

The Adoption of a Child: A Ritual for New Adoptive Parents

Created by William G. Graham

When the parents have presented themselves with the child before the congregation, the minister shall say:

Beloved, to belong, to be loved, is a part of God's wonderful plan for the human race. In the world today, there is a spirit of selfishness. We discard that which we do not want for many reasons. We disregard the needs of others.

Also in the world today is a spirit of adoption in God the Father, who "destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Ephesians 1:5, NRSV). And *you* also have this spirit of adoption, by reaching out to this child, receiving (him/her) into your family. Just as we have the benefits of the heaven as adopted children of God through Jesus Christ, this child will have all the benefits of your home, love, and care.

I ask you now in the presence of these people, and before God, to declare your relationship as you receive (name of child) as a member of your family.

Parents: "We are the adoptive parents."

(Minister addresses the mother, asking her to repeat the following:)

I (mother's name) will be a mother to (child's name) with the help of God. I will care for the needs, give comfort, and the give of my love always, so long as God gives me strength to do so.

(Minister addresses the father, asking him to repeat the following:)

I (father's name) will be a father to (child's name) with the help of God. I will provide for the needs, physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. I will bring (him/her) up in the ways of God.

Minister: We rejoice that God has put into your hearts the love that reaches out beyond your own family. May God grant you both wisdom and strength as you assume your special responsibilities.

"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word." (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, NRSV).

(The minister may offer the following prayer)

Heavenly father, we pray for these loving parents who reach out in love and care for this child. Enrich their lives with grace, help them grow in wisdom and love. Uphold them with loving care, make them a holy example, and keep them faithful in their responsibilities both to this child and You. Father, we also pray that Your love encircle this child. Pour your grace on (his/her) life through these parents and this church. As the Body of Christ, grant us the power of your Holy Spirit to come alongside this family as we strive to serve you with our whole lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

(The minister offers his or her congratulations and gives opportunity for the congregation to greet the family).