

Understanding Adoption Stories: Candle Ceremony

Ritual can play an important role in helping children address and express unspoken feelings. The folks at FAIR (Families Adopting in Response) have developed a beautiful ritual for adopted children. We at Pact encourage families and professionals to think about how they can use this ceremony, modified as needed, to validate the experiences of the children they love and serve. For permission to reprint or for information on future groups please contact Nancy Ng at nancycng@gmail.com or visit www.fairfamilies.org.

I light this candle for my birthmother

whose body was my first home and whose heartbeat was the first sound I heard. Whether I know her or not, whether or not I will ever see her, she lives in my heart. I hope she remembers me. I will never forget her.

I light this candle for my birthfather

the man who gave me life. I don't quite understand why he couldn't raise me but I know it was not my fault. He too has a place in my heart.

I light this candle for my birth brothers and sisters

for those I remember and those I only dream about. We are family. Perhaps one day I will look into their faces and see my reflection.

I light this candle for the grandmas and grandpas, aunts, uncles and cousins in my first family

I hope that you remember me.

I light this candle for my foster mothers

who helped me get ready for my family. I was often sorry to leave you but you helped me come home.

I light this candle for my foster fathers

even though I didn't always understand who you were to me. I know now that your job was to put me on the path toward home.

I light this candle for the workers in the orphanage

who fed me and cared for me and so many other children. They are a big part of my story. Their care made it possible for me to have a family.

I light this candle for my mother by adoption

who teaches me about love and family. I hope you understand that sometimes when I am angry towards you it has nothing to do with you. I need you to remind me that I am safe and that you will always love me, no matter what.

I light this candle for my adoptive father

who shares my life and always will. Sometimes I disagree with you but I always love you.

I light this candle for my brothers and sisters by adoption

We might not look alike, we might not act alike, but we are real brothers and sisters and will be forever.

I light this candle for all my relatives who make up my family

for grandparents and aunts and uncles and cousins who form a warm, supporting circle around me.

I light this candle for all the other people who have gone in and out of my life

for those who hurt me and for those who helped me. I am not afraid to talk about them because I am getting stronger and I know that my parents will help me understand.

I light this candle for other adoptees I know, this group, my friends

We all have different stories but we all share a story too. And we all have most of our story ahead of us—not yet written. I know it will be an exciting and good story about our exciting and fun lives.