

Parent/Teacher guide for “A is for Always: An Adoption Alphabet”

Objective:

Assist your children/students in understanding families formed by adoption. For adoptees (A), celebrating their own families. For non-adoptees (NA), understanding adoptive families.

Introduce:

Read the story together, pausing to talk about parts of the story that are similar to your family and parts that are different, using questions below. (For A's and NA's alike).

Discuss:

Engage your children/students in a discussion about family—how adoptive families are like other families, and what makes them unique. Encourage your children/students to express their feelings about each, using the questions below (arranged by letter) as a guide (A and NA alike, unless specified):

B: Are you aware that every adoptee has two sets of parents? What makes both very real? (A and NA)

H: (A) Do you have any heroes adopted like you? Who are they? Did you know that Steve Jobs, who invented Apple computers, ipads, and iphones was adopted?
(NA) Who are your heroes?

J: How were you brought home to your family? (A) Jetplane? Boat? Car? Other?
(NA) From a hospital? Birthed at home? Somewhere else?

O: Who would you invite into your Oak family treehouse?

Q: (A) Are there any adoption questions you may want to ask?

(NA) Are there any questions you'd like to ask your friends who are adopted?
Can you think of a sensitive way to ask? Can you understand why the question, “who are your *real* parents?” might be hurtful?

R: Can you draw your family having a picnic with all the animal families on the beach? What makes adoptive families different from the rest? Are families with children who don't resemble their parents always adoptive? Can you think of any mixed or blended families you may know?

T: (A) Do you know your own adoption story? Would you like to share it? Which friends would you trust to tell? (NA) How can you let your adopted friends know that you'd like to listen to their stories and learn from them?

U: (A) Is there anything about seeing other families that makes you upset? Can you talk with your mom or dad about that? (NA) Do you know any families of more than one race, or families with two moms or two dads, or families with one parent?

V: What parts of the world do you and your family come from? Can you point to your family roots on a map?

W: (A) Are there questions you have about your birth family? In the illustration, there's a birth certificate on the table. Have you seen your birth certificate?

X: Can you share about any extended family members you especially love—grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins? Save their names for your Oak tree house!

Y: What places in the world would you like to explore? Which places have you already explored?

Z: What special dreams fill your head?

Instructions for Activity:

1. Ask the student/child to think of who they would invite and include in their family treehouse, counting family members, family friends and pets as possible invitees. Once they have made their list, the student/child can write out names or draw their "treehouse family" in the spaces provided on the coloring sheet.
2. Once they filled out their treehouse, the student/child can color in the rest of the page, adding their own drawings or designs as well!
3. Conclude the activity with the follow-up question at the bottom of the coloring page. Encourage student/child to hang their finished page at home, so they may share their work with their families.

Materials included:

1. *A is for Always: An Adoption Alphabet* (book)
2. Parent/teacher guide with suggested questions
3. Oak family treehouse coloring page

Who belongs in your treehouse?



1. Who would you like to be in your treehouse?

Think of who you would want to join you in your treehouse, and write their names or draw them in the spaces near the hearts (hint: family, friends, and pets all count!)

2. Color in the rest of the picture. Add some details of your own!

3. Who did you include in your treehouse, and why?