
Adoption 101



L A K E P O I N T E
A D O P T I O N & O R P H A N
M I N I S T R Y

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Topics

- Resources
- Deciding to Adopt
- Types of Adoption
- Choosing an Agency
- Preparing and Waiting
- Affording Adoption
- Your New Family
- Adoption, Foster & Orphan Care Ministry
- The Joy of Adoption

Resources for Getting Started

- Much information is available to you – too much
 - Google search on “Adoption Getting Started” returned two million results

- Excellent high-level resources
 - Successful Adoption: A Guide for Christian Families
 - By Natalie Nichols Gillespie
 - Best resource for Christian families investigating adoption

 - If You Were Mine
 - Series of adoption-related workshop sessions on DVD

 - Howtoadopt.org
 - Created by Show Hope, a ministry of Steven Curtis and Mary Beth Chapman
 - Contains high-level overviews with links to other detailed information



Deciding to Adopt

■ Why adopt?

Common reasons:

- ❑ Infertility
- ❑ Desire to grow your family
- ❑ God's calling

Adoption brings a child into your family so that you may share love together the same as with any biological child



■ Consider these points

- ❑ Have you prayed and listened for God's guidance?
- ❑ Has God brought both spouses together in the decision?
- ❑ How will you strengthen support within and outside of your family?
- ❑ Are you willing to learn, be flexible, and trust in God's plan to bring a child into your family?

Adoption is a blessing, but adoption takes work and requires 100% commitment to your child.

Types of Adoption

- Domestic private
 - Typically an agency facilitates bringing a birthmother and an adoptive family together prior to birth
- International
 - Typically an agency submits an adoptive family's dossier to a foreign government, receives a referral for a child, and facilitates the travel and in-country process to complete an adoption
- Through the foster care system
 - Typically an agency joins with the Texas Dept. of Family and Protective Services to place a child with a family
 - Potential adoptive parents are foster parents while awaiting legal determination of the child and the birthparents
- Kinship
 - A legal process for a family member to adopt a child (stepparent, uncle, grandparent)

Types of Adoption - Comparison

	Domestic Infant Adoption	Foster to Adopt / CPS adopt		International Adoption
Age of Children	Usually 0-2 years. May get to witness birth	<u>Foster-Adopt</u> Can foster infants with intent to adopt, but outcome depends on legal process	<u>CPS Adopt</u> Largest need for kids >6yr/old and siblings, or children of minority	Varies per country from 0-16 years, but usually the child is at least a few months old by the time of adoption
Choice of gender?	Yes, but usually not in agencies where the prospective birthparents and prospective adoptive parents are matched during the pregnancy. Each agency has its own policy.	Yes		Varies per country, but available in most
Choice of race?	Yes, but largest need for children of minority race	Yes, but largest need for children of minority race and/or sibling groups		Yes, but most countries have limited racial choices
Ability to choose which child(ren)	Birth parent(s) usually choose the parents by profile. Differs from agency to agency.	You work with your agency & CPS to determine which child(ren) would best fit your family. Online lists are available to view waiting Texas children, however, many children are not featured on the web lists. Contact an agency for further info.		Varies per country, Open choice available in some countries. But most countries give referrals and parents have right to accept or deny the referral. Many countries have children waiting for adoption from whom you can choose.
Costs	\$12,000-\$30,000 Fees are dependent on service/agency, attorney fees, race of child, and whether or not you have to pay for birth mom's care. Agencies are required to give fees in their orientation materials.	0-\$2000 If qualifying, the State provides an "adoption subsidy" which may include: a monthly stipend, free in-state college tuition, & Medicaid coverage <u>Usual Subsidy Qualification</u> = />2yrs/old + minority, sibling groups, or special needs 0-2yrs/old NO SUBSIDY, 2-6yr/old & Caucasian: No subsidy		\$19,000 - \$45,000 Varies per country, but you know a good estimate ahead of time, but fees can change slightly during process. Fees are dependent on agency, country, age of child, travel costs, translation costs, legal costs, currency exchange rates, etc.



Deciding to Adopt

Choosing Adoption Type

Types of Adoption - Comparison

	Domestic Infant Adoption	Foster to Adopt / CPS adopt		International Adoption
Travel required	Minimal – usually within Texas	Minimal – Usually within Texas		Usually at least 1-2 weeks; some countries require more than 1 trip
Training required	The state of Texas requires pre-adoptive training for adoptive parents, but the type and amount vary per agency – some agencies require support groups	In Texas, a minimum of 25 hours of classes plus CPR certification (different states have different requirements), the agency may require more.		Some countries require varying levels of education, agencies may have specific requirements
When termination of parental rights occur	In Texas, a birth mother cannot sign the relinquishment prior to 48 hours after birth. Relinquishments signed through a licensed agency in Texas are irrevocable. (Different States vary on this law, but range from 72 hrs-90 days to allow birth mom to revoke decision)	<u>Foster-Adopt</u> The birth parents can comply with requirements to regain custody & potentially claim the child after you have fostered for 18 months or more.	<u>CPS Adopt</u> Birth parent's rights have already been terminated.	Most countries have already severed the birth parents rights prior to placing the child available for international adoption.
When adoption is Finalized	In Texas, adoptions are usually finalized once the child has been in the home for a period of 6 months.	<u>Foster-Adopt</u> You foster the child until birth parent's rights are severed. If the parent's rights are severed & there are no appropriate relatives found, the adoption can be finalized, However, this may or may not happen.	<u>CPS Adopt</u> The child is placed in the home as an "adoptive placement". There is a 6-month supervision period as required by Texas law before adoption is finalized.	Most adoptions are finalized either while abroad or immediately on arrival to US. Child's US citizenship is determined by type of visa used when entering country. If IR3 visa (ex. Russia, China), child is US citizen on landing on US soil. If IR4 visa (ex. Guatemala), the adoption will need to be "re-finalized" in the US in order to apply for the child's Certificate of Citizenship Child may be allowed to hold dual citizenship.

Types of Adoption - Comparison

	Domestic Infant Adoption	Foster to Adopt / CPS adopt	International Adoption
Open vs. closed adoption	Varying levels of openness exists at different agencies. Level of openness is usually guided by agency philosophy and facilitated between birth parents, adoptive parents, along with the adoption counselor.	Varying levels of some contact with some suitable birth family, siblings placed in other homes, or even previous foster families. The degree of openness will be discussed with adoptive parents prior to finalization.	Most are completely closed, with a couple of countries offering open. Often, open adoption is not a choice as there may be no information about the birth family available.

BOTTOM LINE

Each type of adoption carries its own positive aspects and unique risks

Before deciding

- Thoroughly research the options
- Interview adoptive families of all types
- Pray and seek God's will for your family
- Start seeking a support network to help

In adoptive countries and in the US, there are many children available for adoption

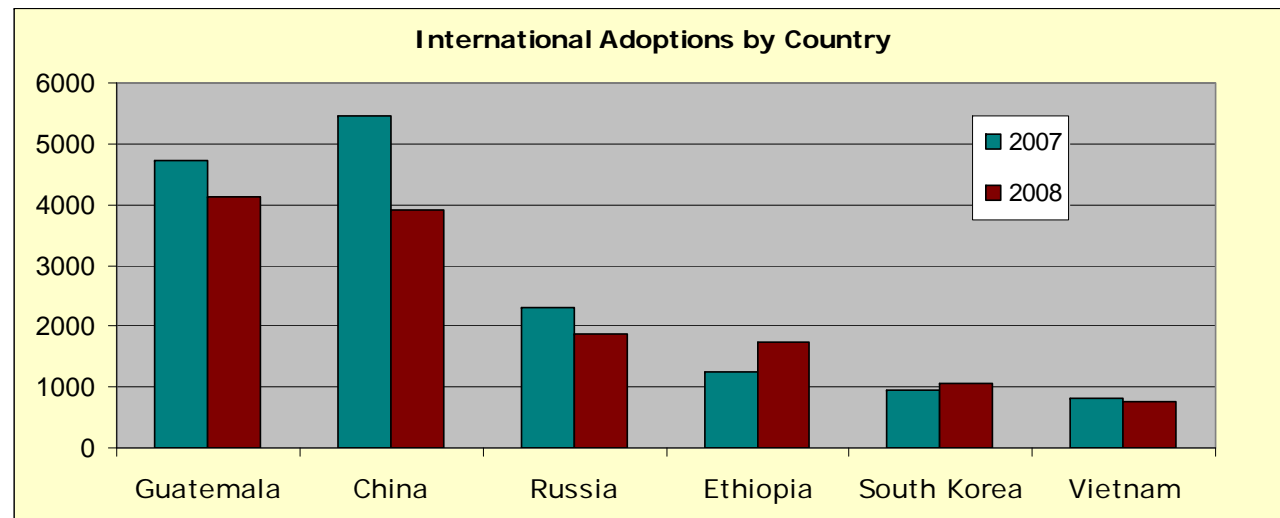
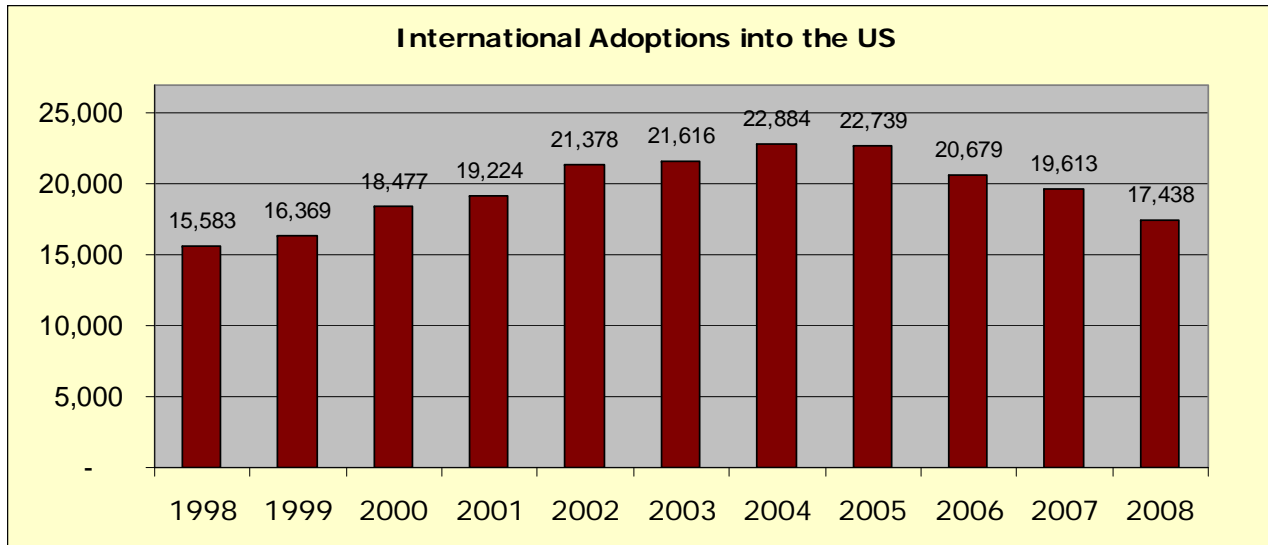
- Older children (4+ years old)
- Special needs children
- Sibling groups

And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.

Matthew 18:5



International Adoption Trends



Source: US Dept of State

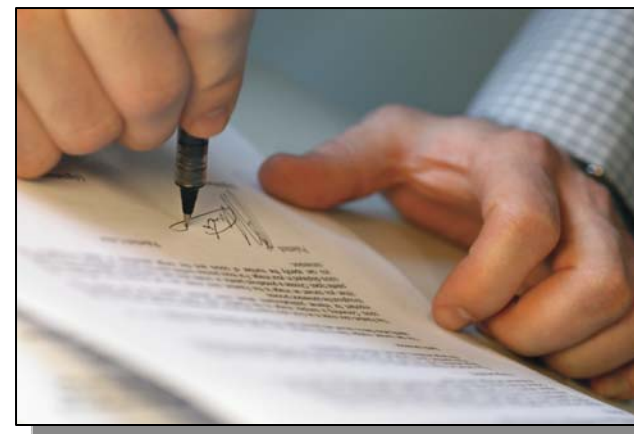
Choosing an Agency

- Prayerfully seek God's guidance (Have you heard this one before?)
- Seek agencies aligned with your beliefs
- Research policies and costs
 - Be sure to determine whether all costs are identified
- Interview families
 - Ask reference families provided by the agency for other references
- Get to know your agency professional – you will be very involved with them throughout the process

Talking to families who have adopted through an agency is the number one way to get unbiased feedback on how they operate and how they handle tough problems

Preparing and Waiting

- Application & paperwork
 - Most agencies require a fairly lengthy application
 - Necessary to protect you and the agency
 - Be honest and complete – omissions can cause problems down the road
- For international adoptions, consider restrictions of specific countries
 - Countries have varied restrictions based on:
 - Income
 - Health/weight
 - Prior criminal record or substance use
 - Single vs. married
 - Age
 - Number of children in the home



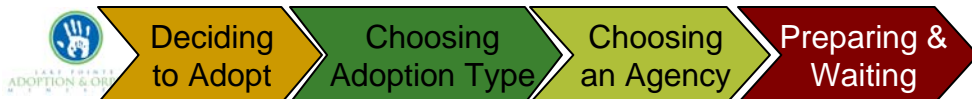
Preparing and Waiting



- Home study
 - Every state requires a detailed home study be completed by a licensed Social Worker regardless of adoption path
 - Home study requires examination of family background, parenting techniques, criminal records, etc.
 - Social Worker desires the best for the child and is acting foremost in the child's interest
 - Social Worker interviews mother and father together and separately and may interview children in the home
- No one has a perfect life, family or past
 - The Social Worker seeks to determine whether you have properly dealt with any prior issue and are ready to move through adopting a child

Goals of a Home Study

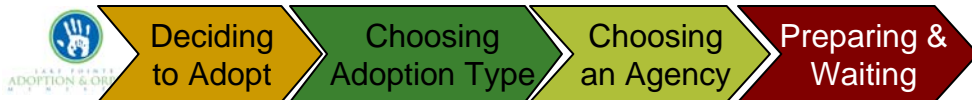
- Ensure that the family will provide a safe, stable, and nurturing home for the adopted child
- Educate and prepare the family for their adoption process and adopted child



Preparing and Waiting



- Training and Education
 - Foster/adopt programs require 25 hours of training
 - Hague Convention on international adoption requires 10 training hours
 - Wait time is the perfect opportunity to educate yourself on topics relating to your adoption
 - Some agencies may have specific training requirements
 - Read books, join web discussion groups, plug into support groups
- Research attachment issues and techniques
 - Especially important for children raised in institutional settings, unstable birth families, or multiple placements
- Bring friends and family along with you on your journey
 - Can use life books, adoption websites, and/or scrapbooks
 - Strong support is healthy for the post-adoption family
 - You will touch their hearts
- Research your child's culture for international adoptions
- Learn about transracial adoption if you are pursuing adopting a child from another race
- First-time parents can make their home ready for a child

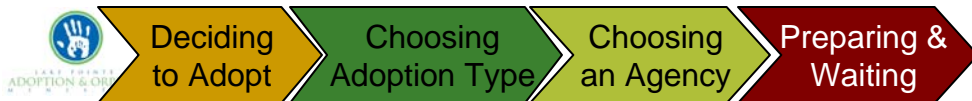


Affording Adoption

- Savings and budgeting
 - Good stewardship will be rewarded
- Assistance available
 - Federal tax credit
 - Employer benefit
 - Tax exclusion of benefit income
 - Grants from charitable organizations
 - Low or no-interest loans from charitable organizations
 - State subsidies for certain adoptions
- Be mindful of cash flow
 - Examine when payments will be due vs. financial position at that point
- Trust that God will provide

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord. “Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11



Your New Family

- Adoption announcements
 - The arrival of your adopted child is a cause requiring great celebration!
 - Variety of providers online and templates
- Get help with the daily needs at first
 - You have a new member of your family!
 - Don't refuse offers of help from friends and family
- Commit to special one-on-one bonding activities with the new child, while emphasizing the continued love of your other children
- Take care of your spouse
- Practice positive adoption language, being sensitive to sharing your child's story appropriately
- Join a support group or church ministry to connect with other adoptive families and to learn from each other



Deciding to Adopt

Choosing Adoption Type

Choosing an Agency

Preparing & Waiting

Forever family

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Practical Steps



- Readoption or finalization of international adoptions
- New birth certificate, social security cards
- Insurance
- Beneficiary & will updates
- Medical evaluations & immunizations
- Emotional support & counseling
- Language tools



Long Term

- As your adopted child grows older, you should be prepared for unique circumstances in his or her life
 - Searching for identity
 - Working through grief and closure with your child
 - Being a transracial family
 - Seeking relationship with birthparents
 - Dealing with people who have unfavorable opinions on adoption and adopted children

Your unconditional love and prayers will always be needed for your child

Helping to nurture your child's relationship with Christ helps provide the most solid foundation of identity within God's family

You will *always* be your child's strongest advocate



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Choosing Adoption Type

Choosing an Agency

Preparing & Waiting

Forever family

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Adoption, Foster & Orphan Care Ministry

- God has now placed adoption in your heart
- Through adoption he provides a visible example of our spiritual redemption through Christ
- God has called his people to care for the fatherless
- Consider joining in ministry and starting a ministry at your local church
- Many resources to help you get started
 - FamilyLife's Hope for Orphans
 - Show Hope
 - Christian Alliance for Orphans

Religion that our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

James 1:27

Learn to do right!
Seek justice, encourage the oppressed.
Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

Isaiah 1:17

The Joy of Adoption

- God has a plan for all of our lives. For some, God places adoption as a path we can choose to take
- This presentation outlined the mechanics and has raised points adoptive families to consider, investigate and pray over in order to make informed decisions
- However, accepting a child into your family opens doors of joy that no one can shut
- God promises that being in his will brings joy to him and to us



Adoption is a miracle.
Don't miss the miracle.

Acknowledgments

- Based on material from the following sources:
 - ❑ Successful Adoption: A Guide for Christian Families by Natalie Nichols Gillespie
 - ❑ Howtoadopt.org from Show Hope
 - ❑ Adoptive Families Magazine
 - ❑ God's Word!

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