



HELLO, WE ARE *The Xanders*

Nate is from Florida and Leslie is from Georgia. We traveled the country together for the first year and a half of marriage before settling down in Tennessee near family. **Nate is the pastor of a church and Leslie is a stay-at-home mom and business owner.** We have one son who will be an awesome big brother and playmate. We also have an incredibly kind and fluffy 13-year-old cat by the name of "Catastrophe."

We are an adventurous couple that cares deeply about our faith, our parenting, our health, our family and our friendships. We value quality time together, love, forgiveness, diversity and laughter. We do not shy away from hard work, difficult conversations or vulnerability. We plan to provide a variety of opportunities for our children through rich **educational experiences, lots of traveling close sibling relationships, financial independence and the encouragement of entrepreneurship.**



IN FL W/OUR GODSON



HIKING IN HAWAII



SCALLOPING IN FL



IN FL W/OUR GODSON



TUBING IN GEORGIA



HAWAII

"I can truly say they have a strong marriage, are kind and give grace to one another, communicate well and are great at conflict resolution."

- FRIEND



HI, I'M NATE

I VALUE:

Learning
Being Healthy
Critical Thinking
Consistency
Relationships

I ENJOY:

Foreign Foods
Breakfast for Dinner
Playing Sports
Dancing with Zeke
Jiu Jitsu
Comic Book Movies

I am 6'4" tall so I am easy to spot in a crowd! I received my Masters Degree from Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis. **I love kids. Being a dad and the pastor of a church with a lot of small children is a real joy.** It is such a blessing to be reminded about the awe and wonder of the world by re-living things through a child's eyes. I also love to learn and the process of learning. I hope to instill this in my kids because if they are fast learners who seek out knowledge, they will have a lot of opportunities in life. I appreciate the talents and skills of other individuals. I believe there are multiple types of intelligence that add value to the world and as a pastor, **I really enjoy helping others see how they have been uniquely wired and gifted by God.** I like thinking deeply, craft coffee, good music, naps and fiction books.

I VALUE:

Closeness

Empathy

Humor

Being Thoughtful

Flexibility

Diversity

I ENJOY:

Cooking from scratch

Playing cards

Hiking & Kayaking

Snow Skiing

Traveling

Making Toys & Artwork

I am 5'9" and spent several of my teens and twenties modeling. **I am fortunate to now be in business with family so I work as much or as little as I would like to and always take Zeke with me.**

This will be the case with future kids as well. My Bachelors is in Fine Arts. I love designing, painting, problem solving, and anything creative! I enjoy reading about Psychology and Child Development; One helps me become a better friend, wife & stranger, and they both help me to be a better mother. I am constantly working to rearrange furniture, my diaper bag, the contents of my minivan and improving myself and my parenting. **My parenting philosophy is to show God's love by being intentional, empathetic, loving and fair with what I say, how I say it and what I do.** Fairness is particularly important to me. I do not like injustices, especially involving the people I love.

HI, I'M
LESLIE





WHAT LESLIE HAS TO SAY ABOUT NATE

"Nate has an incredible gift for looking at situations from an unbiased perspective. **He is intelligent, holds space for peoples emotions and is good at admitting when he is wrong.** He recognizes unique gifts in others and is great at affirming them. He is always learning and is really great with children. I have enjoyed watching him be a father.

God has used our marriage as a way to move both of us closer to Jesus. We learn new things about ourselves and one another daily and enjoy growing together."



WHAT NATE HAS TO SAY ABOUT LESLIE

"Leslie is **both serious and funny.** She is broadly talented, particularly in the areas of art, home-making and finances, **Her sense of fairness is the highest of anyone I know.** She is always wanting to improve things, does not shy away from hard work, **takes her responsibilities very seriously** and has perseverance unlike anything I've ever seen. **She is the mastermind behind our son's play space which is a brilliantly crafted area for learning.**"





HI, I'M ZEKE

Zeke is a fun, observant and chatty toddler, full of movement and wonder. He likes to throw balls, dig with shovels and play in water. **He loves watching and playing with other children.** We spend a lot of time on the floor together rolling around, wrestling and laughing. He is kind and outgoing. **We are looking forward to the companionship that he and his siblings will have.**



HE LIKES:

- Dancing
- Playing with friends
- Basketball
- Eating foreign foods
- Wrestling & tickling
- Cooking
- Swimming & Boat Rides
- Climbing
- Reading Books

our life together



WRITTEN BY NATE

We live in a single-story mid-mod home on 1.5 acres with waterfront property on the Tennessee River. We have 4 bedrooms, two living rooms, a fenced in yard with a large play set and ample space to grow our family. **We believe that a child's "job" is to play and through playing they learn, so we have a room (the "den") dedicated to growing and shaping our child[ren] by way of play.** Leslie intentionally provides the right opportunities for development based on the age and interests of the child.

A typical day begins with Zeke and I getting up first. He plays in the den which is connected to our kitchen while I make breakfast. He moves freely, plays, dances to music and if he is ready for a snack before breakfast, he makes his way to the child-sized table and chair we have in our kitchen.

Some mornings Zeke and I will eat breakfast together at his little table (I sit on the floor and he sits in a small chair) but when we are all three having a family meal we do that together at the dining table Leslie and I built. I head off to work after breakfast and Leslie takes over with whatever adventure she has planned for the day.

Leslie has the flexibility to meet other moms for play dates at the park, zoo or visit with family but she is intentional about balancing the time around town with time at home.



IN OUR DEN



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD



FLORIDA VACATION



FLORIDA



IN OUR DEN

We have a private area between our carport and house (the "atrium") where **we have an herb garden, a swing, play area and an outdoor dining table**. Leslie and Zeke spend a lot of time out there during the spring, summer and fall. **Outdoor baths, water games and dinner with friends are just a few of the ways we use this space**. It is our favorite feature of our home.

Leslie makes dinner most nights when I get home from work, and I get on the floor to play. When it is bedtime for Zeke I get him ready and sing him to sleep. **The day is usually filled with giggling, wrestling, playing, learning, and love.** We try to be consistent with the boundaries we set and loving towards him when we have to make corrections. We kiss the boo-boos and provide comfort and encouragement.



IN OUR LIVING ROOM



IN OUR ATRIUM



FAMILY TRIP TO HAWAII

our family

Family is really important to us. We spend a lot of time with our parents and siblings and they are looking forward to welcoming new little ones into the family. **Your child will know they are loved and they will know how to love others.**

NATE'S SIDE

I have one younger sister, Laura, who is married to Matt and they have three boys and an **adopted baby girl**. They adopted her in May 2020.

Laura and Matt moved from Florida to be near us last year and they live just 20 minutes away!

My parents have been happily married for 35 years and are retired. They also recently moved nearby to be close to all of their grandkids. My parents love to spend time with and teach their grandchildren. They are one of our go-to babysitters when we have a date-night.

They all attend our church and we love playing cards and sharing meals with them. We spend a lot of time with my family, we go on vacations together for a week every summer. Laura and Leslie are really close. They talk almost daily and get together for play dates weekly.



PICTURED: ERIC, CARRIE, NICOLE, SCOTT, BETSY, LESLIE, ZEKE, NATE, RYAN, BETH EL, RHYS, GREG, LAURA, LIAM & MATT.
NOT PICTURED: NICOLE'S HUSBAND NICK, & SKYLAR (ADOPTED AFTER PHOTO WAS TAKEN)

LESLIE'S SIDE

I have an older sister, Carrie, and a younger sister, Nicole. Both are married, hoping to be parents soon and considering adoption. Carrie is only a year and a half older than I am. **Carrie and her husband Eric live 20 minutes from us and we see them often. They are two of our closest friends and are our other go-to babysitters.** Nicole and her husband live in Atlanta near his parents and we see them several times a year. She is a NICU nurse who loves children and we have learned a lot about how to care for little ones from her.

My parents have been married for 35 years, own their own business and **love to take us all on family vacations.** They live 1.5 hours away on a houseboat and we see them at least once a month. We go on an annual ski trip and look forward to teaching our children how to ski or snowboard.

Nate has a great relationship with Matt, Eric and his father, Greg. The four of them meet every other week to eat BBQ and spend time together. **We love that our children will get to grow up near their cousins and so excited to have other adopted children in the family.**



our community



LESLIE'S BRIDESMAIDS



CHURCH FRIENDS IN OUR ATRIUM

WRITTEN BY LESLIE

Our church is a big part of our local community, it is full of young families with lots of children. We spend a lot of time together playing dodgeball, eating and fellowshiping. We take our faith seriously and as a result we have a strong community that loves and serves one another well.

Another big part of our community comes from the family business that my parents started 38 years ago. We have traveled and worked alongside some of the same people for as long as I can remember. Because of this business **we have friends from all walks of life and diverse ethnic backgrounds. Our children will get to grow up in a positive atmosphere with a lot of examples of hard work, leadership and entrepreneurship.**



WITH FRIENDS ON THE 4TH OF JULY



FAMILY LAKEHOUSE

WHY WE ARE *adopting*

WRITTEN BY LESLIE

Nate and I both experienced a love for adoption before we met. It was one of the first things we discussed when we were dating. So adoption has been a part of our vision for what our family would look like from the beginning.

We value ethnic diversity and we want that to be reflected within our home. **We also have a deep desire for close-in-age children** because we believe that siblings are a blessing for one another and lifelong companions. In our experience, siblings can have a special relationship that runs deeper than friendships.

Most importantly, as Christians, we believe that God has adopted us into his covenant family and we are given a right to all of the privileges of the children of God. We also believe that we are to care for children, and love our neighbors, including our tiniest, most infant neighbors. **So we view adoption as a way for us to reflect God's goodness to others while also loving our neighbors.**

WHAT FRIENDS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT US ADOPTING:

"I truly think they were called to this and have a special capacity for doing so."

"Nate & Leslie are both mindful of the best interest of a child, including the child knowing more about where they came from and who they are as a whole."