



Life Summary Guidelines

Name: _____

We understand the personal nature of this information and it will be kept in strict confidence. A typed Life Summary is required for each adoptive parent. Use short paragraphs to answer each question covering the subjects below, i.e., write a paragraph to “describe your personality” then another one about “how you view yourself,” etc. It would be helpful if you would also title the headings for each subject matter as titled below.

Motivation to Adopt: Tell about your desire to adopt a child and what prompted that desire. If you know the birth mother of the child you are adopting, tell about the circumstances in which you got together. How many children do you hope to adopt to complete your family? How important to you is physical resemblance between you and the child you hope to adopt? What factors are most important to you as you consider the child you are hoping to adopt, i.e., health, racial factors, etc. What differences might be anticipated in parenting an adopted child as opposed to a biological child? What do you think you will like most and what do you think you will like least as you think about becoming an adoptive parent? How is your family reacting to your adoption plan? How have you educated yourself about raising an adopted child? What books or articles have you read? What difficulties do you realize a child could have in adjusting to the new environment? If you are adopting a non-infant, how do you plan to help the child adjust and grieve the loss of his/her old environment? What type of child are you open to adopting. (gender, race, age, health). What type of openness are you comfortable with in relation to ongoing communication with birth family?

Adoption of a Child of a Another Race, Culture or Nationality: If you are adopting a child of a different race, culture or nationality, a bi-racial child or a child of mixed races to the extent the child is going to look different from you, how would you help the child feel comfortable? How would your neighborhood, your neighborhood schools, and your family or friends accept this child? How would you help this child with racial and cultural identity? What experiences have you had with other races and cultures? How can you help a child maintain connections with a culture that is different from your own?

Fertility: If you are infertile describe how you came to discover this. Describe the process by which you have come to accept/resolve this issue. If your mate is infertile, describe your reaction toward this issue.

Personality: Describe your personality. How is your view of yourself different from the way others might view you? What do you like about yourself, and what would you like to change? What do you consider to be your greatest strengths as a person, and what are your weaknesses?

Family Relationships: Describe your parent's background, including culture, religion, education, occupations, financial status, etc. Describe their personalities. Describe your parent's marriage, including expressions of love and affection, happiness, communication, disappointment, frustration, anger, resolution of conflicts, sadness or depression, and stress. Describe them as parents, including parent-child relationships and their practices of discipline when you were a child, adolescent and teenager, etc. What is your relationship with your parents now? If they are deceased please explain how they died. Describe your step parents if applicable. How old were you when they became your step parents. Describe your siblings, including birth order, alliances and/or conflicts, what they are now doing and your relationship with them now. With whom in your family did you get along the best and why? With whom did you have the most difficulty getting along and why? Describe your relationship with extended family members. Compared to other families you have known, both as a child and as an adult, would you say your family was happier or less happy than most families? How have you tried to overcome deficiencies in your background?

Early Home life: Describe your home life during your growing up years (including moves and other major adjustments), where you were born (if outside the U.S., please give details), where you were raised, how long you have been a resident of Florida and how you came to Florida. Describe your house and community growing up. What ages of your childhood did you not like, and why? What was the biggest disappointment or loss you have had in your life and how did you cope with it? What are some of your most important memories about your home life? What are the things and family traditions that you value from your childhood experiences, and what things do you wish were different? What family traditions that you grew up with do you still keep today, and why? Are there family traditions with which you grew up with that you do not keep, and why? How old were you when you left home? Why did you take that step at that particular time?

School age Growing Up Through Teenage Years: Describe your educational experiences (elementary, middle school, and high school), including attitude towards school, curricular and extracurricular activities, and achievements. Explain what kinds of school experiences you liked the most (i.e., what subjects, what activities, etc.) What parts of school were the most difficult for you (what classes and activities)? What were the biggest problems in your teenage years? Describe your peer group and dating relationships.

Adulthood: Describe your post-high school education and work experiences. Describe significant relationships during this period of time.

Employment: Describe your current job situation and your level of satisfaction with your job. Of all the jobs you have had, which did you like best and why? Which did you like least and why? What are your responsibilities at your current job? How long have you held this job? Do you have any plans to look for another job within the next few years? Is there anything about your work or work schedule that creates unusual stress on

your family life? How do you think becoming an adoptive parent might affect your work? How much time do you plan on taking off from work after the adoption. Do you plan on continuing to work after you adopt? If so, what childcare arrangement do you have in mind?

Courtship and Marriage: Describe the circumstances of your courtship and marriage to your current spouse, including how you met, what attracted you to your spouse, how long you have known each other and dated, the wedding, how long you have been married, what you like most about your spouse, what you would like to change about your spouse, etc. What do you think your spouse likes most about you and what do you think your spouse would like to have you change? Besides your love for each other, what do you think was the main reason you married and the main reason you have stayed together? What problems have you and your spouse had to overcome during your marriage, and what has been done to resolve them? Describe you and your spouse as a couple, including money management, how financial decisions are made, roles and division of responsibilities, etc. What do you like about being married and what do you least like about being married? How much time during the week do you and your spouse spend alone together, and do you think this is enough time? What is your relationship with your in-laws? What issues might make you want or consider a divorce or an ending of the relationship with your spouse?

Previous Marriage (if applicable): If you had a previous marriage and were divorced, what were the factors that caused the failure of the marriage (be specific, do not say lack of communication)? Identify your emotions about the ending of your marriage and describe how you handled those emotions. What did you learn from this experience that will make your current marriage better? Are there any children from a previous marriage? What contact do you have with your previous spouse(s) and/or any children from a previous marriage? When you remarried, or entered into a relationship with your current spouse, how did your children adjust to the new person? What was your previous spouse's name? How did you meet? How long did you live together before separating? How long were you separated before the divorce was final? What were the factors that contributed to your divorce? What have you learned from this experience? If you had children, what were the child custody arrangements? Do you still keep in contact with your spouse now?

Parenting Experiences: If you have children, describe each of them, including the children who may live out of your home. Describe your relationship with each child. Describe your philosophy of disciplining children (be specific), and how you would rate your effectiveness with your children up to this point. Have you ever been a parent to someone else's child and if so, explain and describe that experience. Describe any parenting experiences you have had with relatives or neighbor's children, church activities, babysitting for younger siblings, etc. What forms of discipline do you find to be most effective? Every family has rules (i.e., no swearing, no walking around the house barefoot, etc.). Regarding the rules in your home, what rules can sometimes be broken and what rules can never be broken? What have you learned from your parenting

experiences that you plan to do differently in the future? If you are a parent, what have you enjoyed and disliked most about being a parent? What childhood ages do you think you would most and least enjoy parenting? As a prospective adoptive parent, what do you believe that you can offer a child?

In the event of you and your spouse's death, whom would you designate as the guardian for your children? Please include the name, address, and your relationship to the person or persons you have designated as the guardian. Why did you choose them to be your child's guardian?

Home and Community: Describe your current home, including each room. How do you make your home an expression of yourselves? Who are the people who most regularly visit your home or whose homes you regularly visit. How have these people reacted to your desire to become an adoptive family? Describe your relationship with your neighbors and your community involvement. What are the ways in which a new child placed in your home might cause problems or concerns in keeping your home and housekeeping standards? Would you consider your neighborhood to be ethnically diverse?

Religion: What is your religious background? Are you active in your religion? What role does religion or spirituality play in your life? What kind of religious training do you believe is important in your home?

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PUT YOUR NAME AT THE TOP OF THE FRONT PAGE.