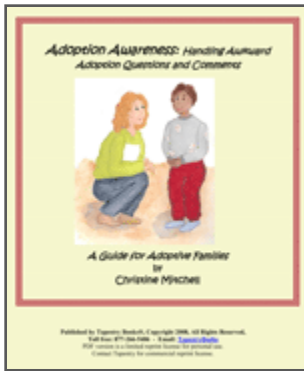


May 2008:

Adoption Awareness: Handling Awkward Adoption Questions and Comments

By Christine Mitchell



*"Why didn't your real mom want you?"
"They're not real brothers, are they?"*

These types of questions can leave both adoptive children and parents feeling hurt, defensive, insecure, and even angry. Christine Mitchell's new guide, *Adoption Awareness: Handling Awkward Adoption Questions and Comments*, helps adoptive families respond to questions and comments respectfully, without necessarily sharing private information or personal feelings. When adoptive families have the tools to discuss adoption, they feel more confident handling insensitive questions and remarks.

TAPESTRY: It's confusing to know how to reply to outrageous comments or overly personal inquiries. Should adoptive families practice 'snappy answers to stupid questions'?

CHRISTINE: I like to stress that awkward questions usually stem from ignorance rather than intentional ill-will. I discourage the use of sarcastic or dismissive retorts, which can send the message that there is something upsetting about adoption. My guide presents sound arguments for families being proud of adoption, yet keeping personal details private. *Adoption Awareness* offers several effective strategies that children and parents can use when faced with awkward adoption questions or remarks, including some approaches not found in other resources. I've also included an outline that offers the most comprehensive list of potential questions and comments available--each with several alternative responses. The categories range from questions that are relevant for all adoptive families, to those applicable to special situations: transracial, single-parent, same-sex parent, older child, and grandparent adoptions.

TAPESTRY: The *W.I.S.E. Up! Powerbook* by Marilyn Schoettle, M.A, is an excellent resource for giving adoptive families options for dealing with curiosity and insensitivity. How is *Adoption Awareness* different from the *W.I.S.E Up! Powerbook*?

CHRISTINE: The *W.I.S.E. UP Powerbook* is a well-respected resource. It is a workbook to be used with adopted children in a hands-on manner, encouraging exploration of the child's feelings, while illustrating a few scenarios. It is a very nice complement to *Adoption Awareness: Handling Awkward Adoption Questions and Comments*, which takes a more **in-depth** look at this issue. I examine the motivation behind the questions, discuss opening a dialogue with children, and mention how the adoptive parent's response impacts the adoptee. *Adoption Awareness* offers strategies that allow a child to:

- gain more time to respond
- decline answering the question
- deflect the question to an adult
- explain that the comment is hurtful
- share limited personal information
- share general information about adoption.

My booklet also goes an important step further, by examining situations where adoption comments are tied in with **RACISM, SIBLING RIVALRY, TEASING** and **BULLYING**, and **CYBER-BULLYING**.

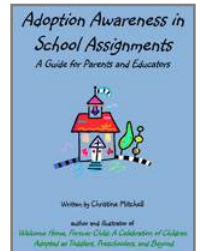
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Like most adoptive families, my family and I have dealt with uncomfortable adoption questions and remarks. I really felt that a more comprehensive resource on this issue was needed, and I am thrilled to be able to help other adoptive families address this very common concern.

Click here to purchase electronic download
Adoption Awareness: Handling Awkward Adoption Questions and Comments

Also by Christine Mitchell

This eBooklet covers a greater number of specific assignments than some of the other resources on this topic. The problem with each specific school project is described, and suggestions are provided to make the assignments more inclusive. The outline offers teachers an 'at-a-glance solution' without having to search through a longer publication. Exclusive ready-to-use worksheets are included, which can either be handed out as they are, or offered as examples to aid students in drawing their own alternative version of the Family Tree chart.



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