



2011 Tapestry Adoption & Foster Care Conference

The 2011 Tapestry Conference will be held on Saturday, October 29th, from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm at Irving Bible Church. The conference is a great opportunity to learn from a diverse group of experienced presenters about a wide range of adoption and foster care related topics. The conference also includes a dedicated track of breakout sessions designed exclusively for adoptees (age 18 and older).

Conference participants will attend the general session featuring Jayne Schooler. Jayne is an experienced adoptive and foster parent, educator, and speaker. She is also the author of several well-known books, including *The Whole Life Adoption Book*, *Telling the Truth to Your Adopted or Foster Child* and *Wounded Children, Healing Homes*. Conference participants will also attend three different breakout sessions and an optional lunch session. The conference will also feature a bookstore containing a wide range of books, DVDs and other resources related to the conference sessions.

The 2011 Tapestry Conference is *completely free!* Online registration begins on Monday, August 15th, at www.tapestryconference.org. Registration includes a light breakfast, box lunch and a conference notebook. Free childcare is also available with advanced registration. However, childcare space is very limited, so we encourage you to register as soon as possible once registration opens!

Schedule

8:45 to 9:15 – Check-in & Breakfast (conference bookstore open)

9:15 to 9:35 – Welcome & Introduction

9:45 to 10:50 – Breakout Session 1

11:05 to 12:10 – Breakout Session 2

12:10 to 1:05 – Lunch (3 optional sessions available; conference bookstore open)

1:15 to 2:20 – Breakout Session 3

2:35 to 3:30 – General Session

3:30 – Childcare Pick-up (conference bookstore open)

Session Titles & Descriptions

General Session

Keys to Success for Healthy Adoptive & Foster Families – What do parents need to know and understand about themselves and their children as they travel the adoption or foster care journey? How can parents evaluate whether they are successful? During this year’s general session, Jayne Schooler will highlight four keys to successful adoptive and foster parenting that are within reach for every family. *(Jayne Schooler)*

Breakout Session 1

What Did You Expect?: Examining Your Expectations to Meet the Needs of Your Child – When someone enters a new experience, they bring with them a whole set of expectations. This is true for adoptive and foster parents as well. But children in adoptive and foster families also bring with them an “invisible suitcase” full of needs and challenges. This session will look at the role of parental expectations in meeting the needs and challenges of adopted and foster children. The session will also provide parents with strategies to manage both more effectively. *(Jayne Schooler)*

Adoption: Myths and Realities – People often encounter many different myths as they explore adoption and begin the process. This session will deal openly and honestly with many of the common myths – issues such as wait times, attachment, friends and family, birth parents, finances and much more. This session is designed specifically for those who are trying to decide which adoption path to travel as well as those who still have tough, unanswered questions and concerns. *(Anthony & Kristin Violi)*

What’s Missing?: Helping Single Adoptive and Foster Parents Provide Everything That’s Needed – Single parents can find it challenging to provide their children with everything that’s needed, and this challenge is often increased when adoption or foster care is involved. This session, led by two experienced adoptive and foster single parents, will focus on some of the challenges encountered by single adoptive and foster parents and will provide practical insights and advice to help singles better meet their children’s needs. *(Kathryn Veazey & Jill Silvey)*

Making Sense of It All: Helping Adopted Children Understand Who They Are – As adopted children reach the pre-teen and teen years, they often encounter a range of feelings, emotions and questions – some related to adoption, and others that are just part of growing up. In this session, Amy Curtis, herself an adoptee, will share insights and skills to help parents better understand and connect with their child leading up to and during the pivotal adolescent years. *(Amy Curtis)*

Fueled Up or Burned Out – Providing the nurture, care and guidance for children who come from difficult and traumatic backgrounds can be a challenging task for foster parents. Providing the environment and opportunities for healing can be even more difficult. In this session, Travis Jones will guide foster parents in identifying ways to refresh, recharge and refuel so that they can burn brighter and stronger, and not burn out. *(Al Blankenship)*

Breakout Session 2

Practical Realities of Connecting While Correcting – Adoptive and foster parents realize that connection is essential to help their children develop trust, heal, and grow. But they know that correction (i.e., discipline) is also important. This session will focus on practical insights and strategies for parents who want to better understand the "how and why" of connecting and correcting. Using a variety of everyday situations for parents of children of all ages, this session will illustrate the principles and strategies developed and taught by Dr. Karyn Purvis, co-author of *The Connected Child*. (Michael & Amy Monroe)

Understanding the Connection Between Sensory Processing and Difficult Behaviors – Often the sensory processing systems of adopted and foster children are impacted by their histories. As a result, parents must be particularly educated and insightful about the role that sensory processing plays in their child's life and behaviors. This session will explore the connection that can exist between sensory processing deficits and difficult behaviors, and how parents can more effectively identify, understand and respond to their child's sensory-driven behaviors. (Kristin Mathis & Shelley Fletcher)

Learning to Parent Again – Parenting adopted and foster children in many ways requires a unique understanding, perspective, and approach. It often requires parents to "un-learn" much of what they already know and how they have previously parented. In this session, Paula St. John will help parents better understand some of the unique differences and challenges that come with parenting "children from hard places," and will focus on helping parents "put down" their existing mindset and approach in order to "pick up" an approach that will yield greater healing, growth, and connection. (Paula St. John)

Do As I Say, Not as I Did – We often learn best from mistakes – preferably someone else's mistakes. This session will feature a panel of experienced adoptive and foster parents that will share openly and honestly about the mistakes they have made along the way, what they have done to change and what they have learned as a result. (Experienced Adoptive & Foster Parent Panel, Facilitated by Cheryl Macdonald)

Loving Well in the Face of Loss: Preparing Foster Families for When a Child Leaves – Being a foster parent is filled with many joys, but it can also involve loss and heartache – especially when a placement leaves. When foster placements return home or move to another home it impacts everyone, including the foster child, foster parents, and other children in the home. This session will explore how foster parents can 'love well' even in the face of this loss, and how they can discover purpose and joy during this time. The session will focus on practical strategies to help prepare and support everyone that is impacted when a foster child leaves, and to recognize how God is at work. (Travis Jones)

Lunch Sessions

What's Next?: Stories from Families Serving Orphans and At-Risk Children in Ways Other Than Adoption & Foster Care (Parent Panel Facilitated by Ira Kirkley)

Whatcha Reading? A Survey of Helpful Adoption and Foster Care Books for Adults and Children (Amy Monroe)

Making Sense of the Cost of Adoption (Michael Monroe)

Breakout Session 3

Sooner Than You Think: Equipping Adoptive Parents with Simple Answers to Challenging Questions About Sex and Reproduction – Most parents feel ill-equipped to answer questions from their child about sex and reproduction. This is especially true for many adoptive parents. And yet being able to talk clearly and confidently with your child about these important topics is particularly important for adoptive parents. In this session, Mary Flo Ridley will provide adoptive parents with the understanding and skills they need to help shape the sexual character of their children. *(Mary Flo Ridley)*

The Practical Gospel: Re-Discovering Our Call to the Adoption or Foster Care Journey – Is the Gospel at odds with becoming prepared and equipped for the adoption or foster care journey? Does learning and seeking help in any way diminish the role of the Gospel? This session will offer an insightful look at what it means to travel the adoption and foster care journey in light of and motivated by the Gospel. This session will focus on how the Gospel is made real, practical and “fully alive” as we follow God on this journey. *(Greg & Tracey Fields)*

From the Valley to the Mountain Top: Finding Hope and Help in Crisis – Many families find themselves in the “valley of crisis” as a result of their adopted or foster child’s behaviors. In this session, veteran adoptive parents Alan and Debbie Jones, will share from their experience how parents can best prepare for the challenge of difficult behaviors. By focusing on practical tools and strategies for parents (with an emphasis on “older” kids), this session will point parents toward the hope and help needed to begin the climb out of the valley and move toward a more joyful and successful future. *(Alan & Debbie Jones)*

Opening Up About Open Adoption – As a result of more and more open adoptions and a growing body of research studying its impact, parents today know more than ever before about open adoption. In this session, Cathy Sones will talk honestly about open adoption – what it is, what it is not, how it is changing and what we are learning about the impact of open adoption for everyone involved. *(Cathy Sones)*

Moving from Checklists to Reality – New foster and adoptive parents often overlook or dismiss critical information about the foster and adoption experience. In this session, Ira and Valerie Kirkley use their own experience as foster and adoptive parents to highlight important details that parents and parents-to-be cannot afford to overlook or disregard – and they will also focus on some aspects of being a foster or adoptive family for which no level of planning can prepare you. *(Ira & Valerie Kirkley)*

Adoptee Track (3 Sessions)

Beyond Reality TV: The Truth Behind Search and Reunion – Those in the adoption community have either seen or heard about the reality TV shows that tend to glamorize the complex aspects of adoption search and reunion. Have you ever wondered why none of those shows are in syndication or production today? The reality is that adoption search and reunion is an intricate journey for a triad member to embark on with many unique issues to consider before and long after a search is started. These sessions will focus on dispelling myths and assumptions that often persist when adoptees enter the search process. They will examine the motivations behind a search and offer insights for preparing for real reactions to real people involved with search – not just the fantasy. *Open to adoptees age 18 and older only. (Melanie Chung-Sherman and Heather Ellis)*