

News Story Summary

Lesley Hemphill was in her mid-20s and working as a volunteer mentor at the Tulsa Boys' Home when she met 15-year-old Dakota, a resident there. His biological parents had lost custody of him. Lesley and Dakota were soon spending a lot of time together. She began to think about the possibility of being Dakota's mom. It wasn't long before Dakota asked Lesley if she could adopt him. Authorities had some concerns about a single woman in her mid-20s adopting a teenage boy. But Lesley demonstrated that she would be the best mom for Dakota. In August 2015, the adoption was finalized, officially making Lesley and Dakota a family. In May 2018, Good Morning America honored Lesley for Mother's Day with a surprise visit to her home. Dakota says, "I don't think anyone would be able to ask for a better mom. Just seeing the parent she is teaches me the parent I need to be one day. The way she cares about other people also teaches me how to care about other people."

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the term "young single mom adopts teen boy".)

Focus Attention

To supplement the Focus Attention idea, share the news story above. Note that Lesley Hemphill's decision to adopt Dakota drastically changed Dakota's life. Then continue by asking the question under Introduce by asking: *What factors make an adoption hearing so joyful? How does the status of the child change with legal adoption, and why is that important?*

Challenge

To supplement the Summarize and Challenge ideas, remind the group of the news article about Lesley Hemphill adopting Dakota. Remind the group that adoptions on earth are a snapshot of the joy, acceptance, and belonging that comes when we are adopted into God's family. Continue by following the instructions under Review by dividing the group into three teams to develop action points related to In My Context (PSG, p. 45).