

**Classroom Study Guide  
Presented by  
Gladney Center for Adoption**

Thank you for your interest in Gladney Center for Adoption's education materials. This study guide is designed to help you with your presentation. Included in this guide, you will find

- ★ presentation outline
- ★ questions concerning the video
- ★ quiz
- ★ helpful hints for making your presentation

As an educator, you have the opportunity to reach out and educate others about adoption and the Gladney Center. Too many times, adoption myths endure and "happy endings" go untold.

The good news is that teen pregnancy rates continue to drop. Teen pregnancy peaked in 1990, with 1.1 million pregnancies occurring in young women ages 13-19. This statistic has steadily declined in all ethnicities, and the current number of teen pregnancies occurring in the United States is around 850,000. Current statistics show that:

**52% will choose to parent their baby**

**33% will terminate their pregnancy**

**13% will miscarry**

**Only 2% of pregnant teens will make an adoption plan for their baby**

**Of the 2% that do choose adoption, 75 percent will place the child within their family**

In a pregnancy counseling situation, adoption is not mentioned **40%** of the time. If adoption is mentioned, **60%** of the information is inaccurate. Because adoption has changed dramatically over a short period of time, many professionals and the general public are unaware of current adoption practices.

### **Adoption Today**

Adoption has changed immensely in the past few years. Today, adoption allows birth parents to make a loving decision for what they feel is in the best interest of the child. Adoption allows biological parents who are not yet ready emotionally or financially to make a plan for their child's future. Placing a child for adoption is a parenting decision that seeks to ensure a greater quality of life for the adopted child.

### **How Has Adoption Changed?**

- ★ Birth parents select their child's adoptive parents from profiles created by the adoptive parents.
- ★ Birth parents have an opportunity to speak with or meet the adoptive parents prior to placement.
- ★ Birth parents receive regular correspondence (photos and letters) through Gladney's Post Adoption Department.
- ★ Because adoption is more open, adoptive parents are explaining to their children what it means to be adopted and the courageous choice their birth parents have made.



# About Gladney Center for Adoption



## A Brief History

Founded in 1887 by the Reverend I.Z.T. Morris, Gladney Center for Adoption was originally known as ***The Texas Children's Home and Aid Society***. Its work focused on finding adoptive parents for orphaned or abandoned children, many of whom had been sent west on "**orphan trains**" from the east coast. Reverend Morris placed over 1,000 children through ***The Texas Children's Home and Aid Society***.

Not long after Rev. Morris and his wife passed away, Mrs. Edna Gladney became the superintendent of the agency. Mrs. Gladney became nationally recognized in the field of maternity services and adoption and has been credited with the initiation of **two major pieces of Texas legislation** concerning adopted children:

- ★ **The removal of the word "illegitimate" from birth certificates**
- ★ **A law which guaranteed adopted children would have inheritance rights just as biological children do.**

The agency was renamed in her honor in 1950 and she continued as Executive Director until 1960. Mrs. Gladney's life and work were honored in the film "*Blossoms in the Dust*", starring \*Greer Garson, and in 1955 in "*This is Your Life*." In 1961, Mrs. Gladney died due to complications from diabetes.

During the 1960's and 1970's, Gladney's maternity services expansion program began under the leadership of Executive Director, Ruby Lee Piester. Mrs. Piester also became well known for her work in adoption through Gladney. The National Council for Adoption in Washington DC named its headquarters after Mrs. Piester (named the Ruby Lee Piester Center). Texas Governor George Bush asked her to serve on a special committee to improve the Texas Foster Care system and most recently she was inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame.

Following Mrs. Piester's retirement, Eleanor Tuck became Gladney's Executive Director for the next four years. Today, Gladney is directed by Michael J. McMahon, the first Gladney adoptive parent to ever head the agency.



# **“Megan’s Adoption Story” Presentation Outline**

## ***Helpful Hints***

- \* Small pieces of candy help to get the attention of a young audience. Toss a piece to each student who gets an answer correct, or to anyone who actively participates in the class discussion.
- \* Know as much about Gladney as possible before making a presentation.
- \* Be familiar with each of the brochures and materials in your packet.
- \* Modify the information in this guide and conform it to your audience.
- \* Listen to your audience.
- \* Use positive adoption language.

### **Q: Is anyone familiar with Gladney Center for Adoption?**

*Provide a little history about Gladney. It's important for your audience to understand Gladney's longevity and that we plan to be here for another 100 years.*

### **Q: How many of you know someone your age who has become pregnant?**

*Expect a large number of raised hands.*

### **Q: What was their plan once they found out? Did they parent? Choose abortion or adoption?**

*Most will tell you their friends parented.*

### **Q: Does anyone know how many teens, 19 years old and younger, get pregnant every year in the United States?**

**A:** *Just under 1 million (850,000)*

### **Q: What percentage of these young ladies will choose to parent?**

**A:** *52%*



**Q: What percentage of these young ladies will choose to terminate their pregnancy?**

**A:** 33%

**Q: What percentage of these young ladies will choose to make a plan of adoption?**

**A:** 2%

**Q: Which state ranks highest in teen pregnancy?**

**A:** Nevada (Texas is currently ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation)

**Q: What age was the youngest birth mom Gladney has worked with?**

**A:** 11

**Q: Why do you think so many teens choose to parent?**

**A:** *Discussion*

**Q: Why do you think so few will make a plan of adoption?**

**A:** *Discuss*

**(\*\*Explain):** Adoption is not for every woman who finds herself with an unplanned pregnancy, just as abortion is not for every woman either. But adoption is another real and viable option. No matter what decision a woman makes, it has to be the right decision for her. Regardless of whether she parents, terminates the pregnancy, or places the child for adoption, it is a decision she has to live with for the rest of her life.



## **Explaining adoption through Gladney:**

When a woman inquires about adoption, Gladney wants to make sure she feels good about the decision she is making. She will receive an "information packet" that includes information about Gladney and adoption. Included in the packet, is a "Decision Making Guide". The guide provides a list of questions about each of the choices. The answers to these questions will help her in her decision making process.

If she chooses adoption, she can either choose to live at Gladney or stay at home in her own community.

### **Gladney's Residential Program offers:**

- ★ Beautiful and modern dorm
- ★ Swimming pool
- ★ Exciting activities that include shopping, eating out, sports events and movies
- ★ Prenatal care and delivery at a state of the art hospital
- ★ High School transportation to the Crowley ISD alternative center
- ★ Middle school classes on Gladney's campus through the Crowley ISD
- ★ GED tutoring and testing program
- ★ Career development classes that include computer classes, nurses aide training and more
- ★ Counselors who work with each resident to make an adoption plan that meets her needs
- ★ Life long post adoption services

### **Gladney's Community Services Program offers:**

- ★ Prenatal care and delivery at a state of the art hospital
- ★ Legal Assistance
- ★ Counselors who work with each birth mom to make an adoption plan that meets her needs
- ★ Life long post adoption services



**\* All services are FREE of charge to Gladney's birth moms in both programs.**

Each birth mom's counselor works with her to determine her interests and what she is looking for in an adoptive parent. These interests are then matched to prospective adoptive parents. She will first "meet" them on paper through profiles; a "scrapbook" or photo album of the prospective adoptive parents' lives. These profiles show pictures of the couples home, pets, activities they are involved in, and grandparents.

After a couple has been chosen by a birth mom, she may call them on the phone and meet them, face-to-face, if she chooses.

A birth mother cannot sign any adoption papers until **48 hours after the delivery of her baby. She may change her mind at any time prior to her signing.** But once the papers are signed, they are irrevocable. For this reason, Gladney wants to make sure each woman feels good about her decision. For the duration that she has been working with the Center, she has received one-on-one counseling and group counseling.

## **What is the birth father's role in adoption?**

Gladney must know about every possible father for a birth mom's baby. He, too, must sign papers. The birth father signs an "Affidavit of Waiver of Interest in Child".

**Q: What percentage of guys that get a girl pregnant will leave the girl to raise the child by herself?**

**A:** 85%

**Q: Why do you think he chooses to leave?**

**A:** Discussion

**Q: What do you think are the birth fathers responsibilities to the child?**

**A:** Discussion (Legally, the birth father is financially responsible and must pay child support.)

Sometimes, the birth father and birth mother will choose the adoptive parents together. They both can receive pictures and letters from the adoptive family. They may also send pictures and letters to their adoptive family. This correspondence is done through Gladney's Post Adoption Department.



## Who are the adoptive parents?

Every year, Gladney Center for Adoption receives approximately 6,000 phone calls from couples wanting to adopt. Since Gladney works with about 150 birth moms each year, there are very strict guidelines that the Center follows to narrow down the 6,000 calls and select the very best families for the birth moms from which to choose.

These couples will attend an “orientation” on the Gladney campus. Staff members from the legal department, adoption services, birth parent services, and post adoption will speak to the group throughout the day. Other adoptive parents, as well as birth parents, will visit with the group and share their adoption experiences.

After orientation, these couples take home an application to complete. As a part of their approval process, a criminal background check must be completed, they return to Gladney for an office visit, their caseworker will visit them at their home for a “home study”, and they must show proof of good health.

Gladney also works with several foreign countries in the International Adoption Program. Currently, Gladney is working with China, Russia, Ukraine, Guatemala, Bulgaria, and Kazakhstan.

**(Ask for any questions.)**

## Commonly Asked Questions:

### 1. Can a single person adopt?

Yes. Most of Gladney’s single parents adopt internationally. However, 1998 was the first year for a birth mom to choose a single mom with whom to place her child. Birth moms are choosing adoption because they want to provide a mom and a dad for their child.

### 2. How much does it cost to adopt from Gladney?

Adoption fees to adoptive parents are based on a sliding scale. These adoption fees help to cover birth parent expenses including her medical, legal, counseling, activities, education and some living expenses. A normal delivery costs anywhere from \$6,000 to \$10,000. It costs Gladney approximately \$30,000 for each birth mother with whom Gladney is working. The average adoption fee is around \$25,000.



**3. How much does it cost for a birth mom to live at Gladney?**

It's free, even if a birth mom changes her mind and decides to parent

**4. After papers are signed, can the birth mom change her mind?**

Once she has signed her papers, it is irrevocable. \*In the state of Texas, she cannot sign until at least 48 hours after delivery. (\*Adoption laws vary from state to state. Gladney operates under Texas law. All legal questions in this study guide are answered in accordance to Texas law.)

**5. What if the birth father doesn't want to sign?**

Many times, having a Gladney casework talk with the birth father to find out why he is hesitant to sign will resolve the issue. However, there are other options and the legal staff at Gladney will pursue all possibilities to complete the legal process. Sometimes the birth father's refusal to sign interferes with the birth mother's plan to place the child for adoption. This may force her to parent when she is not ready.

**6. Can the birth mother change her mind even if she lives at Gladney?**

Yes.

**7. Where does Gladney get its money?**

Gladney is a 501 C (3) non-profit organization. Gladney receives money through private donations and special events.

**8. How many babies do you place each year?**

Approximately 300.

**9. Can the girls have visitors if they stay at Gladney?**

Yes. Girls that are 17 years and younger must have permission from their parents on who can visit.

**10. Can the birth mom see her baby after it has gone home with its adoptive parents?**

It depends on the agreement between the birth parents and adoptive parents. It doesn't happen often, but some birth parents and adoptive parents are meeting after placement. The birth parents do receive ongoing pictures and letters after placement.

**11. Who names the baby?**

The birth mother often names her baby. The adoptive parents might keep this name or choose a name on their own.



## 12. Will you place a baby with a gay couple?

The birth moms working with Gladney are mostly looking for more traditional families that can provide a mom and a dad.

Show the video *“Megan’s Adoption Story”*

“In this video, you will hear one Gladney birth mother’s adoption story, and learn more about the Gladney Center’s adoption services. Let’s watch.”

## Conclusion:

Before you take a chance, ask yourself...

Can I afford a baby?

Have I finished high school?

Am I in a lasting relationship?

Am I ready for the responsibility of a family?

It’s your **choice**... you know what **choices** are right for you.

Being sexually active is taking a big chance with your future and your partner’s future.

Talk with someone about your sexual feelings -- someone you trust and who is close to you.

Most of all, think about your future and all that you can do if you make the right decision.

## How to reach Gladney

Phone number- 1-800-Gladney (452-3639)

Website- [www.gladney.org](http://www.gladney.org) or [www.adoption-education.com](http://www.adoption-education.com) (Great resource for students who are researching a paper on adoption)

E-mail- [Jennifer.lanter@gladney.org](mailto:Jennifer.lanter@gladney.org) or [Karin.matula@gladney.org](mailto:Karin.matula@gladney.org)

**Gladney is here for you!**



## Quiz:

It is helpful to have a bag of candy (Starbursts are popular) to reward for correct answers.

- 1. When did Gladney Center for Adoption actually get its start?**  
*1887; then called the Texas Children's Home and Aid Society*
- 2. What is Gladney Center for Adoption?**  
*The most comprehensive maternity home and adoption agency in the country*
- 3. About how many teens (ages 19 and under) get pregnant each year?**  
*Just under 1 million (850,000)*
- 4. About what percentage of these pregnant teens terminate their pregnancy?**  
*33%*
- 5. About what percentage of these pregnant teens parent?**  
*52%*
- 6. About what percentage of these pregnant teens place their baby for adoption?**  
*2%*
- 7. Legally, when can the birth mother sign her relinquishment papers?**  
*48 hours after delivery*
- 8. What countries does Gladney work with in International Adoption?**  
*Russia, China, Bulgaria, Guatemala, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan*
- 9. What word was placed on birth certificates of children born to "unwed mothers"?**  
*Illegitimate*
- 10. Who worked to have this word removed?**  
*Edna Gladney*



- 11. Which state has the highest rate of teen pregnancy?**  
*Nevada (Texas is currently ranked 5<sup>th</sup>)*
- 12. Of teens who become pregnant, what percentage of them will drop out of high school?** 80%
- 13. What percentage of teens, who marry because of pregnancy, will eventually divorce?**  
*90%*
- 14. Of the guys who get a teen girl pregnant, what percentage of them will eventually leave the girl to raise the baby by herself?**  
*85%*
- 15. What is the average cost of prenatal and delivery of a newborn child?**  
*\$6,000 to \$10,000*
- 16. What is the average cost to provide for a child's first year of life?**  
*\$10,000*

Just for Fun...

See how well your students paid attention to "Megan's Story of Adoption" video!

- 1. Where is Megan from?**  
A small town in West TX
- 2. What are the names of the Adoptive Parents she chose for her baby?**  
Vance & Laurie
- 3. What state do they live in?**  
Virginia
- 4. What first attracted Megan to them?**  
They live on a farm and have horses
- 5. What did they name the baby?**  
Claire



**6. What is Megan studying now in college?**  
Elementary Education

