

The Best Thing to Do

I want all of them to be one with each other, just as I am one with you and you are one with me. [John 17:21](#)

In the text above Jesus prayed to God that human relationships would reflect the same spiritual oneness they share in the Trinity. Therefore, His gospel opposes ideas and practices that denigrate people and deny the sacredness of all human life.

So then how should loving parents equip LGBTQ+ children and youth to navigate a world that is openly hostile to them? Here is a suggestion from the resource, *Supportive Families. Healthy Children*: “The most important way that parents, families and foster families can help their gay or transgender children is to support that child. This helps their LGBT child develop a deep sense of self-worth and self-esteem... building a child’s inner strength by helping them learn to value themselves can help your gay or transgender child deal with discrimination and rejection from others. How you react to your gay or transgender children has a deep and lasting impact on their lives. It affects your relationship with your child and your family. And our research shows that your reactions affect your child’s health and well-being.” Parental rejection is a significant contributing factor to LGBTQ+ suicide. Parental acceptance and advocacy gives and saves life. Choose Life Today!

Resources and Conversations

Don’t be conformed to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you can figure out what God’s will is. [Romans 12:2](#)

Loving means being committed to learning. Here are some resources that can help you grow as a knowledgeable, faithful, and courageous Christian parent:

Website

Many Voices: A Black Church Movement for Gay and Transgender Justice
<https://www.manyvoices.org/>

Handbook

Supportive Families, Healthy Children
<http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/publications>

Bible Study

Umoja: Unity in the Community
<https://clgs.org/?download=%2F2015%2F10%2FUmoja-Facilitators-Guide.pdf>

Video

Laura Flanders’ interview with Yoruba Richen, director of the 2014 film, “The New Black”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_mZMczomY4

Where’s My Hug?

Accepting and Affirming Your Black LGBTQ+ Child in Love and Faith



In many Black Church spaces, the question, “Where’s my hug?” can be interpreted as an invitation to a physical and spiritual embrace that offers acceptance, affirmation, and inclusion into the welcoming family of God.

However, this has not been a common experience for LGBTQ+ Black people in their churches, families, or communities. For far too many of them, coming out means rejection and hateful condemnation by people who once claimed to love them. Many are banished from churches and even the homes they grew up in; left to fend for themselves in a world that is deeply hostile to their racial, gender, and sexual identities.

This brochure is an attempt to help Christian parents of Black LGBTQ+ children develop habits of heart, mind, and faith that promote family unity, Biblical clarity, and a willingness to love beyond our fears and misunderstandings.

Gender & Sexuality are Divinely Diverse

*God created humanity in God's own image, in the divine image God created them. **Genesis 1:27***

American church and society have promoted a binary way of thinking about and identifying human gender and sexuality. This has limited our sense of “normal” gender identities to only heterosexual male and female.

But, God's normal in the human world is not either/or, it is fluid and mysterious. God created heterosexual and LGBTQ+ people. We are *all* fearfully and wonderfully made!

Sexual and gender diversity are not sinful or “worldly,” but are evidence of the divine handiwork of a loving God. This truth invites us to expand our ability to see God's divine image (*imago dei*) in many more ways than we have usually been taught. It is also a sacred invitation from our creator which gives us a chance to grow in love and faith by showing respect, honor, and delight in all the different ways God has made people.

But the Bible Says...

*Jesus replied, “What is written in the Law? How do you interpret it?” **Luke 10:26***

*“Christians should read all Biblical texts through the lens of God's own mission to draw all creatures to the table of divine communion.” **Rev. Dr. Jay Johnson***

In many ways, we have learned to use the Bible as a weapon against LGBTQ+ people. Literal readings of scripture have been used to justify the dismissal of things science teaches us today about anatomy, biology, gender diversity, and human relationships that Biblical writers did not know.

As Jesus said above, interpretation matters. No, the Bible does not, “Speak for itself.” Everyone who reads the Bible and tries to use it as a guide for living makes meaning. The inclusive gospel Jesus lived and taught makes it our duty to read and use the Bible with *head* and *heart* to build a beloved community and do no harm. His rule of life commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Just as Black Christians refused to accept interpretations of scripture that supported slavery and segregation, we must also reject use of the Bible to support homophobia, transphobia, and the hatred of LGBTQ+ people. **All Black Lives Matter to God**

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Faithful and Courageous Parenting

*Look at how good and pleasing it is when families live together as one! **Psalm 133***

Having or being an LGBTQ+ family member is not a cause for shame, but a sacred opportunity. It is an invitation to walk a path of honest and truthful experience that can deepen love through mutual sharing and learning. As parents, it is critical that there not be significant parts of the lives of our children that are hidden away from us because they fear our reaction to their truth.

Yes, having a child come out can be anxiety and fear producing, but we should not let anxiety or fear determine how we respond to the children we rear. Our interactions with them should be rooted and grounded in God's transgressive love and true love has always been a risky business. If your child trusts you enough to disclose their true self, know that God has graced you by providing an opportunity for your family to unite and love each other more authentically. It is also a chance to testify as public witnesses in your community that God has intended difference and diversity as a blessing not a curse.