

Praying for Three

COSTA RICA | September 21



Stephanie

When Stephanie and her future husband started talking about having a family in their native Costa Rica, they realized that they shared something in common. They both wanted to have two biological children and to adopt a third child.

Five years after their wedding, however, the couple didn't have any children. So, they decided to adopt a baby.

Costa Rica's adoption agency informed them that it wouldn't be easy. They would have to wait in a long line, and there was no guarantee that they would receive a baby. The child offered for adoption might be a teen.

A few months later, Stephanie got pregnant with a girl. Three years later, she gave birth to a boy. Nine years passed, and she and her husband remembered their desire to adopt a child. But who? When? Where? And how?

"No problem, I'll pray," Stephanie told her husband. "I'll ask God to make the child come to us instead of us searching for the child."

Stephanie prayed. Then she forgot about it. One Sabbath, Stephanie offered Bible

studies to a visitor who had showed up for the first time at church that day.

The woman agreed, saying, "Come to my house. I'm the mother of 10."

It turned out that the woman was a caregiver at an orphanage. The orphanage consisted of 15 houses with 10 children in each house. A caregiver oversaw each house.

Stephanie went to the orphanage and gave Bible studies to the caregiver and her 10 children. The caregiver gave her heart to Jesus and was baptized.

The orphanage director, seeing that the Bible studies had a positive impact on the caregiver and her work, asked Stephanie to give Bible studies in the other 14 houses at the orphanage. Stephanie took the request to the board of her church, and the church sent church members to each of the 14 houses. Stephanie was assigned to House No. 7.

Eleven-year-old Michelle lived in House No. 7.

From the first day, Michelle caught Stephanie's attention. She carried Stephanie's bag. She was attentive, and she participated in the Bible studies. The woman and the girl formed a close bond.

With permission from the orphanage, Stephanie took Michelle to evangelistic meetings, and she got baptized. Then the girl began to ask, "Why don't you adopt me?"

Stephanie thought, "Why don't I adopt



her?” At home, she told her husband about the request. The couple wondered if Michelle might be the child whom they had prayed to adopt. They asked God for confirmation.

Then Stephanie remembered an experience that had taken place three or four years earlier, long before she had met Michelle. She had invited a woman to share her personal testimony in church. The woman had been visiting various churches to tell her story about going prison, losing her six children to social services, and becoming an Adventist after listening to Adventist radio in prison. The woman had never made it to Stephanie’s church, and Stephanie had lost touch with her.

Now Stephanie wondered what had happened to the woman. She looked on social media and saw that the woman had left the Adventist church. As she scrolled down the woman’s timeline, she saw a photo of Michelle with the words, “My baby.”

Stephanie was shocked. The woman was the mother of Michelle at the orphanage.

A few days later, Stephanie saw Michelle at a birthday party at House No. 7. During the party, Michelle asked if she could borrow Stephanie’s phone, saying, “Do you want to see my mother?” When Stephanie nodded, the girl found a photo of her mother online and showed it to Stephanie. It was the woman whom Stephanie had invited to speak at her church.

For Stephanie, it was all the confirmation that she needed. She was convinced that God had sent Michelle to her family to adopt.

Stephanie spoke with the orphanage director about adoption. She assured the director that she had not known that her social-media friend was Michelle’s mother when she had first come to the orphanage. The director assured Stephanie that there would be no problem if she never contacted the mother again.

In a short time, Michelle moved into her new home. She was 12. It would take four more years for her to be officially adopted, but that didn’t matter. She was at home.

Story Tips

- Show Costa Rica on the map.
- Watch a short YouTube video of Michelle: bit.ly/IAD-Michelle.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: bit.ly/fb-mq.
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the Inter-American Division: bit.ly/iad-2024.
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 1, “To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples”; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go to the website: IWillGo2020.org.

Fast Facts

- Costa Rica means “Rich Coast” in Spanish.
- On December 1, 1948, Costa Rica abolished its army. The budget previously used for the military is now dedicated to providing health care services and education.

Today, Stephanie couldn’t be happier. Her dream has come true. She has two biological children and an adopted daughter. 🌍

This mission story provides an inside look at life in Costa Rica and missional challenges there. Next Sabbath’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a center of influence where Jesus’ love can be shared with at-risk children, including orphans.

By Andrew McChesney