

Ministry with Children

ADDRESSING TOPICS OF CONCERN FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN



“...for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs.”

Adoption

Over the past several months, the topic of adoption has crossed my path multiple times, bringing me back to the biblical story of Moses' adoption. The bold actions of three women illustrate the power of love. Moses' birth mother, whose deep desire to protect her son, entrusted Miriam, who watched over her brother Moses as he drifted down the Nile into the arms of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses' adoptive mother. All three women sacrificed their own personal well being to safeguard this one little child. How do we offer love and nurture to children and their families who make the decision to adopt?

I talked with Migdiel Pérez, father of Dale, who he and his wife Alma adopted at almost three years old, and he was quick to point out that they “believe that we are all adopted into God’s family through Christ.” They made a prayerful journey based on this belief, contacting *Miriam’s Promise*, an adoption service founded through The United Methodist Church. Their church family supported them throughout the long process, and many of them were present at the airport when they returned with little Dale. For this family, the church became “the hands and feet of Christ.”

Sometimes, adoption happens when it is least expected, and under extraordinary circumstances, as Theresa Thames experienced when she recently opened her home and heart to her new nine-year-old child following the death of his mother. Her church family, a congregation where adoption is not unusual, surrounded her with support, and they were “eager to know the needs of her child.” On his first Sunday at church, one of the families presented him with a backpack filled with “educational and fun items” including a city map on which they marked his new church, his new home, and his new school.

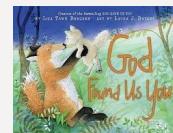
Several years following the birth of their biological child, Lori Lominack and her husband, Jamie adopted a newborn they named Davis. Two years after the adoption, Davis’ birth father was killed in a car accident. The birth mother called again, and soon they welcomed newborn Mary Caroline. Lori reminds us of the importance of not making assumptions about birth mothers, as she praises the family of the birth mother, sharing that they are “a precious family. They were very supportive and (the birth mother’s) minister came to the hospital to offer her support”.

>

September/October 2012

“For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” -1 Corinthians 12.13a

READING AND RESOURCES



God Found Us You

Lisa Tawn Bergren
An introduction to adoption for children

www.amazon.com



United Methodist Adoption Services

www.umc.org



PO BOX 340003 / NASHVILLE, TN 37203-0003
(877) 899-2780

RESOURCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pockets Magazine

<http://pockets.upperroom.org/>

Monthly magazine that connects kids with God the other 6 days!

Ministry with Children Blog

ministrywithchildren.wordpress.com

Connecting leaders with current topics, experiences, support, and resources

GBGM Serving for Children

new.gbgm-umc.org/work/women-children

Mission and outreach impacting children worldwide



Faithful formation of our children takes careful planning, communication with parents and children, intentional relationship building, patience, a sense of humor, and a commitment to the call to make disciples. Most of all, it takes living into Christ's command that we love God and neighbor.

Melanie C. Gordon is Director of Ministry with Children at the General Board of Discipleship, and a member of the South Carolina Annual Conference.

.....
© 2012 by the General Board of Discipleship. Permission is granted to copy or reprint this newsletter for use in local congregations and annual conferences. For any other use, please contact mgordon@gbod.org.

Learning from these families:

Not all of the children that we serve are being raised by their birth parents, and like our adoption into Christ's holy church, this is a reminder that all of the children that we serve deserve the same nurture and love. Our own "church family is defined by a relationship with Jesus Christ. In baptism we all share the name Christian".

These three stories of love and sacrifice mirror the many stories of how God loves us, and sacrificed for us. Through the baptismal covenant, God proclaims our adoption by grace. We are made one in Christ through this initiation into Christ's holy Church. We may not all look alike, but in the words of Dale's father, Migdiel, "every time I look at my child, I see the face of Christ smiling back at me".

What can the church offer families who are in the process of adopting and who have adopted children into their lives?

- Ask parents what they need, and find a way to follow through
- Offer to host a baby/child/youth shower
- Be present when there are bumps in the road
- Respect that adoption is an act of love, not desperation
- Preach about adoption
- Plan carefully around Mother's Day and Father's Day so adoptive families are not excluded
- Address the parents as the child's mother or father
- Offer the same hospitality that you would for any new parents
- Make no assumptions about the circumstances of an adoption

I would enjoy hearing from you!

Please contact me at mgordon@gbod.org

Grace and Peace, melanie

