

# *This is Us* A Television Series Review

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For those of you who have not yet discovered this wonderful television program on NBC about a transracial adoptive family, or if you are not caught up to Season 2 that began airing in September 2017, I'm issuing a SPOILER ALERT – as I am going to reveal the story line in this review.

This Emmy nominated show is about a Caucasian couple, who in 1980, gives birth to twins (as one of the triplets did not survive) and adopts an “abandoned” African-American infant who has been placed in the nursery with their twins. (The legalities of this process are the only questionable part of the story and while that is significant, I view it as Poetic license.) The fascinating and unique aspect of the show is that the story goes back and forth in time – from the present to various time periods in the past – revealing and reflecting upon how the past experiences influence what is happening in the present.

With wonderful acting and writing, it is obvious that the writers must have adoption consultants because the dynamics, issues, feelings and challenges that are sensitively portrayed regarding adoption are spot on. Themes include: adoptee loss and grief; post-adoption depression and attachment; the important challenges in transracial adoption around identity, racial socialization, and racism; birth parent loss and grief; sibling rivalry between birth and adopted siblings; the complexities of search and reunion; and more. As an adoptive mom, I especially love and appreciate how the show portrays the intense, deep love between adoptees and their families, as well as the complexities of marital/family dynamics, including ones unique to adoptive families.

Now in its second season, the show is tackling the realities, complexities, and challenges of adopting traumatized children and teens. Randall, the African-American adopted adult, and his wife have two young daughters. They have decided to adopt an older child. They are currently foster parents to a deeply grieving 12-year-old girl whose biological mother is back in prison. If the writers of the show continue to get it “right,” they will portray how trauma-informed, loving, patient, committed parents can help vulnerable, hurting youth who need to heal. Based on the first few episodes, I believe they will succeed.

*This is Us* covers other significant topics including addiction to alcohol, drug and food including issues about weight and body image; mental health challenges including crippling anxiety and depression; illness, death and dying; LGBT relationships; and career and artistic challenges.

I wholeheartedly agree with television critic, Brooke Cain of the National News and Observer who wrote, “Man, do I love this show. It checks off all the right boxes for me: great writing, great performances, cringe-worthy bits of brutal honesty, heartwarming moments, heart-shattering moments and a beautiful sense that everything in the universe might somehow be connected.”

I'd love to know what you think of *This Is Us*: send me your thoughts at [singer@adoptionssupport.org](mailto:singer@adoptionssupport.org).



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