

Name _____

ISSUES TO CONSIDER WITH INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS FROM HAITI

The goal of this exercise is to educate families and create awareness regarding transracial adoption issues. If you and your family are Caucasian and you adopt a black child from Haiti, your family will become an interracial family, also known as a transracial family. Adoptive parenting is somewhat different than biological parenting in that it involves an additional layer of self-awareness and skills. As you begin this exercise, please ask yourself how you plan to help your child develop his/her own cultural, ethnic and racial identity and how you plan to help your child deal with racial and adoption issues, as these issues will inevitably occur at some point in your child's future. *Note: There are no right or wrong answers.*

Questions to Answer

1. By adoption, you will become an interracial family. Will you raise your child to have the same racial and/or cultural identity as you or your other children? _____

2. How will you help your child develop his/her own racial identity? _____

3. How will your immediate & extended family react to having a black child as a family member, (if you are not a black family yourself)?

4. Will your Haitian child be the only person who looks like him/her in school; or will there be other Haitians, Africans, Caribbean Africans, or African Americans in his/her specific class and grade?

5. How do you feel about getting lots of public attention (comments, stares, etc.), both while your child is young and as he/she matures? _____

6. If you have biological children, there is a possibility that your adopted child will get too much attention and your biological children will feel left out. How will you handle this?

7. How can you learn what it is like to be non Caucasian and grow up in a Caucasian society if you do not know this from your own experience? _____

8. How do you feel about interracial marriage? _____

9. How will you feel when people assume that you are married to an African American upon seeing your adopted child? (if applicable) _____

10. Do you want to learn more about your child's culture and heritage? _____ If so, what are your plans to do this? _____

11. Do you have family or close friends of other cultural backgrounds than you own? _____

12. Do you have family or close friends who are African or African American? _____ If not, how will you work to establish relationships with such individuals?

13. How will you find strong, positive role models for your children, who are of the same race as your child?

14. Does where you live now provide adults of color in positions of authority and others who can serve as role models for an African child (teachers, principals, doctors, dentists, lawyers, babysitters, barbers and hair stylists, etc.)?

15. What stereotypes do you have of blacks/Africans? _____

16. Are you prepared to learn about, and teach your child about, proper and culturally appropriate care of, and styles for African hair, in order to make him/her feel like he/she fits in with other kids like him/her? What resources will you use?

17. Are you open to visiting Haiti with your child as your child matures?

18. Do you as parents feel ready to prepare your child for the prejudices he/she will encounter as a black person in a society where race relations are sometimes strained?

19. What kind of multi – cultural events or activities have you attended in the last year?

Feel free to attach a separate sheet of paper for your answers, if needed

What Are You Likely or Not Likely To Do?

On a scale of 1-5, how likely are you to do the following things?

(1-Very Likely, 2- Likely, 3- Not Sure, 4- Probably Not, 5- Definitely Not Likely)

- _____ Learn about current issues in the local Haitian/African American community,
_____ or learn about what is happening in Haiti?
- _____ Incorporate art work and other home decorations reflective of the Haitian/African
_____ culture.
- _____ Move to a culturally diverse neighborhood.
- _____ Read a local ethnic newspaper to learn the values and current issues of the community.
- _____ Subscribe to culturally diverse and African/Black magazines.
- _____ Watch television shows with your child that positively reflects his/her culture.
- _____ Seek out a specialty store and purchase the traditional clothes worn by people in the
_____ child's country.
- _____ Learn the child's first language.
- _____ Regularly take your child to African/African American churches (or other events) where
_____ you (not the child) are in the minority,
_____ or take your child to a religious institution with a culturally diverse population.
- _____ Actively participate in community celebrations that highlight your child's culture.
- _____ Take cooking classes to learn how to prepare foods associated with your child's culture.
- _____ Establish friendships with people who share the same background with your child.
- _____ Regularly discuss race and racism as a family.

***** Researchers have shown that the happiest and best adjusted children of international adoption are the ones who have a sense of cultural belonging.**

Good luck in your self-reflection activities!