

Created in God's Image: Transgender Children and the Church

TERMS TO KNOW:

Intersex: Is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.

LGBTQ: A collection of identities including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, aromantic, pansexual and polysexual. Alternate abbreviations include LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTQ+, LGBTQIA and LGBTQIAPP+. transstudent.org/definitions

Gender identity: One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither — how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. hrc.org

Cisgender: A person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth (for example, woman and female). Often abbreviated to "cis." uwhealth.org

Transgender: Transgender is a term that describes gender identity, gender expression and behavior that does not conform with ascribed gender norms for one's sex at birth. dhs.wisconsin.gov/lgbthealth/resources.htm

Nonbinary: Nonbinary is one term people use to describe gender identities that don't fall exclusively into one of two categories: male or female. transequality.org

Gender expansive: An umbrella term that expands notions of gender expression and identity beyond what is perceived as the expected gender norms for one's society or context. pflag.org/glossary

Gender nonconforming: A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. The term is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual. glaad.org

Cross-dresser - n. A person who wears clothing commonly associated with the "opposite" sex

Queer - adj. Formerly a pejorative, queer is often used as an umbrella term for people who identify outside of traditional gender and sexual identities

Self-harm: Self-harm or self-injury means hurting yourself on purpose. Self-harm isn't the same as attempting suicide. However, it is a symptom of emotional pain that should be taken seriously. If someone is hurting themselves, they may be at an increased risk of feeling suicidal. nami.org

Hormone blockers: Hormone blockers work by blocking the hormones — testosterone and estrogen — that lead to puberty-related changes in young transgender peoples' bodies. This stops phenomena like periods and breast growth, or voice-deepening and facial hair growth. Plannedparenthood.org

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

What does it mean for you to be created in God's sacred image?

What identifies you as a Child of God in your eyes?

What identifies you as a Child of God in the eyes of others?

What identifies you as a Child of God in God's eyes?

What does it mean for you to be loved and accepted in the Church as a Child of God?

Talk about a time when you, as a Child of God, did not feel that the Church accepted you for whom God created you to be?

Likewise, talk about a time when you did feel the Church loved and accepted you for whom God created you to be?

What might it look like to see transgender people thriving in Christian communities?