

Discussion Questions for
Adopted: The Ultimate Teen Guide
By Suzanne Slade

The following is a list of suggested discussion questions for adoption groups reading *Adopted: The Ultimate Teen Guide*. Your group may decide to read this book front to back, but you can also gain valuable insights by reading those chapters that are most relevant to your group. For example, teens interested in resolving issues with birth parents might focus on chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, which cover the topics “Why Did My Birth Parents Choose Adoption?”, “Should I Search?”, “Searching for Birth Parents”, and “Meeting Birth Parents”, while a group of internationally adopted teens might study chapters 2, 8, 9, and 10 on “Fitting In”, “International Adoption”, “Transracial Adoption”, and “A Real Family”.

Remember, there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to these discussion questions. Spend as much time as needed on questions that spark interest and response from your group, and ignore questions which are not pertinent to your teens’ situations. A successful discussion group is one that provides a safe place where teens can acknowledge and verbalize their fears and unresolved feelings about adoption, discover answers to some questions, hear the stories of others, and find support and encouragement.

Chapter 1 – Finding Out You’re Adopted

When and how did you find out you were adopted?
Do you remember how you felt when you first found out?
How do you feel today about being adopted?
Do people ask you questions about the fact that you’re adopted?
How do you handle nosy or annoying questions about adoption?

Chapter 2 – Fitting In

Do you feel like you “fit in” with your family? Why or why not?
Is there someone in your family that you find particularly hard to get along with?
 If so, why do you think you struggle with that person?
Do you think being adopted affects how you “fit in” with friends at school?
Are there any activities, groups or sports at school you’ve been thinking about getting involved in but haven’t?
Do you think teens who aren’t adopted face times when they don’t feel like they “fit in”?

Chapter 3 – Learning about Your Adoption

What facts do you know about your adoption? (type of adoption, agency, how old you were, etc.)
Do you have any questions about your adoption that you often wonder about?
 If so, who might know the answer to your questions?

Chapter 4 – Why Did My Birth Parents Choose Adoption?

What are some of the reasons you think birth parents choose adoption for their children?
Does anyone in the group want to share their birth parent's situation and reasons for deciding on adoption?
What are some things you really appreciate or like about your adoptive family?
How might your life be different if you had not been adopted by your family?

Chapter 5 – Should I Search?

Do you tend to think about your birth parents often, or not much at all?
Are any friends or family members encouraging you to search (or trying to stop you from searching) for your birth parents?
Who do you think knows best if you should search for your birth parents?
What fears do you have about searching for your birth parents?
Have you created any fantasies or dreams about what your birth parents might be like?
Would you be able to handle it if those fantasies or dreams weren't true?
Are you emotionally ready to find out all the details about your past, or would you be better prepared when you are older?
Do you think every adopted child should try to find his or her birth parents? Why or why not?

Chapter 6 – Searching for Birth Parents

Have you ever discussed searching for your birth parents with your parents?
What information do you have about your birth parents?
Have you talked with the social worker or agency that helped with your adoption?
Have you ever tried to search for your birth parents?
Are you prepared to start a search that may end up taking several months or even years?
What would you do if you couldn't find either of your birth parents?

Chapter 7 – Meeting Birth Parents

Do you think its better to talk to your birth parents over the phone before you meet them? Why or why not?
Where do you think would be the best place to meet your birth parent the first time?
What would you most hope to gain by meeting your birth mother or father?
What would you do if you could not accomplish that goal during your meeting?
Who would you want to be with you when you meet your birth parents?
What's the most important thing you want to tell your birth parents when you meet?
Would you want to set any kinds of personal boundaries or limits before you meet your birth parents?

Chapter 8 – International Adoption

In what ways do you feel unique or different because of your birth heritage?

How do those feelings affect you?

Have you done any research on your heritage?

Do you think internationally adopted teens face certain issues that other adopted teens don't face?

If so, how do you work through those issues?

What advice would you give to other teens born in another country and adopted in the United States?

How can being "different" be a good thing sometimes?

Chapter 9 – Transracial Adoption

Do you think a person's outward appearance tells a lot about what the person is like on the inside? Why or why not?

What are some things you have in common with your family members?

What do you wish your family could really get, or understand, about you?

How could you share that information with them?

What is the most difficult challenge you face as a member of a transracial family?

Chapter 10 – Adopted at an Older Age

What things in your life changed the most after you were adopted?

What are the best things your new family has given you?

If you could send a message to anyone in the world, who would you send it to and what would the message be?

How can dwelling on the past be helpful or hurtful to you?

What things can you do to move beyond your past so you can focus more on your future?

What is your biggest goal for the future?

What do you need to do to reach that goal?

Chapter 11 - A Real Family

How do you define a "family"?

What can you do to help make your family better?

How do other members of your family help you?

What is the best thing about your family?