

Heritage Camps Help Adopted Children Find Identity

✖ Challenges abound when it comes to international adoption.

One such serious challenge is in helping adopted children gain a sense of identity.

Children who have been adopted from other countries may struggle with their sense of identity if they grow up uninformed about their birth heritage. One ministry offers an opportunity for these children as well as their families to take pride in their histories.

Buckner International ministry partner Dillon International has built a solid reputation in the international adoption community on providing top-quality “heritage camps” for adoptees and their families.

“Our experience over the years has taught us that adoptees who have a greater awareness and appreciation of their dual heritage grow up to be more well-rounded adults and better equipped to succeed in life,” explains the Dillon Web site. Dillon’s Karin Price agrees.

“It is important that children who have been adopted into their family from other countries get a good sense of their identity and who they are and celebrate really both of the heritages they have: the heritage that they were born with—that comes from the country they came from, and then the heritage that they were adopted into,” says Price.

Heritage camps help a child to celebrate these things by teaching them about other cultures. “For children, as they grow up wanting to know who they are and how they fit into our society, it’s important for them to know where they were born and a little bit about that country—maybe a little bit about the language, what types of food are eaten there,” says Price.

And at heritage camp, "It's a time where they learn about that country—they learn about the country from people who are from that country."

Entire families can learn together but also engage in intercultural dialogue with other families. Relationships are built, and children are better equipped to answer people when they ask difficult questions about why he or she doesn't look like the rest of the family. They can even be proud of their answers.

Your adopted child will learn more about their earthly heritage and their identity in Christ at a heritage camp. Heritage camps for children from China, India, Korea, Africa, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, Guatemala, Vietnam and Haiti are all offered through Dillon. Many camps are in Tulsa, Okla., but not all. [Click here](#) for a list of camps and more information on when and where each one will take place.

As children attend camp, they are able to gain a better sense of identity right off the bat. "This 6-year-old had come in, and this was the first time she was at camp," remembers Price. "She looked around registration (and a lot of our camps are anywhere from 100 to 200 children), and she said, 'Mommy! The families look just like us!'"