

Under most circumstances, adopted children may be sealed to the adoptive parents in an LDS temple (*see* SEALING). However, living children born in the covenant, that is, born to parents who have been sealed to each other in an LDS temple, cannot be sealed to any other parents although they can be adopted for life; and children who have been previously sealed to another couple may not be sealed to adoptive parents without cancellation of the former sealing. The temple sealing of a living adopted child into an eternal family relationship is performed only after legal adoption is finalized in accordance with local law (*General Handbook of Instructions*, Salt Lake City, 1989, 6-6).

Adopted children who have been sealed to adoptive parents are considered as natural children for all doctrinal purposes, including tracing genealogical lineage. All sealed children are entitled to all the blessings promised to children born in the covenant.

The desire to adopt children is strong among Church members, but Church leaders have cautioned them never to become involved in adoption practices that are legally questionable. In a letter dated April 20, 1982, the FIRST PRESIDENCY urged members to “observe strictly all legal requirements of the country or countries involved in the adoption.” It was also stated that “the needs of the child must be a paramount concern in adoption.” Members considering adoption are counseled to work through the Church’s SOCIAL SERVICES agency or through others with the “specialized professional knowledge” necessary to ensure that the child’s needs are met.

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## ADULTERY

Adultery constitutes a grievous violation of the law of CHASTITY. For Latter-day Saints it is defined as sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than his or her legal and lawful spouse, while fornication involves two unmarried parties. Both transgressions fall under condemnation in scripture and in the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Lord forbids adultery in the TEN COMMANDMENTS and elsewhere in the Law of Moses (*see*, e.g., Ex. 20:14; Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). Both in Israel and in the Western Hemisphere, Christ commanded his followers not to commit adultery in thought or deed (Matt. 5:27–28; 3 Ne. 12:27–28). In this DISPENSATION, the Lord has again prohibited adultery, and “anything like unto it” (D&C 59:6), while reproofing even adulterous thoughts as an offense against the Spirit (D&C 42:23–26). In an official pronouncement in 1942, the FIRST PRESIDENCY of the Church decried sexual sin—including adultery, fornication, and prostitution—as an offense “in its enormity, next to murder” (*IE* 45 [Nov. 1942]:758; *MFP* 6:176).

Because adultery or fornication breaks BAPTISMAL COVENANTS and temple vows and may involve other members of the Church, penitent offenders are to confess the sin to their BISHOP or other Church authority, who may convene a disciplinary council. After prayerful deliberation, the council may excommunicate or disfellowship an adulterer, or implement some type of probation to help the offender repent. The excommunication of an adulterous priesthood leader is almost certain. A disciplinary council usually requires the adulterer to seek forgiveness from the betrayed spouse and from anyone drawn into the sin. By demonstrating an abhorrence for past sin and a commitment to righteousness, the repentant adulterer may, after an adequate period of probation, become fully reconciled to Christ, rebaptized, and reinstated in the Church and find forgiveness from God (D&C 58:47–48).

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## ADVERSARY

See: Devils

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## ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER

See: Jesus Christ, Names and Titles of