

# Resource Sheet

Language | Reading | Community Connection

## Faith and Sexuality Forum



### What we cover?

While there will be elements of teaching on what the Bible says about faith and sexuality, we want this to be an open forum. Your stories, victories and struggles are an important part of the discussion. We aim to provide a safe space for learning, listening and equipping. We will also cover tools for coming out and provide prayer coverage for anyone in need or want of prayer support.

1

#### STORY SHARING

Every journey is different. Sharing stories allows us to be heard and give/receive affirmation and support.

2

#### THE BIBLE

What does the Bible have to say about faith and sexuality. Exploring the Scriptures.

3

#### COMING OUT

Listening to your current situation and offering suggestions and support for engaging family and friends.



#### Listening

Please be sure to use active listening

#### Respect



Please show respect for differing views and experiences.

#### Equality

Everyone is equal regardless of their



ability, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, age, gender or culture

## Definitions | Language

Provided by Victorian Government [www.vic.gov.au](http://www.vic.gov.au)

### Key points to remember:

- Sexual orientation, sex and gender identity are all separate concepts.
- Sexual orientation is used to describe a person's romantic and/or sexual attraction.
- Sex refers to a person's biological characteristics. A person's sex is usually described as either male or female. The designation of a person as either male or female on the basis of their biological characteristics takes into account their chromosomes, genitals, hormones and neurobiology. Some people however have both male and female characteristics, or neither male nor female characteristics.
- Gender identity refers to the way in which a person understands, identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics within a particular sociocultural context.

### Terminology: Sexual orientation

**Lesbian:** This refers to a woman who is romantically and sexually attracted to other women.

**Gay:** This refers to someone who is romantically and sexually attracted to people of the same gender identity as themselves. It is usually used to refer to men who are attracted to other men but may also be used by women.

**Bisexual:** This refers to a person who is romantically and sexually attracted to individuals of their own gender and other genders.

**Asexual:** This refers to someone who does not experience sexual attraction. They may still experience feelings of affection towards another person.

**Pansexual:** This refers to people who are romantically and sexually attracted to people of all genders.

**Queer:** Queer is an umbrella term used by some people to describe non-conforming gender identities and sexual orientations.

**Intersex:** This refers to the diversity of physical characteristics between the stereotypical male and female characteristics. Intersex people have reproductive organs, chromosomes or other physical sex characteristics that are neither wholly female nor wholly male. Intersex is a description of biological diversity and may or may not be the identity used by an intersex person.

### Terminology: Gender identity

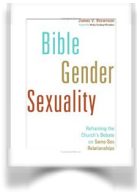
**Trans (Transgender):** This refers to a person whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour does not align with their sex assigned at birth. In Australia, at birth children are assigned male or female. Male children are raised as boys and female children are raised as girls. A person classified as female at birth who identifies as a man may use the label trans, transman or man. Similarly, a person classified as male at birth who identifies as a woman may use the label trans, transwoman or woman.

**Gender diverse and non-binary:** This refers to people who do not identify as a woman or a man. In the same way that sexual orientation and gender expression are not binaries, gender identity is not a binary either. It is important to challenge our thinking beyond the binary constructs of male and female.

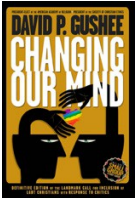
Some people may identify as agender (having no gender), bigender (both a woman and a man) or non-binary (neither woman nor man). There is a diverse range of non-binary gender identities such as genderqueer, gender neutral, gender fluid and third gendered. It is important to be aware that language in this space is still evolving, and people may have their own preferred gender identities that are not listed here.

**Cisgender:** This refers to people whose gender identity is in line with the social expectations of their sex assigned at birth. It is a term used to describe people who are not transgender.

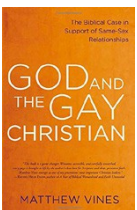
# Book Listing



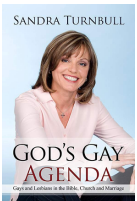
This thought-provoking book by James Brownson develops a broad, cross-cultural sexual ethic from Scripture, locates current debates over homosexuality in that wider context, and explores why the Bible speaks the way it does about same-sex relationships.



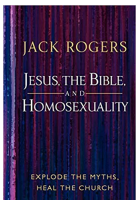
Gushee is no stranger to the public arena. He is the author of the “Evangelical Declaration Against Torture” and drafted the “Evangelical Climate Initiative. “For decades now, David Gushee has earned the reputation as America's leading evangelical ethicist. In this book, he admits that he has been wrong on the LGBT issue.” writes Brian D. McLaren, author and theologian.



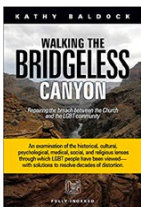
“God and the Gay Christian is a game changer. Winsome, accessible, and carefully researched, every page is brought to life by the author’s clear love for Scripture and deep, persistent faith. With this book, Matthew Vines emerges as one of my generation’s most important Christian leaders, not only on matters of sexuality but also on what it means to follow Jesus with wisdom, humility, and grace. Rachel Held Evans, author of A Year of Biblical Womanhood and Faith Unraveled



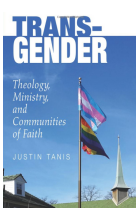
“Who needs to read God's Gay Agenda? Everyone who assumes they know something about the "gay agenda," anyone struggling-or who has a friend or family member struggling-to come to terms with same-sex relationships and the Christian faith, those who are absolutely certain they know what the Bible says about homosexuality, and every compassionate person.”  
-Chuck Smith, Jr., author of several published books including There Is A Season.



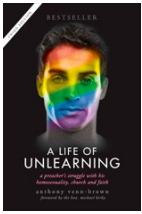
Rogers, an evangelical, begins by discussing his own personal change of heart and mind on the issue, a change that has moved him into the middle of this controversy in his own church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). He examines how the church misused the Bible to justify slavery and the denial of rights to women and links these efforts to efforts today to use biblical texts to deny equal rights to gays and lesbians. He shows how neither the Bible nor the Confessions are opposed to homosexuality and debunks frequently used fundamentalist stereotypes and myths about gays and lesbians. Rogers concludes with his thoughts on how the church can heal itself



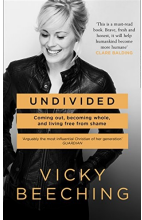
In Walking the Bridgeless Canyon: Repairing the Breach Between the Church and the LGBT Community, Baldock constructs a narrative timeline, including fascinating stories and personal testimonies, detailing the historical and current social, medical, cultural, and religious discrimination which have impacted the gay and transgender communities, with particular focus on the intersection of the conservative political and religious right beginning in the late 1970s.



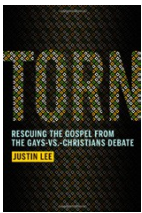
“Rev. Dr. Justin Tanis is a creative queer theologian and activist with a wealth of pastoral experience. His classic, Transgender--Theology, Ministry and Communities of Faith, is now available again for faith communities and university students struggling to include trans-people. It is a primer for understanding the spiritual journeys of transgendered people, examining the biblical support for inclusion, and provides faith communities guidelines for hospitality. His notion of 'gender as a calling' is a creative theological proposal for all of us to recognise our own gender calling and the diverse callings of the marginalised. Tanis imaginatively uses the image of twilight space of dawn and dusk, in-between space occupied by trans-people.



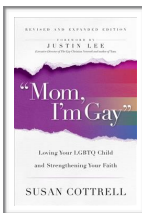
On the surface, everything looked perfect. Anthony Venn-Brown was a popular, high-profile, Pentecostal preacher in Australia's growing mega-churches, such as Hillsong, and happily married father-of-two. Behind the scenes was a different story. Believing homosexuality made him unacceptable to God and others, a secret battle was being fought. After twenty-two years of prayer, struggle, torment, gay conversion therapy and marriage, a chance meeting forced Anthony to make the toughest decision of his life. Tired of feeling torn and fragmented, he confessed and came out. Abandoned by his church and Christian friends Anthony began his life of unlearning; a lonely journey that made him who he is today.



Vicky Beeching, called "arguably the most influential Christian of her generation" in The Guardian, began writing songs for the church in her teens. By the time she reached her early thirties, Vicky was a household name in churches on both sides of the pond. Recording multiple albums and singing in America's largest megachurches, her music was used weekly around the globe and translated into numerous languages. But this poster girl for evangelical Christianity lived with a debilitating inner battle: she was gay.

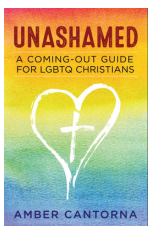


As a teenager and young man, Justin Lee felt deeply torn. Nicknamed "God Boy" by his peers, he knew that he was called to a life in the evangelical Christian ministry. But Lee harboured a secret: He also knew that he was gay. In this groundbreaking book, Lee recalls the events - his coming out to his parents, his experiences with the "ex-gay" movement, and his in-depth study of the Bible - that led him, eventually, to self-acceptance.

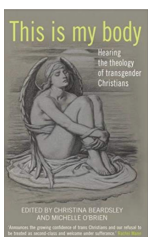


When your child reveals that he or she is attracted to the same sex, how you respond may have a lot to do with your faith. Doesn't the Bible say that's wrong? Will we have to leave our church? Worst of all, you may wonder, "Do I have to choose between my Christian faith and my child?"

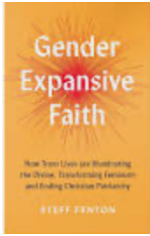
Susan Cottrell is a mom who has been there and wants you to know that loving and accepting your gay child does not mean abandoning or even compromising your faith. This is not a book about the politics or morality of homosexuality. This is a book about how to respond with love and support during this vulnerable time for your child. With practical advice and heartfelt encouragement, Cottrell guides readers through the fear and uncertainty Christian parents of LGBTQ children often feel.



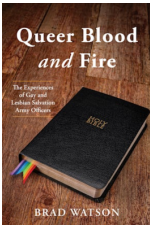
As the gay daughter of a thirty-plus-year executive of conservative Christian organisation Focus on the Family, Amber lost everything when she came out as gay in 2012. However, her journey to embrace her authenticity brought her fulfilment and wisdom to share. Unashamed serves as a guide for Christians considering coming out, tackling tough subject matters such as demolishing internalised homophobia, finding an affirming faith community, reestablishing your worth as a child of God, navigating difficult family conversations (especially in cases where family is involved in church leadership/ministry), and healing from the pain of rejection. Unashamed encourages LGBTQ Christians to embrace their unique identities and to celebrate the diversity placed inside them by God.



Much has been said and written about trans people by theologians and Church leaders, while little has been heard from trans Christians themselves. As a step towards redressing the balance, This Is My Body offers a grounded reflection on people's experience of gender dissonance that involves negotiating the boundaries between one's identity and religious faith, as well as a review of the most up-to-date theological, cultural and scientific literature. The book has been compiled and edited by Christina Beardsley, a priest and hospital chaplain, writer and activist for trans inclusion in the Church, and Michelle O'Brien, who has been involved in advocacy, research, lecturing and writing about intersex and trans issues.



In *Gender Expansive Faith*, Steff Fenton offers a bold and tender invitation into a Christianity beyond binary norms—one that celebrates gender diverse people as leaders of God's expansive justice, equality and non-violence. This book combines Steff's tender personal experience through memoir, their extensive research of history, biblical interpretation and theology, as well as practical education and guidance.



This book is based on a survey and interviews conducted with queer Australian Salvation Army officers. It explores the history, harms, and hopes of these people within that context. The harms are multiple and include moral injury, sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts ("conversion therapy"), religious trauma, internalized homophobia, workplace discrimination, and, in some cases, suicidal ideation. The hopes are centered on expressions of integrated personhood that are holy and authentic. Their lives teach the church about God's diverse creation, enlivened grace, justice through solidarity and community, and the ministry of all believers.

# VIDEO RESOURCES

The Bible and Homosexuality: A Nuanced Approach-Justin Lee

<https://youtu.be/zW5ZZtdziwU>

Dr. James Brownson: Gender Complementarity

<https://youtu.be/k1f0KD-B0Z8>

Dr. James Brownson: Marriage

<https://youtu.be/yt-a0BiAEVs>

Mel White: The Gift of Homosexuality

<https://youtu.be/321hmWcvaRk>

Matthew Vines: "For the Bible Tells Me So: Hermeneutics and the Debate About LGBTQ Inclusion"

<https://youtu.be/Jz8c0b8L-IY>

Kathy Baldock: Unclobbering the Tangled Mess—Part 1 and Part 2

<https://youtu.be/MBwajcvZtqw> (Part 1)

<https://youtu.be/3JTBpomMH5c> (Part 2)

Kathy Baldock: An Evening With Rev. David: The Story Behind a Historic Letter About Biblical Translation (basis for the film 1946)

<https://youtu.be/rdfxPDZEO5k>

Breaking the Binary | Thorn de Vries | TEDxAUCollege

<https://youtu.be/xE5ztqGzvCM>

Gender Identity and Pronouns - Onlea - What Will You Teach The World?

<https://youtu.be/J3Fh60GEB5E>





## Community Connection



Ambassadors & Bridge Builders International's mission is to create understanding and acceptance for LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) people, empower community members and build bridges with religious organisations and leaders. We are committed to ending unnecessary suffering caused by ignorance and misinformation about sexual orientation and gender identity. [abbi.org.au](http://abbi.org.au)



Through our vibrant MamBear Nation community, in intimate gatherings and other resources, we walk with Christian parents on the journey to help them fully understand their child, reconcile faith issues, and keep their child safe and their family strong. [www.freedhearts.org](http://www.freedhearts.org)



The Reformation Project is a Bible-based, Christian grassroots organisation that works to promote inclusion of LGBTQ people by reforming church teaching on sexual orientation and gender identity. Our vision is of a global church that fully affirms LGBTQ people. [www.reformationproject.org](http://www.reformationproject.org)



The mission of Canyonwalker Connections, founded in 2011 by Executive Director Kathy Baldock, is to repair the division existing between social and Christian conservatives and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community through education, training, encouragement, and dialogue in both secular and religious environments. [www.canyonwalkerconnections.com](http://www.canyonwalkerconnections.com)



Equal Voices is an alliance of LGBTIQ+ Christians and allies. It supports, sustains and empowers LGBTIQ Christians to express their religious identity in community with others and in the public domain. [www.equalvoices.org.au](http://www.equalvoices.org.au)



The Victorian Pride Centre will be the iconic new home of Victoria's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex communities. [www.pridecentre.org.au](http://www.pridecentre.org.au)

## Hosted by:



Melbourne Inclusive Church (MIC) is a contemporary, Spirit-filled, Christ centred church dedicated to sharing the inclusive love of Jesus Christ. Melbourne Inclusive Church provides a safe place of worship for the LGBTIQ community, their families and friends. We boldly and proudly proclaim Christ's equal love for all people regardless of their socio-economic status, sexual orientation, age, gender, or culture.

## Our Vision

A world where people know and express the all-inclusive love of God demonstrated through the life of Jesus Christ.

## Our Mission

To create community where people feel safe to connect with God and others. We offer Biblical truth and teaching about faith and sexuality and offer life applicable teaching and tools. We encourage authentic worship of God and fellowship with one another.

## Statement of Inclusivity

Melbourne Inclusive Church (MIC) is a contemporary, Spirit-filled Christian church dedicated to sharing the inclusive love of Jesus Christ. We boldly and proudly proclaim Christ's equal love for all people regardless of their ability, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, age, gender, or culture.



### Inclusion

We believe God made you who you are and has a great plan for you. Being LGBTQIA+ or Straight is part of that plan.



### Living on Purpose

We are about helping you realise your God-given dreams. The passion placed in your very DNA is God's calling on your life.



### Bridge Building

We are an inclusive, bridge building church. We are active in the LGBTQIA+ affirming spaces and we take our rightful place in the Christian and wider community.

