Transfigured

PRIDE STALL & CELEBRATION

OVERVIEW

RESOURCE

www.transfiguredmission.uk

Introduction

We hope that you find this toolkit helpful to support the missional work of supporting your local Pride and LGBTQ+ events. This explainer includes an overview of resources available and practical information. We believe information should be freely available to all who wish to share God's love to the marginalised, you can champion our work by letting others know about Transfigured and sharing our posts.

At Your Local Pride

Volunteers

Once you've booked your stall at your local Pride event, you will need to find approachable and conversational volunteers. You should always follow your Churches safer recruitment processes when enlisting anyone.

Pride events can be hours long, on hot or wet days, with very deep conversations - making it demanding. It is worth while exploring how many volunteers are realistically needed across the day. Events like these can benefit from a rota, with everyone doing an hour each. It is best practice to have a minimum of 2-3 people staffing the stall at any one time.

Additionally, to be visible and to have a sense of unity, a uniform may be helpful. This could be achieved through lanyards, name tags or t-shirts. To order provided t-shirts please use Christians at Pride (www.christiansatpride.com).

For guidance for those volunteering, please read and share the "Tips for Volunteers" section of this document. Wherever possible, talk through each volunteer through the priorities of the stall, and what they should be inviting guests to.

Stall

The stall is more than just the table but also the decoration, the volunteers and the atmosphere. Plan the space in a way that helps passers-by to engage with you. Decor may include: flags, banners, placards - particularly anything that identifies who you are.

Our recommendation would be to limit the amount on offer on your stall, in order not to oversaturate what you're providing. It is important to explore "what is the message you're wanting to convey to this community?" And to make decisions in relation to the question.

Please always make sure to have space for people to pray, this is often offered through a prayer tree or postbox style. Similarly, it is always a positive to have a children's activity if you have additional space for this.

Some activities that promote engagement:

- Spinning wheel with prizes
- Face painting
- Grab bags
- Photo op with props
- Message board with an insightful question
- Free food / cupcakes
- Interactive Games / Competition
- Adding to a collaborative artwork

March

At a Pride event typically the day will start with a march or parade through the local high street. This is a great opportunity to be visible and to counter those with anti-LGBTQ+ views.

Similarly to decorating your stall, items like banners and placards can also be used on the march. Holding signs about where you are from, where you represent, an affirming theology, can share God's love afresh to a group who often hears hate and exclusion.

We suggest that the time and meeting place is advertised across inclusive churches, giving all a chance to walk together as witnesses. It is sensible to have two individuals organise and lead the group, to be people to find at the meeting point.

Materials

The handouts on your stall should be reflective of your church/es and the people who will be receiving these. For example, one consideration is the language you use to advertise; i.e. "family services" may not feel accessible for members of LGBTQIA+ communities.

An attempt should be made not to overload the stall with material, but to collate what is relevant. For example, if you are sharing the stall with multiple churches you may wish to create a joint flyer with a list of churches and key contacts, and events.

We would recommend including these on your stall:
- One flyer about your church/es with contact details, a list of relevant regular groups, and what being an inclusive church means.
- Transfigured Mission's Pride Handout, which includes affirming scripture in an quick and accessible way.
- Information about weddings, if same-sex weddings are offered.
- An invitation to upcoming event or group.

Practical tip: take paperweights in case of wind.

Giveaway Items

Outside the written materials it his sensible to have plenty of giveaway items available, if possible it is recommended these are given for free. These may include:
- Badges
- Stickers
- Sweets
- Wristbands
- Pins
- Totebags
- Fans
- Bibles
- Keyring
- Flags
- Pens
- Bubbles

Places to find faith specific or inspired items:
- transfiguredmission.uk
- store.illustratedministry.com
- niftynoppen.com
- nakedpastor.com
- www.pandaloco.co.uk
- gayprideshop.co.uk
- www.gillamglass.co.uk
- AniDesignsUK
- www.abprallen.co.uk
- The Sticker Clubhouse
- HagstoneArt
- brooklynswenson.com
- www.methodistpublishing.org.uk/books/EGPBD23%20/pride-badges

Around Pride

Worship

Following Pride your church may choose to have a Pride Celebration Service or Rainbow Service. We would also suggest looking through our Trans Day of Remembrance (TDOR) toolkit for guidance on trans-inclusive worship. Please note that compared with the lament of TDOR, this worship should be a space of celebration grounded in the reality of hope and justice. There is plenty of resources to help create this liturgy, these are helpful starting points:
- www.ucc.org/loveislouder
- www.ionabooks.com/product/grace-like-glitter-pdf-download/
- openandaffirming.org/resources/worship
- www.uua.org/worship/holidays/pride-sunday
- worshipwords.co.uk/pride-words-lgbt
- opentable.lgbt/words-we-use
- www.reconcilingworks.org/resources/pride
- christianbsl.com/prayers/lordsprayer/
- believeoutloud.com/2014/06/rainbow-christ-prayer-lgbt-flag-reveals-the-queer-christ/
- lectionarysong.blogspot.com/2016/06/songs-and-music-to-lament-mass-murder.html
- enfleshed.com/blogs/liturgies/queer-calls-to-worship/

Events

In the lead-up to your local Pride, LGBTQ+ may be hosting other events such as poetry nights, sign-making creative meetings, and fundraisers. It's always worth being in communication with your local groups, to support where you can, and to consider hosting if appropriate.

Additionally, a large part of these preparations requires volunteers to set-up and facilitate the event. Your church may be able to offer finances, people to help, or materials; such as tables and chairs.

Tips for Volunteers

Complied below is references to scripture showing the inclusion of Christ, as well as the passages that often get quoted by those wanting to exclude the LGBTQ+ community.

Today you are encouraged to model the fruits of the Spirit to everyone: Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

Should you enter into conversation with anyone professing LGBT+ hate, here are some things to remember:

- Please attempt to enter into these conversations with a friend, or someone you trust.
- You can always walk away.
- It is okay if you make mistakes or don’t answer queries perfectly.
- If you have any concern; take note of your conversation, who you spoke with, and what church they were from. Share with your safeguarding officer or one of the ministers.
- If you are comfortable, offer them sweets, stickers, prayers from the stall.
- You do not need to enter into debate, or change their views.
- Show kindness & grace.

Message of Love

There are some who feel it is “better to be safe than sorry” in sticking with the “traditional” teaching on LGBTQ issues; however, there are only a handful of passages that have been used to justify bias against LGBTQ people, but there are over a hundred about love – so it may be safest to focus on love!

God would not want LGBTQ people to be driven away from the church or lose their faith. These verses may particularly help you today:

> John 13:34-35 “A new command I give you: **Love one another.** As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples.”
>
> Mark 12:30-31 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘**Love your neighbour** as yourself'. There is no commandment greater than these.”
>
> Matthew 5:7 “**Blessed are the merciful**, for they will be shown mercy.”
>
> Luke 6:37 “**Do not judge, and you will not be judged.** Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."
>
> Micah 6:8: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? **To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.**"
>
> Romans 15:7 "**Accept one another,** then, just as Christ accepted you."

LGBTQ+ Affirming Scripture

God loves LGBTQ people

Nothing can separate us from the love of God. (Rom 8:38) This message is for all people, including LGBTQ individuals.

God did not make a mistake in creating LGBTQ people. “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” (Psalm 139:13-14) Sexual identity and gender identity are components of a person’s personality, and as such are part of who God made each of us to be.

The over-arching themes of the Christian Bible are that God loves everyone and has reconciled everyone through Jesus Christ; this includes LGBTQ individuals. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) “The world” means everyone, including LGBTQ people.

On Inclusion

God welcomes people of all genders and sexual identities. “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28) Also “...God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.” (Acts 10:28) Jesus gladly socialized with people that the religious establishment disapproved of. (Matthew 9:11)

The Church needs its LGBTQ members. “The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

Jesus, quoting Isaiah, proclaims that the house of worship should be for all people. He was angry to find people acting as gatekeepers to God. (Mark 11:17, Isaiah 56:7)

Examples of love between people of the same gender in the Bible:

David and Jonathan. “After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.” (1 Samuel 18:1) David says of Jonathan: “Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.” (2 Samuel 1:26).

Ruth and Naomi - Ruth expresses her devotion to Naomi with, “Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God . Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.” (Ruth 1:16-17).

The Centurion and his servant (Matt 8:5-10). The word used for “servant” here, “pais”, was commonly used to describe a servant who was a romantic partner of the master.

On Gender

All people, including LGBTQ individuals, were created in God's image: "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27, NSRV).
The use of the two primary genders in this passage is likely a "merism", a figure of speech by which a single thing (in this case, humanity) is referred to by a phrase that lists several of its parts, but does not list all components. For example: land & sea, high & low, flesh & bone. In particular when "day & night" is named in the creation story, it is a merism, expressing that dusk, afternoon, etc is also created.

Jesus acknowledged that gender variance exists, and he did not condemn it. "For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:12)

There are several characters in the Bible who were non-gender-conforming, meaning that they did not behave according to traditional gender roles, or that they were not physically typical of men or women.

The Bible contains feminine images of God, in addition to the masculine metaphors of "Father" and "King".

The Clobber Passages

From Brandan Robertson:

> Simply put, the six references to homosexual sex in Scripture are all references not to consensual, loving, same-sex behavior, but references to sexual exploitation, abuse and idolatry. If you open up the Bible to any of the clobber passages and read the entire chapter to which each singular verse or story belongs, you will find multiple references to the worship of idols and to other heinous, exploitative and abusive sins.

People arguing against churches being fully inclusive cite what are typically called the "clobber passages": Genesis 19:1-38; Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:25-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:9-10 and Jude 6-7. A few also cite Genesis 1-2.

We do not know and cannot know what was in the mind of the authors and redactors of Genesis or Leviticus or the relevant New Testament passages; we do not know and cannot know what the first people to receive these works thought. In many of the clobber passages, we do not even know, for certain, to what the text refers.

Reflections from Amy-Jill Levine (biblical scholar), read more here: https://outreach.faith/2022/09/amy-jill-levine-how-to-read-the-bibles-clobber-passages-on-homosexuality/

Genesis 19, the account of the punishment wrought upon Sodom and Gomorrah, has nothing to do with consensual sexual relations; the sins of Sodom are inhospitality, threat, and finally, attempted rape. Should this point not be clear, Ezekiel makes it so. Ezekiel 16:49 reads, "This was the sin of your sister Sodom; she did not support the poor and needy."

Leviticus 18:22, translated literally from the Hebrew, says, "and with a male (in Hebrew, zakhar) not will you lie the lyings (i.e., bedding) of a woman (mishkave isha); it is an abomination." We do not know what "the lyings of a woman" are, and the only times the term appears are in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. Genesis 49:4, Jacob's testament to his sons, describes Reuben as having gone up to "the lyings of your father"—which is what Reuben did by having relations with Rachel's slave and Jacob's wife, Bilhah. Thus, Leviticus 18:22 may be focused on incestuous relations (males in the same family) rather than males from different households.

Romans 1:26-27. Our first problem is what "natural use" signifies. Paul's language is not clear. Finally, Paul's label "contrary to nature" (para physin) is exactly the same description he uses in Romans 11:24 to describe how Gentiles "have been cut from what is by nature (kata physin) a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature (para physin), into a cultivated olive tree." Here, an act contrary to nature creates being in a right relationship with G-d.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Paul's first (extant) letter to the Corinthians says, "Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! pornoi, idolaters, adulterers, malakoi, arsenokotai, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God." The key terms, which I've given in Greek, are the first problem, since we do not know exactly what they mean. The second problem: We do not know why Paul included these elements in his vice list. What these words mean, or what they would have meant for Paul and his gentile friends in Corinth, we can only guess.

"These passages have been generally repudiated or rendered metaphoric by most of those who read the verses prohibiting same-sex sexual activity so strictly. The way forward, if we take seriously the idea that we are all molded in the divine image and likeness, is to determine the touchstone, such as love of neighbor and love of stranger. Anything that prevents such love needs to be questioned, if not eliminated. Not all passages are of equal import, and not all actions lead to wholeness."

The Reformation Project offers 10 thoughts on biblical interpretation, which can be read in full here: https://reformationproject.org/case/. This includes:

1. Celibacy is a gift, not a mandate.
2. The arc of Scripture points toward inclusion, not exclusion.
3. Sodom and Gomorrah addresses sexual assault, not a loving relationship.
4. Romans addresses unrestrained lust, not sexual orientation.
5. 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy address exploitation.

Historical Context

Our history shows us that when hurting people's lives are involved, a compelling Scriptural argument in the abstract is not enough. As Tony Campolo says, "You may have an inerrant book, but you don't have an inerrant interpreter of the book." What matters is not just that we interpret the Scriptures, but how we interpret the Scriptures. We must interpret them within the context of real people's lives, not in the abstract or in a vacuum. We have needed to do this time and time again; when abolishing slavery, when including women in worship, when marrying divorced people.

Pride Stall Organising Check Sheet

Pre-Event Planning

- ❏ Application Submitted: Confirmed spot with organisers.
- ❏ Payment Made: Stall fee paid by deadline.
- ❏ Risk Assessment: Completed and submitted if required.
- ❏ Recruited Volunteers: Organised rota and communicated expectations.

Stall Setup & Essentials

- ❏ Banner/Signage: Clear, visible, and branded.
- ❏ Gazebo/Table: if not provided by organisers.
- ❏ Tablecloth: Bright, colourful, or branded.
- ❏ Materials for Volunteers: water, snacks, printed rota.
- ❏ Weatherproofing: paperweights, tent pegs, etc.

Engagement & Merch

- ❏ Decorations: Pride flags, bunting, balloons, rainbow decor.
- ❏ Giveaways: Stickers, badges, etc.
- ❏ Activity: Interactive game, photo booth, or signing wall.
- ❏ Information/Flyers: Info on your church/groups.
- ❏ Event invitation: To follow up after the event.