



Preparing to Say Goodbye

While it's expected that reunification will take place at some point during your foster care journey, most foster families are never really prepared for that moment. The anxiety and grief that comes with saying goodbye to a child you have welcomed into your home, who has become a much-loved part of your family.

Here are some ideas to help your family prepare for that day

- Learn about your role in reunification and what resources are available from your certification agency before you begin your fostering
- Think about what it might be like to say goodbye
- Find ways to celebrate each child that comes through your home
 - Create a Lifebook to highlight the moments and memories
 - Build a rock garden; paint and write the names of the children and find a spot in your yard or home to honor the children that have lived there
 - Make a beaded necklace or bracelet as children enter your home and add a bead to honor each child
- Walk alongside the birth family. You are called by God to love and be a part of their redemption story. When you grow a relationship with your child's family, your goodbye may become a 'see you later'.
- Reach out to the family- Share your heart with them and let them know you're rooting for them
- Pray for the family, for their success, redemption and restoration
- Allow Time to Grieve—Reach out to your support team. Let them rally around you and your family as you grieve.
- Ask your church to pray for your family
- Spend time reconnecting with your family, enjoy outings together, or staying home for a night of movies and popcorn
- Provide opportunities for all family members to share memories, emotions, and fears. Family members will handle the transition in different ways and timelines. Remember God's faithfulness. Explore Scripture about God's faithfulness and love.
- When grief is deep or family members are having a hard time with the adjustment, consider investing in family counseling.

Reminding yourself that fostering is an opportunity to love and care for a child or children temporarily and be a part of reuniting a family that was once broken and is now, prayerfully, safe, and healthy. Reunification can be an illustration of the gospel message, beauty from ashes.