of adoption enters the parent's awareness to the moment the child's adoption is finalized--and in the years beyond--family and friends will be an invaluable support if we are aware of and sensitive to adoption's uniqueness, complexities and joys.

As long as there are children in need of homes, and loving homes in need of children, adoption should be encouraged as an act of piety and love.

--Daniel Shevitz⁴



The Blessedness of Adoption

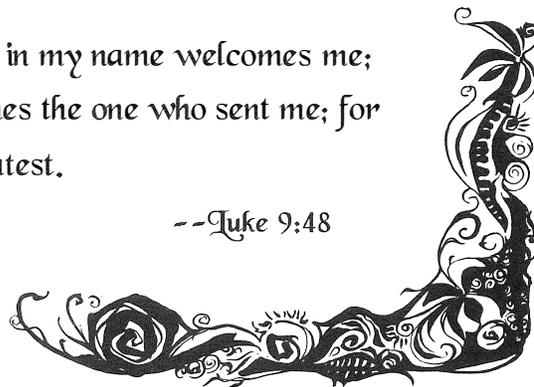


El que recibe a este niño en mi nombre, me recibe a mí, y el que me recibe a mí, recibe al que me envió; porque el más pequeño entre todos ustedes, ése es el más grande.

--Lucas 9:48

Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest.

--Luke 9:48



The blessedness of adoption in the Christian world springs from the long-standing Biblical principle that we must care for widows and orphans, from our belief in our sacred obligation to children, and from the Spirit of Adoption described in the New Testament.

Texts in both the Old and New Testaments make countless references to our responsibility to all God's children. Christ Himself says: "...Y el que recibe en mi nombre a un niño como éste, a mí me recibe"--"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." (Matthew 18:5)

He also says: "Dejen a esos niños, y no les impidan que vengan a mí; porque el Reino de los Cielos es de los que se asemejan a los niños"--"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." (Matthew 19:14)

Jesus's family is a model for our understanding of adoption. Scripture tells us that Jesus is not Joseph's biological child. Yet because Joseph names Jesus and raises Him, Joseph *is* Jesus's father. The Bible never qualifies Joseph's role as a parent. It never makes distinctions (as we do, all too often, in the modern world) between Jesus's "real" father and his "adoptive" father. Joseph is Jesus's true father, and is referred to as such.

The New Testament makes it very clear that our relationship with God is an adoptive relationship. As it is written in Romans 8:15: "Ustedes no recibieron un espíritu de esclavos para volver al temor, sino el Espíritu que nos hace hijos adoptivos, y en todo tiempo llamamos: ¡Abba!, o sea: ¡Papito!" ("For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry out 'Abba! Father!' it is that very spirit bearing witness. . . .") God has freely chosen us, and He welcomes us as His own true children.

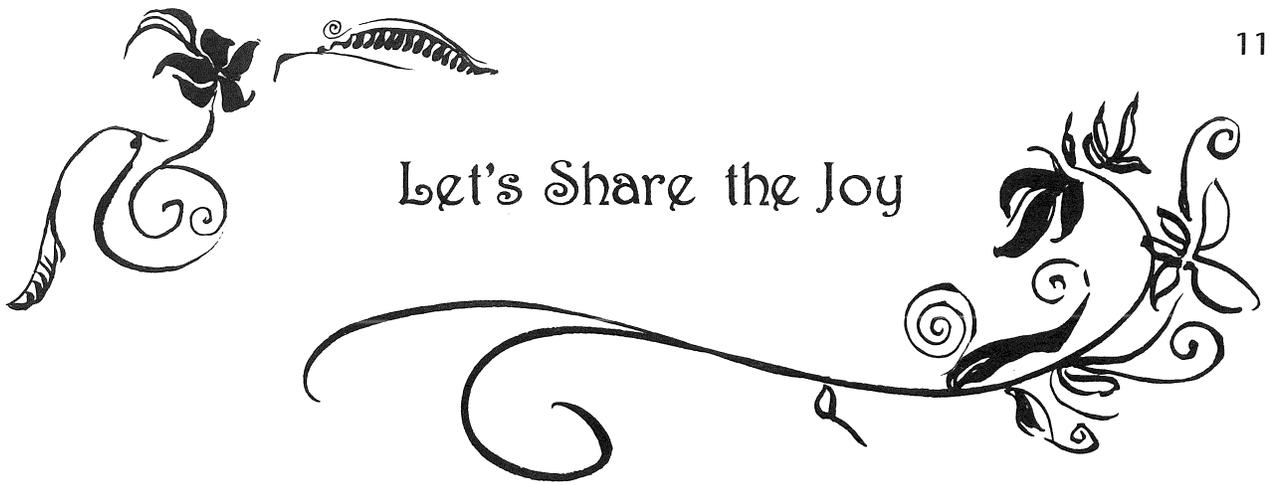
Other quotations from the New Testament reveal that, as God's adopted children, we are in a position of privilege: "Pero, cuando llegó la plenitud de los tiempos, Dios envió a su Hijo, el cual nació de mujer y fue sometido a la Ley, con el fin de rescatar a los que estaban sometidos a la Ley, para que así llegáramos a ser hijos adoptivos de Dios"-- "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive adoption as children." (Galatians 4:4-5)

Families are the social foundation of Christianity and our Hispanic way of life; children who need families are a community responsibility. In our modern world, this responsibility for helping children without parents goes beyond geographic boundaries. "Our children" may be born in any country around the globe.

Just as our understanding of geographic boundaries has changed, so has our use of the word "orphan." In ancient times, when most women had no independent source of income and were viewed as needing a man's care, "orphan" often meant a child without a father, even though the child's mother was living.

Today we rarely use the term because most children who are available for adoption have parents who are living, but unable to care for them. For those children who need families, and those families who need children, adoption is a joyous prospect and a blessing indeed.





It takes a whole village to raise a child.

--Traditional proverb

Children are our community's most precious treasure. The arrival of a child, whether by birth or adoption, is the occasion for our interest, encouragement, support, help and our unbounded joy.

Here are 17 ways we can support and celebrate adopting families. Let's begin our support from the moment the parents decide to adopt.

1. Let's show we understand.

The wait for a child can last years and be extremely stressful. Those who experience difficulties and disappointments deserve our encouragement and our support in their wish to be parents.



2. When the child arrives, let's be welcoming.

The arrival of an adopted child should be accompanied by rejoicing, not embarrassment or silence. Let's be "greeters." Let's wish the family and their new child "¡Felicitaciones!" and "¡Bienvenido!"

As one adoptive parent writes, "Nothing meant as much to my children as the moments of celebrated welcoming: being welcomed into a Church community, being welcomed into several of their parents' family and friend groups through a variety of showers, being welcomed into the neighborhood community, being welcomed into the school, being welcomed into the Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts. More recently they have been welcomed into baseball and softball teams."⁵

3. Appreciate the family.

We need to show the adopting family we value them as they are--that we consider an adoptive family to be every bit as real and important as a birth family.

Sometimes the public, and even professionals, ask, "Who are the real parents?" *Real parents* are the people who love and raise the child.

4. Encourage celebration.

Let's celebrate the arrival of the child by planning or helping with a joyous occasion: a baptism, adoption party or a neighborhood get-together--or several of these! Some families will choose to create unique adoption ceremonies that include adoption literature, poetry or songs.

For several examples, see page 21.



5. Give gifts.

Bring the newly adopted child a welcoming present just as we would a newborn birth child or make a donation to a charity in the child's name.

6. Offer help.

Having a new person in a family can be exhausting. Let's make specific offers of help: "What would be the best day for mowing your lawn?" "May I bring you dinner Wednesday night?"

7. Offer respite.

Most families will appreciate offers of respite: “Why don’t you two go out to dinner? I’ll give your María Gabriela her supper and then we’ll go to the library.”

8. Offer emotional support.

After the arrival of their new child, it is natural for parents to experience ambivalence, doubt, worry, and the strains any new family situation—even a happy one—can create. If the child has a disability, anxieties about being an effective parent may be magnified.

Ask the parent, “How are you doing today?” Even when we imagine we have nothing to offer in the way of useful suggestions, our willingness to listen, encourage, and problem-solve with the new parent will be invaluable support.

9. Be patient.

Families take time to develop. Before the adoption, the children and parents were traveling different paths. Eventually those paths will merge. Especially when older children are adopted, we need to have realistic expectations about the time, effort and enormous commitment such family-building takes.





Will My Lullaby

Will my
lullaby
sing you to sleep,
small one?
Your first tunes
were jungle rains,
shifting sands,
snow sweeping across
frozen plains,
whispering bamboo:
melodies to
soothe you.
Will my song, too?

--Carolyn Flanders McPherson⁶

10. Offer spiritual support.

As one adoptive parent expressed it, "Adoption is a powerfully divine experience."⁷

Adoption often challenges people to think about the spiritual. They may ask, "What is God's will? Why have I suffered? What are my goals? Are these things compatible? If 'God helps those who help themselves,' what actions should I take? Am I equal to this responsibility?"

Our willingness to discuss ethical and spiritual issues will help our family and friends sort through these important spiritual considerations, to distinguish between life's trials and God's blessings.

Oración al ángel guardián

*Ángel de Dios
 mi amado guardián
 cuyo amor me protege.
 No me desampares
 ni de noche
 ni de día.
 Ilumíname
 cuidame
 guíame.
 Amén.*

--Tradicional

Prayer to the Guardian Angel

*Angel of God,
 my beloved guardian
 whose love protects me.
 Do not forsake me
 either by day
 or by night.
 Shine on me,
 care for me,
 guide me.
 Amen.*

--Traditional

11. Share life experiences.

Let's talk honestly about the challenges--our doubts and questions--as well as the joys of parenthood. New parents may find it comforting to be reminded that, in the endeavor called parenting, we all start as amateurs!

*And God saw we were not able to let our children go.
And so God created teenagers.⁸*



12. Be adoption sensitive.

Life events--baptism, First Communion, Christmas, Mother's Day, a quinceañera, a birthday, the anniversary of the adoption finalization--even drawing a family tree in school--may raise a variety of emotions in families created by adoption. We need to be understanding and adaptable, allowing the child, for example, to talk--or be silent--about diverse life experiences and their significance.

13. Use adoption-friendly language.

Adoption often touches sensitive areas, including infertility's pain and its disappointment, and anxieties about adoption. We need to avoid expressions that stigmatize or negatively label adoption. Adoption is a wonderful opportunity, not an unfortunate last resort.

Sometimes we thoughtlessly ask, "Who are the *real* parents?" Parents who raise and love their children are the child's real parents. We also need to remember that the

correct name for a person who adopts is “father” or “mother,” not “guardian,” “foster parent” or “stepparent.”

For a brief list of adoption-friendly phrases we can use and teach others, see page 22.



14. Get involved.

Let's be aware of and sensitive to adoptive families and their needs. We can, for example, help them find or organize adoption support groups for parents, younger children, teens or the entire community.

15. Become adoption literate.

Much has been written about the adoption experience. We can all become better informed on this important and beautiful way to care for our children.

A brief list of resources for further study and support begins on page 23.

16. Let's begin an “adoption celebration chain.”

Let's share adoption information and resources. Let's talk to family, friends and acquaintances about the value, beauty, and holiness of adoption, and encourage them to speak to others. Our excitement can be contagious. The negative view some hold of adoption will vanish in the face of our enthusiasm!

17. We must encourage our community leaders.

We must encourage community leaders--our priests, ministers, church boards, principals, teachers, scoutmasters, lawmakers and judges--to promote the understanding and integration of adopted children into the church, classroom, and neighborhood.

Let's encourage our schools and churches to acquire books and other resources about adoption. Let's help them understand that seemingly ordinary events, such as drawing a family tree in school or celebrating a birthday, may raise painful issues for the child and family. We need to promote understanding and adaptability that will allow adopted children to talk--or be silent--about their diverse life experiences and their significance.

Let's become advocates for adoption. We must raise the sensitivity of our community leaders and urge them to overcome misunderstandings, stereotyping and negative labeling.

18. Let's stay supportive.

Adoption is a life-long process. We must stay involved. Difficulties *can* arise in adoptive families, just as they arise in biological families, at any time of life. It is natural, for example, for children to question their parents or their adoption, and this can be exceedingly painful.

Most of life's difficulties can be dealt with if we become more knowledgeable about an adversity, learn coping skills, and give and receive emotional support. Hispanic families are uniquely equipped to face such problems because our tradition is based on strong family unity.



*¡Qué bueno y agradable
cuando viven juntos los hermanos!*

Salmo 133

*How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!*

Psalm 133



Ceremonies for Celebrating Adoption

There is rich diversity in the way we celebrate life's events, and we can choose the kind of celebration and the degree of ethnic flavor we find most comfortable and meaningful. Celebrating an adoption can take place in the church, the courtroom or in the home, as the parents and family prefer.

Some new adoptive parents feel their adoption finalization is a strictly legalistic proceeding, rather like signing a contract. Others feel an adoption resembles the sacrament of marriage and will choose to make some religious observance or commemoration of the event. Most parents find that adopting is a powerful turning point in their lives and want to celebrate it as they would any memorable occasion.

The possibilities for celebrating an adoption are endless. Adoption-sensitive judges are usually delighted to permit a courtroom ceremony, complete with cameras and videotaping. One couple created an original adoption ceremony and used poems from *Perspectives on a Grafted Tree*, edited by Patricia Irwin Johnston and containing many beautiful poems about adoption. (For information about ordering this book, see page 25.) Others might celebrate in their church with prayers, a reading and a blessing.



Adoption celebrations . . . have another, pedagogic function: to educate one's friends and family about the source of blessing, the occasion for pride, and the opportunity for holiness that attends an adoption.

Daniel Shevitz⁹



Adoption-Friendly Language

It's easy to lapse into phrases that are hurtful, that speak negatively of adopted children or that ignore the adopting parents' worry and pain.

It is not impolite for us to correct people who use negative language. And when we ourselves use adoption-friendly language, we help others learn and understand. As one adult adoptee says, "All I want is for our community to be sensitive to adoption."

Examples of phrases to avoid:

Too bad they couldn't have children of their own!

It's amazing how often women get pregnant after they adopt. Maybe that will happen!

The baby doesn't *look* Latino!

They're so brave (or wonderful or crazy). My friends adopted, and they had a dreadful experience with that child. . . .

Of course, they'll have to expect less from their adopted child than if he was *really* theirs.

What happened to their real parents?

How could you be sure you'd love them?

Examples of adoption-friendly phrases to use:

Their child (instead of "their adopted child")

The child's biological (or birth) parents (instead of "the real parents")

A child from abroad (instead of "a foreign child")

A child with special needs (instead of "a handicapped child" or "a retarded child")

The parent (instead of "adoptive parent," "stepparent," "foster parent" or "guardian")



Resources for Further Study and Support:

(This is only a partial listing and does not constitute an endorsement of any agency named.)

1.

Contact RESOLVE, Inc., a group that offers counseling and referral services for those dealing with infertility. They can direct you to the nearest local chapter.

RESOLVE
1310 Broadway
Somerville, Massachusetts 02144-1731
phone: (617) 623-0744

2.

Consult *The Adoption Resource Book* by Lois Gilman, (HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 1992), one of the most detailed and complete compilations available to those interested in every facet of adoption.

3.

In Michigan, those seeking specifically Christian adoption services can contact:

Adventist Adoption Agency (will work with other faiths, as long as the couple
are both of the same faith)
8903 US Highway 31
Berrien Springs, MI 49103
(616) 471-2221

Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries
214 North Mill Street
St. Louis, MI 48880
(517) 681-2171 or
(800) 29-ADOPT



Bethany Christian Services
901 Eastern Avenue, NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 459-6273 (Corporate office; they can refer you
to a nearby branch office)

Catholic Social Services (many branches;
call local directory assistance for the
nearest office)

Christian Cradle
416 Frandor, Suite 205
Lansing, MI 48912
(517) 351-7500

Christian Family Services (for Protestants)
17105 West Twelve Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48076
(313) 557-8390

Lutheran Adoption Service
21700 Northwestern Highway
Suite 1490
Southfield, MI 48075
(313) 423-2770

Lutheran Social Services
135 West Washington
Marquette, MI 49855
(906) 226-7410

Methodist Children's Home Society
26645 West 6 Mile Road
Detroit, MI 48240
(313) 531-1044



4.

There are a number of agencies that specialize in international adoptions:

Americans for International Aid and Adoption
877 South Adams
Birmingham, MI 48009
(313) 645-2211

Bethany Christian Services
901 Eastern Avenue, NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 459-6273 (Corporate office; they can refer you
to a nearby branch office)

Latin America Parents Association (LAPA)
PO Box 339
Brooklyn NY 11234
(718) 236-8689



5.

Read *Reflections on a Grafted Tree*, an anthology of many beautiful poems about adoption. The anthology is published by Perspectives Press, PO Box 90318, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46290-0318, and is copyright 1983.

6.

Contact the National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption (Spaulding for Children). The National Resource Center offers advice, resource materials and training regarding children with special needs.

National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption
16250 Northland Drive
Suite 120
Southfield, MI 48075
phone: (313) 443-7080

7.

Contact one of the major American centers for adoption information. Among them are:

NACAC
1821 University Avenue West N-498
St. Paul, Minnesota 55104-2803
phone: (612) 644-3036

The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) is an adoption advocacy organization that promotes the adoption of special needs children. They can direct you to a state chapter.

Adoptive Families of America (AFA)
3333 Highway 100 North
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55422
phone: (612) 535-4829

AFA offers packages of information and has affiliates around the country.

National Adoption Information Clearing-House
11426 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
phone: (301) 231-6512

The Clearing-House offers information on the adoption process, agencies, laws, publications, and pre- and post-adoption resources. They can also inform you of speakers and consultants in your locale.

8.

Read *Adopting the Older Child*, by Claudia L. Jewett (Harvard Common Press, Boston, 1978). As the title suggests, this book touches on the issues particular to the adoption of older children.

9.

Read *How It Feels to Be Adopted* by Jill Kremetz (Knopf, New York, 1982). Based on the personal stories of 19 children, *How It Feels to Be Adopted* is touching and thought-provoking, and could be shared by parents and their older children.

10.

In Michigan: For post-adoption services, contact your county Community Mental Health office about your local post-adoption network and other programs available under the MPASS (Michigan Post Adoption Services System) Project.

Or: Contact your county probate court or the adoption agencies in your community.

Or: Contact MARE (Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange) for a monthly book containing photos and write-ups about waiting special needs children; information on any aspect of adoption, including access to adoption records and search support groups; newsletters; and speakers on adoption issues. The MARE book is available through adoption agencies or by contacting:

MARE
PO Box 6128
Jackson, MI 49204-6128
phone: 1-800-589-6273

11.

In the event you encounter prejudice in the adoption process, contact:

In Michigan:
Department of Civil Rights
5th Floor
State Plaza Building
1200 Sixth Street
Detroit, MI 48226
(313) 256-2663

or your local Legal Aid Society.



12.

There are many excellent books about the adoption experience. Consider reading:

Being Adopted: The Lifelong Search for Self, by David Brodzinsky, Marshall D. Schechter, and Robin Marantz Henig, (Doubleday, New York, 1992), a scholarly analysis of how adoption affects everyone it touches.

Lost and Found: The Adoption Experience, by Betty Jean Lifton, (Harper and Row, New York, 1988).

Proverbios 4:10-13

Escucha, hijo mío, recibe mis palabras;
 para que se multipliquen los años de tu vida.
 Yo te guío por el camino de la sabiduría,
 y te conduzco por sendas rectas.
 Así caminarás a tus anchas,
 y si corres, no tropezarás.
 Mantente firme en la instrucción; nunca te desanimes,
 guárdala bien, pues ella es tu vida.



Proverbs 4:10-13

Hear, my child, and accept my words,
 that the years of your life may be many.
 I have taught you the way of wisdom;
 I have led you in the paths of uprightness.
 When you walk, your step will not be hampered;
 and, if you run, you will not stumble.
 Keep hold of instruction; do not let go;
 guard her, for she is your life.



NOTES

1. Carolyn Flanders McPherson, 1992.
2. "Piececitos" by Gabriela Mistral, translated by Doris Dana, from *Selected Poems of Gabriela Mistral*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1971, pp. 26 and 27. Reprinted with permission of the Joan Daves Agency.
3. Michael Gold, *And Hannah Wept*, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1988, page 35.
4. Rabbi Daniel Shevitz, "A Guide for the Jewish Adoptive Parent," *Response: A Contemporary Jewish Review*, Vol. XIV, No. 4, Spring 1985, page 120, as quoted by Anita Diamant and Howard Cooper, *Living a Jewish Life*, Harper Perennial, New York, 1991, page 281.
5. Letter to Carolyn Flanders McPherson from Charles Spliedt of Grand Rapids, Michigan, May 4, 1993, page 3.
6. Carolyn Flanders McPherson, 1993.
7. Spliedt, page 3.
8. Carolyn Flanders McPherson, 1993.
9. Shevitz, page 120.



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Notes

