

Month: May 2019

Topic: Rainbow Connection

Source: <http://www.smallgroupministry.net/public/sessions/index.html#sessions>

## Gender & Heterosexism

### Opening Words “Every One of Us”, by Grace Lewis McLaren, verse 1 and 2\*

Ev’ry one of us has been a stranger, ev’ry one of us has been alone.

Welcome the open, welcome the hidden, welcome the darkness, welcome the light.

Welcome the seeker, welcome the wounded, welcome the courage, welcome the fright.

Ev’ry one of us has been a stranger, ev’ry one of us has been alone.

Ev’ry one of us is whole and worthy, ev’ry one of us has strength to give.

Honor the gay one, honor the straight one, honor the changer, honor the search.

Honor the quest for fairness, for justice.

Honor the struggle for equal rights.

Ev’ry one of us is whole and worthy, ev’ry one of us has strength to share.

### Focus Reading

Our gender is different from our **biological sex**. Most of us are XX and XY females and males, born with genitals that match our chromosomal sex.

Our **gender** is the way we enact our biological sex in the world and that enactment is highly (perhaps almost solely) determined by how the culture in which we are embedded dictates that we “should” act...

**Gender identity** seems to form very early in life under the influence of complex biological, psychological, and social variables and is most likely irreversible by age 4.

**Gender stereotyping** functions by permitting groups and society to open or close doors based solely on general assumptions about the ways a person’s gender limits or enhances their ability to function in various realms.

A **transgender** person is one who has, with or without sex reassignment surgery, chosen to live as the opposite gender, the one that feels more comfortable to them. Many people now understand gender as a spectrum of possible identities, along a line between the poles of “male” and “female,” or even beyond that duality.

### Focus Questions

1. When you were growing up, what did you learn about how you should or shouldn’t behave as a “boy” or a “girl?” Were there ways in which you were punished/harassed/bullied for not “acting like” the gender culturally appropriate for your biological sex? Do you think that gender stereotypes have changed since you were a child?
2. What have you enjoyed about being born the sex you are and living a culturally congruent gender identity as a boy/man or girl/woman? Are there ways that you have thereby benefitted from certain privileges that people of the opposite sex and gender did not?
3. Has there ever been a time in your life when you couldn’t acquire, achieve or do what you wanted because of your gender?
4. Have you ever met someone whose gender was not clear? What feelings came up for you when you couldn’t firmly identify that person as either male or female? How did you resolve your confusion?
5. Have you ever in your life wished you had been born the opposite sex or that (regardless of your biological sex) you could live a gender identity somewhere between the two (polar), a shifting gender identity (fluid) or a gender identity outside the “either/or” framework (third gender)?

### Closing Words “Every One of Us”, by Grace Lewis McLaren, verse 3

Ev’ry one of us can rise and triumph, ev’ry one of us can sing with pride.

Sing out in friendship, sing out in safety, sing out for justice, sing out for joy.

Sing out for all who dwell in seclusion, sing out for hearts sprung open by love.

Ev’ry one of us can rise and triumph, ev’ry one of us can sing with pride.

\*This song was written by Grace Lewis McLaren for the Northeast District Welcoming Congregation Conference at Ferry Beach, copyright 2007. Words used here with permission. Contact Grace for the music at 207-798-4074, 6mainer6@suscom-maine.n

**Go in Peace**