



PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER

## Adoption case study: Joy, Harry and Ethan

Joy, who is a vicar, adopted two brothers, seven-year-old Harry\* and Ethan\*, six.

She said: "I knew I had a lot of love to give children. I'd always wanted to have a family but I didn't meet a husband to have them with in the usual way!"

Joy said a friend who had adopted suggested she should consider it but initially she did not think someone who was single or a vicar would be allowed to adopt. She spoke to a social worker at a church seminar she attended and was told she would be suitable so started to think and pray about it seriously.

She said as well as her desire to start a family, she was motivated to adopt by a sense of God's compassionate call to all Christians to care for the most vulnerable members of society, especially children without parents.

Joy had heard about PACT through a Home for Good seminar and met other people who had adopted through the agency at a clergy conference.

"All the interactions I had with the various members of the team at PACT made me feel confident to explore the process with them. I was particularly drawn to the emphasis on an ongoing commitment to the adoptive families and the excellent aftercare which is provided."

Joy was matched with Harry and Ethan, who were placed with her in the summer of 2016.

She said: "Meeting my children for the first time was amazing, I couldn't believe how much they accepted me as their mum even on that first day. I cried when I could hear them through the front door saying 'it's mummy!'. What has been even more powerful has been the months that followed when they really grew to feel like my children, not just children who call me mum, but children to whom I am their mum."

Joy said the boys had settled really well with her and were making great progress.

"We have had ups and downs. There have been a lot of tantrums, outbursts and tears (not all mine!) but each day I can see trust and love being built up. Acceptance has played a huge part in both my parenting and their understanding of what has happened to them. It isn't easy but the progress they are making and the way I am able to walk with them through it is a beautiful thing to me and those around me who have seen the changes in all of us."

She said throughout the adoption process she was encouraged that her faith was seen as a positive thing, and



that her church family had been incredibly supportive.

"They really looked for ways to encourage and practically look after me in the build-up to introductions. They welcomed my boys with open arms and were keen to understand the particular needs of adopted children. Other adoptive families in the wider church community made particular effort to come alongside us with shared experience and empathy. Their prayers and practical help have seen me through the season of adjustment and their ongoing support enables me to balance full-time work and full-time motherhood.

"My own faith has been deepened and enriched through the whole process. Theologically adoption is an important concept; in church we talk about how God has loved us and made us his children through Jesus. But when you actually take a child into your home, give them your name, write them into your will and nurture them with unconditional love, you feel the reality of God's love for you in a completely new way."

Joy said her advice to anyone considering adoption was to fully understand what it entailed and to accept the prayers and practical help from friends and family.

She said: "Trust that if God has laid it on your heart then he will also give you the strength and resources to see it through."

PACT has a long history of approving families of faith as adopters

The agency works closely with the Home for Good charity to encourage more Christian families and those who attend church to think about growing their family through adoption

\* Names changed in line with confidentiality



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