



a different kind of adoption organization  
serving adopted children of color and their families

## Understanding Adoption Stories Candle Ceremony

*Ritual can play an important role in helping children (and adults) address and express unspoken feelings. The folks at FAIR (Families Adopting in Response) developed a beautiful ritual for adopted children that we have adapted. This ceremony is written for adoptees and centers adoptees' experiences and relationships; please use care and sensitivity when modifying for use by non-adoptees.*

### **I light this candle for my birth mother**

whose body was my first home and whose heartbeat was the first sound I heard. Whether I know her or not, whether or not I will ever see her, she lives in my heart. I hope she remembers me. I will never forget her.

### **I light this candle for my birth father**

the man who gave me life. I may or may not fully understand why he couldn't raise me, but I know it was not my fault. He too has a place in my heart.

### **I light this candle for my birth siblings (known & unknown)**

for those I remember and those I only dream about. We are family. Perhaps one day I will look into their faces and see my reflection.

### **I light this candle for the grandmas, grandpas, aunts, uncles, cousins, and other ancestors in my first family**

I hope that you remember me.

### **I light this candle for my foster family(ies)**

Even though I didn't always understand who you were to me, I know now that you cared for me and helped me on my journey.

### **I light this candle for the social workers, caretakers in the orphanage and others**

who fed me and cared for me and so many other children. They are a part of my story and helped to guide my days and years in all the places I have lived.



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### **I light this candle for my parent(s) by adoption**

who teach me about life, love, and family. I hope you understand that sometimes when I am angry towards you it has nothing to do with you. Adoption is complicated and I need you to remind me that I am safe, that you will always love me, no matter what and that it is OK for me to express all my feelings even when I am sad or mad.

### **I light this candle for my sibling(s) by adoption**

We might not look alike, we might not act alike, but we are real siblings and will be forever.

### **I light this candle for all my relatives who make up my family**

for grandparents and aunts and uncles and cousins who form a warm, supporting circle around me.

### **I light this candle for all the other people who have gone in and out of my life**

for those who hurt me and for those who helped me. I don't have to be afraid to talk about them because I am getting stronger every day and do not have to be defined by what has hurt me. I ask my parents, my siblings and everyone who cares about me to help me understand and process all my experiences, good and bad.

### **I light this candle for other adoptees and foster youth I know**

because this group can understand me in special ways. They are my community and my friends. We all have different stories but we all share a story too. And we all have most of our story ahead of us—it is not yet written but is ours to grow into and own.