

## To the parents of an albino child,

### YOUR CHILD IS A BLESSING

God has blessed you with an albino child or a child with a condition known as albinism. He has blessed you.

### YOUR CHILD IS NOT SICK, JUST DIFFERENT

Your child is not sick. Your child simply has a condition called albinism. It is not a disease. It is not caused by germs or viruses or anything like that. It is nothing like a disease. Your child did not get his pink skin by catching it, and no one else can catch it from being around your child.

It is safe to touch your child and to be near him. It is safe to hug him and to hold him on your lap. If your child is an infant, it is safe to breast feed him. Your child is not sick.

### YOUR CHILD IS A BLESSING NOT A CURSE

Albinism is not caused by spirits or gods. It does not come from a curse, and it is not a curse to have an albino child. A child is always a blessing from God. Having an albino child does not mean bad things will happen to your family. Whenever there are problems, it is not the child who is causing the problem. A child is always a blessing from God.

Albinism is not caused by unfaithfulness of either the wife or the husband. This is YOUR child, your special, beloved child, a blessing from God. The child is a blessing, but he is going to face some special challenges. He needs the love and acceptance and support of both parents if possible. You needs YOUR love and support for sure.

### WHY YOUR CHILD IS AN ALBINO

God loves variety. He made many colors and kinds of people in our world and He loves them all. God made you and He formed your child in your womb. He loves you, and He loves your child, too. Albinism is a genetic condition, which means it is inherited from the parents. But we know that God is in control of all things. He does not want all flowers to look the same. Don't we enjoy the different colors in the world He made? He also wants children to be different colors. Every color is just as good as the other because God made them all.

### WHY SOME MIGHT BE AFRAID

If others seem afraid of your child sometimes, it is only because they don't understand what albinism is. People are often afraid of things they do not understand. They might be afraid that your child is sick and will make them sick, too. That is not true.

They may be afraid that your child is under some kind of curse from the gods. That is not true. God loves your child. Your child is a blessing from God.

Your child does look different from others, but your child is just like them in most ways.

### YOUR CHILD CAN HAVE A GOOD LIFE

Many people with albinism have grown up to do outstanding things. Some well known singers, government people and business people are albinos. With God's help, your child can do anything that other people can do.

Many people with albinism are very intelligent or smart. They can learn just like others. They can go to school. They can do well in their studies. Some children with albinism do have poor eyesight. If your child has trouble in school, make sure he can see the chalkboard. Make sure he can see his books. Ask your teacher if your child can move to another seat where he might be able to see better.

People with albinism can live to a normal old age just like other people. The only problem that might prevent this is skin cancer. We will talk more about how to prevent this in a minute.

## HOW TO HELP THE TWO BIG PROBLEMS ALBINO CHILDREN FACE

There are two problems that people with albinism do face, and there are things you can do to help make these problems better for your child.

One, your child's eyes do not have the dark melanin that protects the eyes of other children from the sun. Your child's eyes are extremely sensitive to light and can get burned very easily. Your child can protect his eyes by always wearing sunglasses when he is outside in the daytime. He can also wear a hat that has a brim which gives some shade to his eyes. Christians who love Jesus have sent your child a gift of sunglasses. We hope they will help your child's eyes. We are giving you this gift just to show you that God really does care about you and your child. He wants your child to have a good life and to be His friend forever.

Your child's eyesight might be poor in other ways, too. If your child has trouble seeing in school, you might ask your teacher if you might move to a position nearer to the front of the classroom. If you need more authority to ask your child's teacher for something like that, ECM will be glad to provide you a letter of request.

Two, you probably already realize that your child's skin is also very sensitive and can get burned easily. Because of this, his skin and lips will tend to get sores on them very easily. Many albinos do develop sores and skin cancer because their skin has no protection against the damaging rays of the sun.

You can do several things to help protect your skin from the sun. First, try to avoid having your child out in the sun from about 10 a.m. to about 4 p.m. At this time of day, the sun's rays are the hottest and most direct and can hurt your child the most. During this time your child should stay inside or stay in the shade as much as possible. Outside chores should be done in the early morning or in the late afternoon when the sun's rays are not so damaging.

Your child's skin can also be protected by having him wear long-sleeved clothing. White or light-colored cotton shirts and long pants or a long skirt will protect your child's skin and reflect the sun away from him. He should keep his shirt buttoned up. He can wear a wide-brimmed hat to shade and protect his face, eyes and ears. He can also wear sunblock lotion to protect his skin. This is very important for the skin areas that will not be covered by clothing. Be sure your child applies it to the outside part of his ears, and his nose. He should not put this lotion in his eyes. Coconut oil will not block the sun, but it is good for your child's skin and can help protect him from some of the damage the sun might do. It acts like a mild medicine to help undo some of the damage the sun's rays do to your child's skin. You could rub coconut oil on your child's skin at night or on rainy days when he is staying inside.

Ask your child's teacher to excuse him from physical education class, which is usually held in the hot, sunny part of the day, wearing clothing that massively exposes your child's skin to the dangers of the sun. ECM will be glad to provide a letter of recommendation for you to support you in making this request. Your child can do active things inside or in the shade in place of this class.

## GOD LOVES YOU & YOUR CHILD

Always remember that God loves you and He loves your child. Your child is a special blessing from Him.. You are important to God, and so is your albino child. He loves your child just the way he is. Your child can be a blessing to your family and to the world.

## PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM RIDICULE

Others who do not understand albinism may ridicule you or your child. They may say unkind, hurtful things. They may even believe those things are true. You need to defend and support your child. If others ridicule him, you stick up for him. A child is too young and weak to face the ridicule of others all by himself. Ridicule can do permanent, serious damage to a child's understanding of himself. It can prevent your child from reaching his full potential as a human being.

## ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD—HE'S A GREAT BLESSING

Some people who are ignorant and don't know much about albinism may see your child as a curse. It is important that you tell your child over and over that he is a blessing to you. He is wanted, loved, accepted. This will help your child succeed in life more than anything else you can do.

DO YOU HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS?

What questions do you have about what we have said, or about your child being an albino?

What problems has your child faced as an albino?

What challenges has your family faced in caring for your albino child?

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A MORE DETAILED EXPLANATION ATTEMPTING TO EXPLAIN GENETICS  
USE THIS ONLY IF THE PARENTS ARE QUITE EDUCATED OR THEY DEMAND A FULLER  
EXPLANATION:

If the albino child is not sick, then why is the skin of an your child so pink? This is how it happens:

Every mother has inside herself an egg. An egg is produced in her ovaries every month.

Every father has inside himself a sperm. Many sperm are produced all the time. The egg and the sperm are like the seeds of a new human being. When they come together, a new human being is formed.

Although it is very small, every egg and every sperm carries a code of information inside of it. That code of information decides what the baby will be like. The mother has half the genes and the father has half the genes. When they come together, the baby has all the genes it needs to help it grow.

That code of information called genes tells whether the baby will be a boy or a girl, whether it will be large or small, whether it will have curly hair or straight. That code of information tells what the baby's skin will be like, what its eyes will be like. That code of information is called genes or genetics, and it determines everything about the new baby. As the baby begins to grow inside its mother, the genes tell it how to develop.

Some people carry genes in their egg and their sperm that tell the developing baby, "Make very dark skin." The body does this by producing lots of something called melanin. It is what gives skin its color, and it is good because melanin protects our skin from the sun. Even white people have melanin in their skin, but black people have a lot more of it. So most African people carry genes that tell the developing baby, "Make lots of melanin."

Some people have genes that tell the developing baby, "Don't make melanin. Don't make dark skin." If just one parent has that gene, the baby will still be dark, because the genes of the other parent will still tell it, "Make melanin."

But once in awhile, two people get married and they both have the gene that says, "Don't make melanin." Then that baby will grow normally, but he will not have any melanin or coloring in his skin." When he is born, you will be able to see the blood under his skin, so he will look very pink.

This is how your child got to be an albino. Albinism is what we called a genetic condition. It is not a sickness. It is a condition caused by genes that were inherited from both parents.