

Respect Life Ministry



Reflections for the Spiritual Adoption of an Unborn Baby

Written by and permission given to
St. Isidore Church for their use
by Lisa Menich

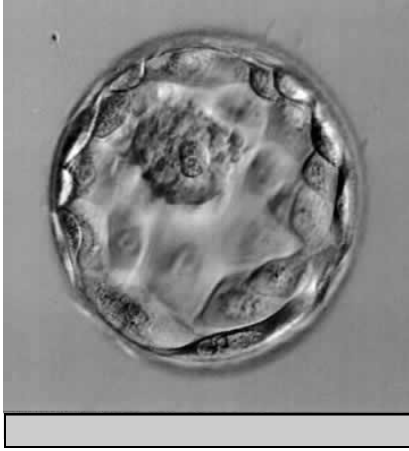
What is Spiritual Adoption?

Spiritual Adoption is a way to prayerfully bond to one particular, yet unknown, baby as he/she begins the journey from conception to birth. Through Spiritual Adoption, you commit yourself to remembering that child in prayer for 40 weeks, thus “adopting” them, until the day that they are born. This is a prayerful way to open our hearts to those who are voiceless and to be a strong witness to the sanctity of all life.

How to use this booklet:

Choose a specific day of the week to pray for your spiritually adopted baby, or decide on a time to pray every day. You may use your own prayer or use the one provided in the back of this booklet. Each time you pray, read the weekly reflection and think about the baby’s development. You may choose to specifically pray for the growth that is happening that week, or you may wish to just pray for the general health and life of your baby. Continue to work through the 40 weeks and then pray a prayer of Thanksgiving the final week when your spiritually adopted baby is born.

Please continue to pray that all babies conceived will be given the gift of **LIFE**.



Week 1

“Here I am! Because of God’s divine creativity, I am here! I have only begun with two tiny little cells that came together but I am already wonderfully designed in God’s image. By the end of this week, I will make up only 100 cells.

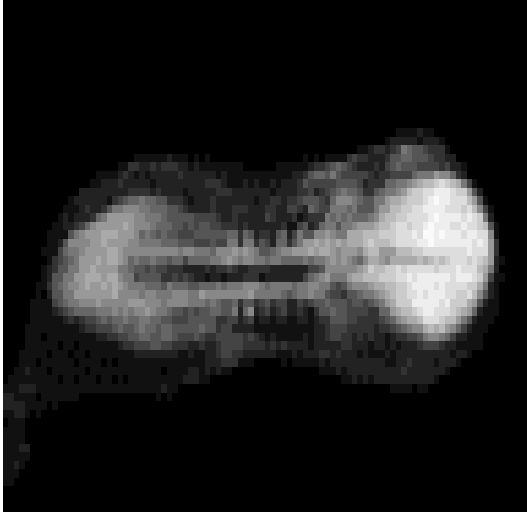
Yet, everything that I need to grow is right here in my mother’s womb. It’s already been decided whether I am a boy or a girl, what color hair I will have, what color my eyes will be, if I’ll have my father’s dimple or my mother’s crooked smile. They don’t even know that I am here yet... but God does....and now you do too!”



Week 2

“This week I have grown to over 150 cells that are divided into 3 layers. Each of those layers is important in God’s design. The innermost layer will become my lungs and stomach; the middle layer will be really busy growing into my bones, cartilage, heart, muscles and internal organs! The outermost layer

will grow to become my brain, nervous system and skin. Right now I am floating freely inside the safe protection of my mother’s womb. She doesn’t even know I’m here yet...but God does...and so do you!”



Week 3

“My mommy took a test today and wasn’t she surprised to find that I am here! I’ve already been working hard to grow and get strong for two whole weeks! This week I will make my home in the wall of her womb. My brain and my spine have already started to develop and the placenta, which will keep me protected and well-nourished for the next 37 weeks, has started to form. I hope that my parents are going to be as excited to see me as I will be to see them! Until then, I have a lot of growing to do. Pray for me.”



Week 4

“I have been here for a whole month now. I am growing much larger and stronger but still have a lot more growing to do. By the end of this week, I will have tiny buds that will grow into my arms and legs and I’ll be just a little bit larger than a grain of rice. I may be small, but I am already changing the life of one family! Isn’t that amazing? Thanks to God, I am wonderfully made.”



Week 5

“This has been a busy week! The base of my brain, my bone marrow and my nervous system are all in place. Did you know that I am developing brain cells at the rate of 250,000 per minute?! My eyes, ears and mouth are starting to form. Even though my heart is not inside my chest cavity yet, it has already started to beat. I can feel my mommy’s heart beat too, as it steadily beats out, ‘love you... love you... love you.’”



Week 6

“It is six weeks since my life began. My head is taking shape and my digestive tract is in formation. The cluster of cells that will become my testis or ovaries is also forming. Won’t my mommy and daddy be surprised when the doctor exclaims, ‘It’s a boy!’ or ‘It’s a girl!?’ This week the umbilical cord that is a life-line from mommy to me is in place and my heart is beating at 138 beats per minute. I am so excited to be here!”



Week 7

“I can move! My muscles and nerves are now functioning and I have reflexes and can move spontaneously. Even my tiny fingers are starting to form. My lungs are starting their slow development and my heart is now inside my thoracic cavity. It beats strongly as I wiggle and move inside my mother. She can’t feel my movements yet, but pretty soon she will. My abdomen is fully formed and my mouth can almost open. I wish I could just yell out to my parents, ‘I can’t wait to meet you--- Thank you for keeping me safe!’ Please pray for me.”



Week 8

“It’s right about now that the doctor has started to call me a fetus, but I’m a person, a really tiny little **person**. If you could see what I look like, you’d say the same thing. My bones are starting to replace some of the cartilage that has developed, which is good since I will need strong bones to run and jump and play. My face and jaw have formed, too. All my vital organs are in place, they just need more time to grow and develop. Won’t mommy and daddy be surprised to see just what I look like? Please keep praying for me.”



Week 9

“This is the week for fingers and toes. Mine are developing really fast this week. I can’t wait to have someone count them and tell me about the “*Little Piggy that went to Market*”. I have opened my mouth wide for the first time. Someday, I will smile and melt my parent’s heart. Right now, my heart beats quickly at 150 beats per minute. Isn’t God wonderful? Pray for me.”



Week 10

“My brain is very big compared to the rest of my body right now. That’s all part of God’s design. My body is so big that you could cradle me in a soup spoon and my legs would hang off the end! Can you believe how far I’ve come in just 10 weeks? - from microscopic to over 5cm in such a short time! Pretty soon my mommy will need to start wearing some clothes that give me a little more growing room. Please pray for me.”



Week 11

“I am tumbling around inside my mother and have noticed that there are more changes this week. I can now swallow fluid and even urinate. This is all just practice for my **birthday**. My internal organs are formed and most of them function fully. They just need more time to grow in size and efficiency. I’m starting to think about what my life will be like when I am born. For now, I am busy growing and resting and thanking God for the gift of life. Please keep praying for me.”



Week 12

“If only they could see me now! My brain and my muscles are working together and, with my reflexes, I am able to flex and bend my limbs and even twist my wrists. My face scrunches up and then relaxes as everything learns how to work together. I am just a tiny baby but I am so much like you. I need to spend a lot of my time sleeping so that my body can continue to grow. Please pray for me.”



Week 13

“There are some parts of development that I’ll bet you take for granted. This week, my neck is more developed and I can turn my head from right to left. What an interesting new sensation. My lungs are making progress too. I can take tiny little breaths. They don’t do much now but prepare my lungs for taking in deep breaths of air once I am born. I will use my lungs to sing praises to God for making me in His image. Please, pray for me.”



Week 14

“You may not believe this, but I am already into my second trimester of development this week. That means that I am 1/3 of the way to birth. Most of what I’ll be doing this trimester is growing. That’s an important job. This week alone, I will DOUBLE in size! By week’s end I will be about as long as a paper napkin. Amazing, huh? The even better news is that by the end of this week, there is much less risk that my mommy and daddy will lose me to miscarriage. I am looking forward to LIFE! Please, pray for me.”



Week 15

“This is another week of miracles. I am able to hear my mother’s voice for the first time! All of the fluid that surrounds me helps to carry the sound of her voice, her heartbeat and even her stomach, to me. I can hear some things outside the womb--- like Daddy’s voice, too! My brain is not yet mature enough to interpret it all, but it sure is interesting. I am growing some hair and eyebrows and even growing tiny little hairs called ‘lanugo’ all over my body that helps me to maintain my body temperature. Don’t worry; by the time I am born, most of that hair will have disappeared! Please keep praying for me”.



Week 16

“Today was a wild ride. I got the hiccups for the first time! I spun around inside my mother. I’m sure she felt me in here, because I heard her start to giggle. What a silly day I’ve had. I’ve learned the reflex of suction, which means that when I arrive into the world, I’ll be ready to eat. I hope I get something sweet, because I definitely have taste buds now. Another thing that is new is that I can tell when there is bright light outside. Sometimes I use my hands to shield my eyes from the light. I thank God that I am here and growing so healthy and strong. Please, pray for me.”



Week 17

“Today was the day I had my first picture taken. They put some warm gel onto my mommy’s tummy to see just what was going on inside. Even though I am developed enough for them to be able to tell if I’m a boy or a girl, I did summersaults during the picture so they never did get a good look. I want my parents to be surprised on my **birthday!** My skin is still pretty transparent; there is a new kind of sealant that is coating it called ‘vernix’. This protects my skin for the next 23 weeks. Keep praying for me!”



Week 18

“I heard a loud noise outside my mother’s womb this week and jumped and even covered my ears to muffle the scary sound. Sometimes I just bump and kick just for fun. I need to get my muscles working and I get to tease my mommy at the same time...what fun! Whenever I make a ruckus, I always hear mommy gathering more people around her to see what I am up to. I can’t wait to see everyone. I wonder if I will have any brothers or sisters. Hope everyone is still praying for me.”



Week 19

“I sleep about 20 hours a day now. Growing is very hard work! I try to make sure that I wake up and kick around when it is very dark in here...and very quiet, too. I get the impression that I get mommy’s full attention that way. I found some strange things in my mouth today. I think they are teeth. They’re underneath my gums. That was a good idea for God to put them there. I won’t need them yet, but one day I will. I can’t wait to have my first cookie! Please pray for me.”



Week 20

“This is the half way point! I can’t believe that I am going to be born in only 20 more weeks! I am half as long as I will be at birth (that’s about 10 inches!) but only weigh about 12% of what I will weigh on my **birthday**. I still have a lot of growing to do. My muscles are getting stronger every day. I can do all sorts of acrobatic moves in here. You should see me! Isn’t it amazing to know that there has never been anyone like me before and there never will be another ‘me’ again? Please pray for me, God’s miracle.”



Week 21

“I’ve been sleeping and dreaming about my family. While I was asleep, more of the ‘vernix’ (the sticky coating that covers my skin) has been busy completely covering me. That coating will keep my skin protected, but also help my body stay slick for the delivery process. That will certainly be a tough day for mommy and me, but I can’t wait for it to come! Thank you for praying for me. God is watching over me.”



Week 22

“Inside my body, I am starting to produce white blood cells this week. They are important because these cells will help my body fight off infection once I am born. My eyebrows and lashes have started to grow too. When I hear my mommy’s voice, sometimes I get excited and punch and kick. Other times, though, her voice soothes me to sleep. I can’t wait to see my parents’ faces. I wonder if they look like me. Please pray for my family.”



Week 23

“This week, there are little lines starting to form on my hands and fingers. These will eventually be my fingerprints. I knew it! I am completely unique! There is no one else like me in the whole world and there never will be. That is so awesome to imagine, but it’s true. God has a special plan just for me and I can’t wait to see what it is. Please pray that I will be given the gift of LIFE.”



Week 24

“My auditory functions are done developing and my inner ear has grown to its full size. That means that when people talk, I can hear them completely. I enjoy the sounds of my parents’ voices and even the sounds of music and rain. It’s wonderful to know that hearing is just one of the many precious gifts that God will give me throughout my lifetime. Please pray that I will experience the most precious gift of all, LIFE.”



Week 25

“I am growing more slowly, yet still steadily, and I’m looking forward to the day that I am born into the world. If my parents were to take a peek inside the womb right now, they would see that I have already started to suck my thumb. What a soothing sensation! I could even cry, if I felt like it. But, for now, I am safe and happy. I’m looking forward to being held in the arms of someone who loves me. Please pray for me.”



Week 26

“It is remarkable to think about all of the things that my body has done in the last 26 weeks. I am $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way through my life here and about to start the final trimester in the womb. It is so exciting to think of what waits for me in the world outside. My brain is so developed that I have actually started to dream about what God has planned for me. For now, I can only imagine...Please pray for me.”



Week 27

“They say that the eyes are the windows to the soul. Well, my soul has been around since God created me 27 weeks ago, but my eyes are finally nearly finished developing. The membrane that was covering my eyes has split and now I can see. My eyes are blue now, but after I am born, they may change to another color within a few weeks. They will be whatever color God has already decided they will be. God’s plan is full of miracles. Please keep praying for me.”



Week 28

“There is a rhythm to my breathing now as my lungs get closer and closer to maturity. I am practicing my breathing in the womb so that when the time for my delivery arrives, I’ll be ready. I’ll bet my parents can’t wait to hear my first cries. Before you know it, those cries will turn into words. I can’t wait to learn all sorts of new things from my parents. They can tell me the story of how I came to be and I will tell them all that I remember about God. Please pray for me.”



Week 29

“It seems unbelievable, but if I were to be born today, I would have about an 80% chance of surviving. Can you believe how far I’ve come? I don’t want to enter the world just yet. I still have some growing to do, but it’s nice to know that if I was born today, I’d have a good chance. Even though I am not growing a whole lot longer, I am still gaining weight slowly to prepare for my life with my family. Please keep praying for me.”



Week 30

“It sure is getting crowded in here! My body has grown so large that I am curled up pretty tightly and still have very little room to move. Sometimes I yawn and stretch and I push my hands and feet into the inside wall of the womb. I’ll bet it looks really funny from the outside! Soon, I will need to turn myself over and stand on my head in order to leave my mother’s womb. My **birthday** is just around the corner! Please pray for me.”



Week 31

“I finally made my move this week and turned my body over. It was tough, but I did it! It is important that I am upside down now so that when the time comes for me to make my entrance into the world I’ll be ready to go. My lungs have started to secrete a liquid that will help my lungs fully expand when I take my first breath of air. I can’t WAIT for my **birthday**. Please keep praying for me.”



Week 32

“There are so many things happening to me this week! My brain is growing quickly now and I am thinking all sorts of new things. It is taking huge amounts of calcium for my bones to harden and I am continuing to gain more weight. I am even starting to look a little chubby. I’ll bet my parents will just love to squeeze my pudgy cheeks. I am healthy and beautiful and thanks to God, I am wonderfully made.”



Week 33

“Mommy and I are getting near the end of the time that we are joined together through the umbilical cord. Even though she is keeping me safe and nourishing my body, I am still completely separate from her. I am my own unique person. I have my own blood which is completely separate from hers. (We might not even be blood-type compatible!) Soon enough, I will emerge from my home here in the womb and think and feel and laugh and love. Please pray for me.”



Week 34

“Here we go again! <hic!> Another case < hic!> of the hiccups! ...<hic!> I have been practicing my breathing here in the womb and <hic!> sometimes that causes me to have the <hic!> hiccups! They sure do feel strange! Meanwhile, the fuzz on my head that will become my hair is growing rapidly and I get excited to hear my mother’s voice as she sings to me. Those will probably be the same songs that I will hear as she sings me to sleep. My **birthday** is almost here! Please pray for me. <hic!>”



Week 35

“It seems that I just keep getting chubbier as the days go by. I need to store up a layer of fat underneath my skin in order to help my body regulate its temperature once I leave my mother’s womb. I am cute and round just like a cherub. I’ll bet once I’m born everyone will say that I look like an angel. I must admit --- I am so adorable! Some of the tiny hairs that have covered my body are starting to disappear. I guess by the time I leave this place I will have a beautifully soft ‘**birthday** suit’! I can’t wait to show it off! Please pray for me.”



Week 36

“We are in the home stretch now. (pun intended! ☺) These are the last few weeks of my time in the womb and it seems that my parents have just about everything done in preparation for my arrival. Every part of my body is fully formed and ready to go except for my lungs. They still need a couple more weeks until they function perfectly. If I were to be born now, though, I would just need to spend a couple of extra days in the hospital before going home with my parents. It looks as though I will just be here for a short while longer...please pray for me.”



Week 37

“Um, it’s getting a little crowded in here. I think it’s about time I get out, don’t you think? I am just getting chubbier every day, which means there is less and less room for me to move around. My fingernails and toenails have grown to the ends of my fingers and everything else here is about the same. My mommy seems to be spending a lot of time resting now. I think she’s ready for my arrival, too. I wonder when the BIG DAY will arrive! Please pray for me...”



Week 38

“I am ready to enter the world. All of my reflexes are working together. I can move my hands and head and can even tell the difference between light and dark. My brain is pretty developed now and I recognize sounds and voices. I am running out of things to do in here. My development inside the womb is completed. My lungs are ready for their first breath of air. Now, all I need to do is wait until God decides it’s time for my emergence into the world. It will be a life-changing day for me and my family. Please pray for us.”



Week 39

“Oh my, I hope this is the last week! I am in here upside down and this week, something strange happened. My little body dropped down and my head is resting firmly against my mother’s pelvis. It’s pretty uncomfortable and I’m guessing from what I can hear that she’s not very comfortable either! I think that was the last thing that needed to happen before my **birthday**. It is going to happen any time now. Thank you God, for the blessing of this life you have given to me. My life is a miracle.”



Week 40

“I am here in the world, because of God’s divine plan! He has blessed me in so many wonderful ways and I am in awe of His goodness! Because of God, I can smile and laugh and play. I can show love and receive love. Thank you for your prayers. Please continue to pray that all babies conceived will be given the precious gift of LIFE!”

+ Prayer for the Reverence of Life +

Almighty God, giver of all that is good, we thank you for the precious gift of human life.

For life in the womb, coming from your creative power.

For the life of children, making us glad with their freshness and promise.

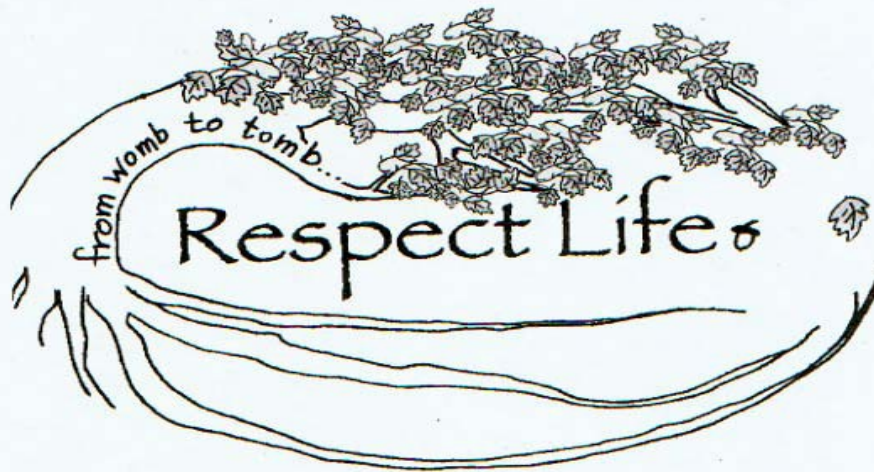
For the life of young people, hoping for a better world.

For the life of the handicapped and disabled, teaching us humility.

For the life of the elderly, witnessing the ageless values of patience and wisdom.

Like Blessed Mary, may we always say YES to your gift. May we defend it and promote it from conception to its natural end and bring us at last, Father, to eternal life, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN



The 40-Week Journey. In the Gospel of *St. Luke 1:21-38* **Mary of Nazareth** was visited by the angel Gabriel. He came bearing a message from God that Mary had found favor with God and would bear His Son, Jesus Christ. Mary's **Yes** "*Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your*

word." began her baby's 40 week journey from conception to birth.



"For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above while mortals sleep the angels keep their watch of wondering love; O morning stars! Together proclaim the holy birth, And praises sing to God the King and peace to men on earth. How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given! So God

imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven."

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"