



## 2014 Adoption & Foster Guide

# Many reasons why Christians should embrace adoption

Despite efforts at awareness of such a miracle of life, sometimes people still don't embrace adoption. Sadly, many of those ideas emanate from Christians who are pro-life.

Recently another sad story of a "returned" child made news, leading others to question whether adoption is the best thing—at least for the parents—especially when children are difficult and need more support, whether emotionally or physically. "You don't know what you're getting," they say, often adding that an adopted child could be "damaged." He or she could make your life uncomfortable, ruin the family dynamic.

To the Christian, the answer to all of that should be, "so what?"

First, the reality for Christians is that the Bible talks of God adopting believers into his family through the sacrifice of His son Jesus Christ. This is the foundation of Christianity. To reject adoption as a special calling for "other" people, or only adequate for extreme circumstances such as for infertility, is to reject the principle that God himself modeled. The actual ques-



tion should be "is there any good reason not to adopt?"

There are good reasons not to. It would be irresponsible to suggest everyone

should run out and sign up for home studies and adoption lists solely because it's the model of Christianity, but the question must be an honest inventory of why

nots?

Second, the Bible abounds with scriptures about orphans, and it is clear that the job of the Christian is to take care of the orphan; James 1:27 describes this as "pure religion" that God accepts. One of the most oft-cited verses is Psalm 68:6 "God sets the lonely (some versions say solitary) in families." It brings a sort of comfort into pro-life circles to know this: "God will take care of the orphan; he loves the orphan and will give him a family." But it can also become a cliché, a cloud without water, if the next question is not "Do some of those lonely belong in my family?"

God does set the lonely in families, but God is a supernatural being who uses human beings to execute his work on earth. God gives resources and love and families to people, so they may share those things with others. To say "God sets the lonely in families" then shut the door to the lonely outside of our homes is missing a key point of the gospel.

As pro-lifers, we rightly demand abortion stop. We decry the killing and pray for hours at abortion clinics, weeping over the loss of life. We post pictures and sayings on social media and proudly announce we only vote for pro-life candidates. But beyond that, the solution for abortion re-

**...to a Christian, adoption is the most natural thing that can be.**

mains solely in our hands. It's negligent of us to expect everyone else to do the adopting. Not all pro-lifers are Christians, but the majority of those on the forefront are vocal about their faith. That voice must translate to adoption—in one way or another.

True family can be any lifelong bond God has knit together, and blood isn't a requirement for it to be real or somehow better because some DNA connects in a special way. Birth children can end up with severe problems just as adopted children can. Love doesn't get to choose which goods are damaged, just as God didn't dictate who was too damaged to be in his family.

Family is a committed, loving relationship that is in our power to offer and support—whether by doing the adopting or by actively, financially and emotionally, supporting those who do.

Recently a comment appeared on a public site saying that adoption wasn't a "natural" thing, but to a Christian, it's the most natural thing that can be.

God didn't have to send Jesus, and Jesus didn't have to go to the cross to allow us a way to the Father. The goal of this was to expand God's family through adoption. That statement sometimes gets so over-used in Christian culture that it loses personal meaning, and yet it's the reality of the gospel.

Janette Pettey and her husband Tim, who adopted both of their daughters, tells the story of how her daughter Hannah used to explain her adoption: "She used to say she was 'double adopted,' referring to her adoption into her natural family and also into her eternal family as a Christian," Janette says.

And that's the most natural thing of all.



### Brianna's Story of Hope

Brianna was a "good girl" from a stable, two-parent home.

And yet the three men watching her saw her as an ideal candidate. She had a dream to get out of her small town ... needed to make money for college tuition. She was vulnerable and innocent.

And they took advantage of her in the worst possible way.

Naively, she was lured away from family and friends ... and into a strip

club. She quickly realized she was required to do more than just dance.

Thankfully, Brianna's family did not give up on her. They enlisted the help of a local police officer who understood sex trafficking, and who, in turn, enlisted Shared Hope's help to extract her from the situation.

Brianna was rescued!

Today, Brianna still has nightmares that "they" have found her again ... but she has become an outspoken activist, sharing her personal experience to save others. She recently

even allowed her story to be told on a billboard in Times Square, desperately hoping her warnings will be heeded.

Shared Hope International strives to prevent the conditions that foster sex trafficking, restore victims of sex slavery, and bring justice to vulnerable women and children. We envision a world passionately opposed to sex trafficking and a committed community restoring survivors to lives of purpose, value and choice — one life at a time.

Call Mike Parris, KC Area Ambassador of Hope, for Speaking Opportunities: 816-982-1042

WWW.SHAREDHOP.ORG

# Mom says “Don’t fear a special needs adoption”

**Susanna** | theblessingofverity.com

If fear is keeping you from special needs adoption...  
 What are you afraid of?  
 Losing your freedom and leisure time?

Losing control of your ability to choose the life you want?  
 Being stretched too thin financially, or even going under?  
 Being unable to adequately care for a child’s special needs?

Not loving an adopted child like he or she needs to be loved?  
 Losing some of your preferred image or social standing?  
 The hard work?  
 The future for your child with special needs when you are old or have passed away?

The right kind of fear keeps us from doing what is wrong, but the wrong kind of fear keeps us from doing what is right.  
 What stops many qualified families from taking the next step toward special needs adoption is not the obstacles themselves. What’s stopping them is simply their fear of the obstacles.

And then sometimes they fear that they aren’t qualified simply because they feel afraid. Or they think that their fears are a message from God telling them not to adopt. Not true!  
 Did you know that God hasn’t said, “All My people must adopt?”  
 But He does command us, over and over and over again,  
 “Do not be afraid.”  
 Don’t be afraid?  
 Isn’t some fear good??  
 Can’t fear play a role in helping us make wise decisions?  
 God’s command not to fear does not mean, “Do not feel afraid.”  
 It means that we as His people can not walk in obedience to Him while we make decisions based on the wrong kind of fear.

**“Born thy people to deliver...born to set thy people free; From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in thee..”**

Did we have fears throughout our adoption of Katie?  
 Yes, at times I struggled with terrible fear. I was afraid of the power of mere human beings to stop the adoption process. After God opened my eyes to the truth that this fear was based on unbelief in His limitless power, I still had to battle fear. We have



The author’s daughter, Katie.

first-hand experience with the fact that He is not a tame lion. What if He stopped the process before Katie was our daughter? I had to have the truth ready for the fight when it came, and at times it felt like a fight to the death! Besides the truth that nothing is too hard for God, it is also true that He is good and cannot make mistakes. He gave us a fervent, over-arching desire for Him to show Himself as the God He really is, and for Him to write Katie’s story and our story in the way He knew would best make that happen. No matter what.

And now? Our family has lost a lot of our former fears. But no matter how much trust we eventually learn to have in our trustworthy God, it will never come close to the enormity of His trustworthiness. In other words, His power, His grace, His faithfulness will always far exceed our faith in Him, no matter how great our faith grows.

Do you know what fear I most commonly hear about from potential adoptive parents?

It’s the fear that they might miss God’s will and mistakenly adopt when He didn’t want them to. As a result, they fear, their family will be miserable, or their household will be turned upside down and given to irreversible chaos, or their other children will suffer (or at least lose necessary opportunities), or the adoption will fail, or they will go bankrupt, or perhaps they will sink into deep depression. Or maybe all these things will happen and more. And the hardships will mean that they had missed God’s will.

We as God’s people can be confident that He will not throw us off the deep end and walk away as we drown in agony. This is the crux of the matter, really.

In order to lose all fear of accidentally adopting outside of God’s will, you first need to understand that adoption is not an automatic or guaranteed process. You will not succeed in adopting if it’s not God’s will. He has a myriad of ways to say, “No,” or “Not right now.” A friend described their family’s experience as jumping off a cliff, only to hit a ledge a few inches down.

If your situation is in such a desperate state that you would clearly go under if you adopted a child with special needs, any home study social worker worth his or her salt would discover that early on. And that is just a human being judging on a human level. We and countless other adoptive families have seen supernatural provision of the Lord that fills in our gaps and goes far beyond what a home study social worker could have quantified.

■ See SPECIAL NEEDS page 11

Every child deserves a loving, caring home. A family they can call their own. A place where they belong. With people who will be there for them always.

**Adopt Kansas Kids**  
 www.adoptKSkids.org • 877-457-5430

Adopt Kansas Kids works to connect foster and approved adoptive families with children throughout Kansas who need adoption. This service is provided by the Kansas Children’s Service League through a contract with the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF).

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 for *life*.

**THE PATHWAY**

The Missouri Baptist Convention’s Christian Life Commission and *The Pathway*, the official newspaper of the Convention, are proud to work side-by-side other Missourians in the effort to promote adoption and foster parenting.

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 Breahn R. Vokolek • bvokolek@pattonwagner.com  
 Brock A. Patton • bpatton@pattonwagner.com

114 Westwoods Drive  
 Liberty, Missouri 64068  
 (816) 792-2020 • www.pattonwagner.com

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## A trusted resource for families

“Trustworthy: able to be relied on to do or provide what is needed or right, dependable, reliable.”

For over 30 years Christian Family Services has been that trustworthy resource for both birth and adoptive families. Adoption is a life-changing event and often a frightening prospect when not much is known about it. Birth parents are always treated in a non-pressured, warm and supportive manner that respects the tough decisions they are facing and honors their commitment to make a good plan for their baby. If adoption is the choice they believe is best, they can choose and meet the adoptive parents and decide what type of ongoing relationship they want. Caring support to birth parents doesn't end at placement but continues long after if desired.

To adopt a child also requires much consideration. Fears are normal but with education and support and reminders that God is ultimately the designer of their family, adoptive parents can safely navigate their journey to parenthood as well.

CFS received Hague accreditation in 2012 and this allows us to provide home studies and post-placement supervision for international adoptions as well. Many families have listened to the call to care for the orphan. Just in the last year this has included a family who traveled to China to bring home their wheelchair-bound son with spina bifida, a family making their home ready for a sibling group of four from Haiti, and many others.

What is God calling your heart to do? We strive to keep our fees low and rely on the generosity of Christians to keep our ministry funded. We offer tax credits to Missouri taxpayers and all donations are tax deductible.

### **i** moreinformation

**Christain Family Services**  
See our ad below  
for contact info. Donations  
can be mailed to  
8249 W. 95th St. Ste 107,  
Overland Park KS 66212.

## Parkville Women's Clinic has vision for families

Lauren holds her baby's picture close as she tells of how her daughter has been added to "God's family." The eight month old has round cheeks, new teeth and eyes that like the rest of her are irresistible. Lauren gave her baby up for adoption, a process that wasn't complete until the newborn was three months old.



"Holding her is like holding your own heart in your hands," Lauren says. "I wouldn't trade that time with her, but I know she is exactly where she needs to be."

Lauren is like the hundreds of clients seen each year by Parkville Women's Clinic who come for the free services to help them with their pregnancies. The women are faced with the options of abortion, parenting or adoption.

"Most of our clients are at risk for

considering abortion when they first come to us. They feel they don't have any options," says Sonya Rice, executive director of the clinic. "We are thankful to report that more than 95% of our clients choose life for their babies."

Parkville Women's Clinic is a nonprofit ministry located in Parkville, Mo. with the mission to empower and equip individuals to make healthy life choices.

The clinic's leaders have a vision of building families and impacting communities for good. "We dare to ask, 'what if we lived in a world where every child is valued, and mothers and fathers are equipped to build strong families that positively impact our community,'" Rice says.

To fulfill that big dream, the clinic is looking to add to existing services by

starting STI testing, a fatherhood program, educational outreach and post-abortive counseling. Current services include pregnancy testing, ultrasounds, parenting classes, basic baby clothing, support services and community referrals.

Funding for PWC is provided by individuals, businesses and churches, and the ministry receives no government support. At a recent funding event, guests represented more than 25 area congregations.

"We would not exist without the generosity of donors and the support of dedicated volunteers," Rice says.

### **i** moreinformation

To learn more about  
Parkville Women's Clinic,  
go to [www.PWC4Life.us](http://www.PWC4Life.us) or  
call 816-746-4855.

## Everyday hope everyday impact

At The Women's Clinic of Kansas City, we get to see what hope looks like. Because we care, listen and lovingly speak the truth to those we serve, new opportunities ... and new lives ... await countless women, babies and teens.



Come visit our clinic and ask anyone serving about the changed lives they see because TWC, a community supported non-profit 401(c)3, provides free services to women facing the

**"Ellen and I consoled a sobbing young mom considering abortion... and she chose Life for her tiny new daughter."**

crisis of an unplanned pregnancy and educates teens about sexual risk avoidance. You'll hear things like:

■ "My client walked in with tears today but left with a smile"

■ "Ellen and I consoled a sobbing young mom considering

abortion...and she chose Life for her tiny new daughter"

■ "An inner city teen cried at our latest workshop when offered a candy bar her family can't afford to buy"

■ "Several young moms got new jobs this month because Mimi helped them with their resume"

Every day we see God's handiwork through our ministry as counselors and nurses offer hope and help to

■ See TWC page 10

## From Heart to Home Infant Adoption Program

**An adoption agency you can trust.**



For over 120 years, adoption has been a core service throughout KCSL's history. Let us help fulfill your dream of having a child.



**Kansas Children's Service League**  
877-581-5437 • www.kcsl.org

### TWC

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women feeling unable to care for a child and considering abortion. On average, four babies are saved from abortion each day at our clinics.

TWC is also unique in its presence in KC's public schools with its prevention education program, Life-Guard. TWC offers classroom instruction on sexual risk avoidance to over 3200 students annually at an average of nearly 15 hours per student.

We impact lots of lives, but we could still do more. What is your next step to "reach more"?

To learn more about how you might partner or get involved, contact Sue Mahurin at (816) 836-9000 or visit [www.thewomensclinic.net](http://www.thewomensclinic.net). Working together with you and with God, all things are possible to bring new life to those in need. We look forward with anticipation of what He will do next.

## Kansas foster, adoptive families get support from Project Belong

Currently in Kansas there are approximately 1,000 children waiting to be adopted and over 6,000 children in foster care.

"There are far more churches in Kansas than there are waiting children," stated Brandon Hoffman, co-founder of Project Belong. "If the Church will stand up and get involved, answering the call of James 1:27, we could provide homes for every waiting child. It would make it possible to have a waiting list of families rather than waiting children."

Project Belong reaches out to churches throughout Kansas to promote awareness about the need for foster and adoptive parents for children in foster care. Through church presentations and clergy meetings, Project Belong's experienced staff strives to inform and educate the Church about the need to provide loving, safe and stable families to care for children in foster care and those awaiting adoption. Project Belong's Family Partner process allows families of faith to navigate the beginning stages of the foster care and adoption process in Kansas with highly informed support, prayer, and encouragement for every step of the way.

Brandon Hoffman and his wife Missy are the parents of 12 adopted children, ages 9 to 33. "Throughout our journey, God has proven Himself more than faithful, and it is by His grace that we are able to share this message of love and the blessing of adoption with others," says Hoffman.

Project Belong's Northeast Kansas Ministry Liaisons, Kat Peoples and Allison Schumm, serve the Kansas City, Lawrence, Topeka and surrounding areas. Both are available for meetings, presentations, trainings and more. The ministry has seven additional regional Ministry Liaisons across the state of Kansas. Peoples can be reached at 785-207-9760 or [kat@projectbelong.org](mailto:kat@projectbelong.org). Schumm can be reached at 785-410-4810 or [allison@projectbelong.org](mailto:allison@projectbelong.org).

To learn more visit [www.projectbelong.org](http://www.projectbelong.org) or visit Project Belong on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/projectbelong](http://www.facebook.com/projectbelong).



## Make A Difference <sup>for eternity</sup> in the life of a child

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### FYI



In 2012, 23,396 youth aged out of the U.S. foster care system without the emotional and financial support necessary to succeed. Nearly 40% had been homeless or couch surfed, nearly 60% of young men had been convicted of a crime, and only 48% were employed. 75% of women and 33% of men receive government benefits to meet basic needs. 50% of all youth who aged out were involved in substance use and 17% of the females were pregnant.

Source: AFCARS Report, No. 20, Jim Casey Youth

As of 2012, more than 58,000 children in the U.S. foster care system were placed in institutions or group homes, not in traditional foster homes.

Source: AFCARS Report, No. 20

# Families Make the Difference

**Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, nurturing environment. When a child's family is not able to provide for that child, a foster or adoptive family can. You can make a difference by becoming a "family" for a hurting child. You can also make a difference by providing support for foster or adoptive families.**

**MBCH Children and Family Ministries and its affiliate The LIGHT House offer a variety of Christian foster care and adoption services.**





For information call 800.264.6224 or visit us at [www.mbchcfm.org](http://www.mbchcfm.org)

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

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It is vital that we examine the foundational thinking under each fear, and hold it up to the light of Scripture.

Do you really believe that by taking steps to move forward with special needs adoption, you might displease your Father in heaven, who is also the Father of the fatherless, with the result that He'll take vengeance on you by withholding the resources you need to care for your adopted child? When it's stated that way, you can see that it doesn't fit with the character of our God as He has revealed Himself to us

in His word. He doesn't play manipulative games to hide His will from us and then ZAP us and say, "Ha! You missed it! Too bad for you! Now you'll have to bear the consequences forever!" No, no, no! He wants His children to know His will!

Most of the time we won't know for sure what He wants us to do next unless we are moving. He is more than able to direct our steps as we are walking.

We aren't urging you to walk in paths of rebellion and evil! That kind of walking is the only walking that should cause us to fear!

His people simply don't need to be paralyzed by the fear that if we start out to do

something He says is a good thing, that He will punish us for that! Imagine people with the living God inside them curled up inside coffins of stifling fear, waiting out their lives until they can die and be buried. Does that picture look tragic to you?

I want to encourage you that if you have an open heart toward God, He will make His path clear to you as you walk, and if He wants you to adopt, He will make it possible. If He does not have adoption for your family, He will close the door on it either temporarily or permanently, and that would be His perfect will for you.

So if you have God's heart for adoption,

and you think you qualify, you can take the next step without fear, knowing with confidence that He will be guiding your steps 100%. And that will continue to be true after the adoption is final, if He allows the process to get that far.

Don't be afraid, God says. No fear. Not with Me in charge. Don't allow fear to rule your decisions. Eyes wide open? Yes. Expecting difficulty? Yes. Paralyzing fear? No.

Ask yourself what you would choose if you had total trust in your heavenly Father and no fears. If you took the wrong kind of fear out of the equation, what would you choose? That decision will be made

out of pure love and faith, and your Father will not fail to direct you exactly where He wants you to go.

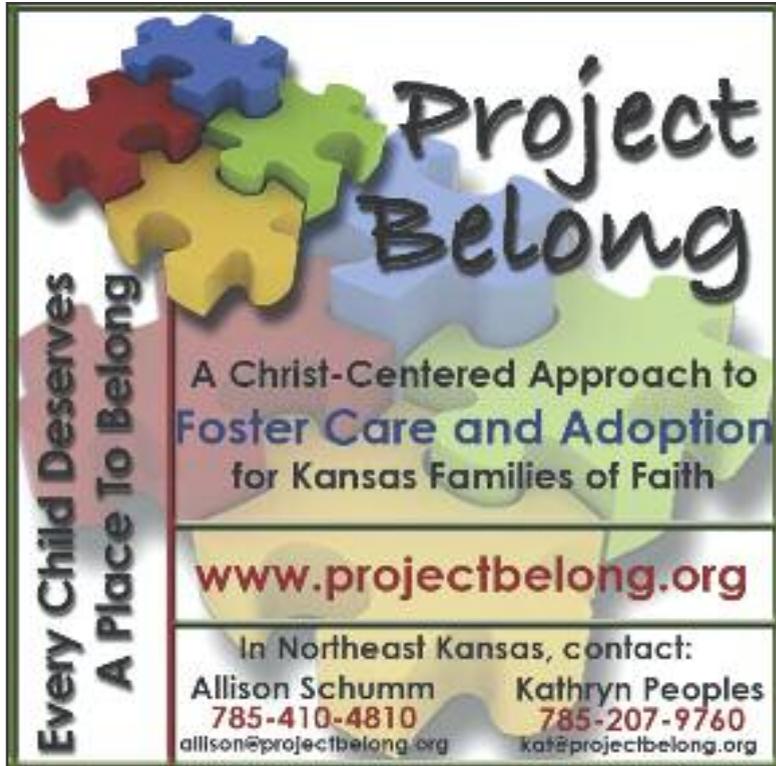
What decision would you make if you took out the fear?

"Does God have a secret will of direction that He expects us to figure out before we do anything? And the answer is no." ~Kevin DeYoung, in his book, Just Do Something

"Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread."

This is not intended to be a comprehensive treatise on fear, nor even a complete treatment of the fears commonly related to special needs adoption. Maybe someday when I've grown all the way up...oh, and've grown back a few of the brain cells I donated to my children, heh heh.

If you have thought about adopting a child with special needs, but your fears have stopped you from taking the next step, this is from me to you, with love and understanding. What decision would you make if you took out the fear? That's the decision our family is praying you'll make.



**Project Belong**

Every Child Deserves A Place To Belong

A Christ-Centered Approach to Foster Care and Adoption for Kansas Families of Faith

[www.projectbelong.org](http://www.projectbelong.org)

In Northeast Kansas, contact:

Allison Schumm 785-410-4810 [allison@projectbelong.org](mailto:allison@projectbelong.org)

Kathryn Peoples 785-207-9760 [kat@projectbelong.org](mailto:kat@projectbelong.org)

**6,167** Kansas Children in Foster Care

*Each child needs a safe, stable, loving home like yours*

Churches in Kansas  
*What are you being called to do?*

Please sponsor a child in foster care during this holiday season by donating gifts and gift cards.

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Phone: 913.890.2207



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**FYI**

In the U.S. 397,122 children are living without permanent families in the foster care system.

101,666 of these children are eligible for adoption, but nearly 32% of these children will wait over three years in foster care before being adopted.

Source: AFCARS Report, No. 20

Around the world, there are an estimated 153 million orphans who have lost one parent. There are 17,900,000 orphans who have lost both parents and are living in orphanages or on the streets and lack the care and attention required for healthy development. These children are at risk for disease, malnutrition, and death.

Source: Childinfo (UNICEF, 2011)



*Loving Life*

Mother's Refuge gives teens an opportunity to deliver their babies in a safe, loving home and prepares them for a life of independence and success.

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**MOTHER'S REFUGE**

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Statewide the number of children awaiting adoption on 7/31/14 was **977**  
Statewide, of the adoptions finalized, **66%** were by foster parents.

*Help with finding a child their home.*



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for more information on adoptive resources visit  
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