A guide for congregations seeking to encourage youth to understand their own gender identity and expression as well as better understand the lives and experiences of transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex people.
MCC Transgender Ministries presents...

The “MCC TRANSformative Church” Ministry Program: A Curriculum for Youth and Young Adults

...but what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?  
- Micah 6:8

Table of Contents

Introduction_________________________________________ 3
My Gender and Me____________________________________ 4
Gender Systems_________________________________________ 5 – 7
Terminology__________________________________________ 8
Listening to Jazz: The Experience of a young trans* kid______________ 9
Gender and the Bible____________________________________ 10
Tips for Being an Ally____________________________________ 11
Wrap-up_______________________________________________ 12
Introduction

This resource is intended as a teaching tool to help introduce youth and young adults to topics of gender, gender identity and expression, and trans* and gender non-conforming communities.

As a foundation for learning, the first activity is intended to give youth and young adults an opportunity to explore their own gender. This can be a profound activity for many who have never had to think about their own gender or even that they have a gender. It can also be affirming for those who have often felt uncomfortable in the gender they were assigned and provide them with a new awareness and freedom to live fully into who they understand themselves to be.

Next, the program will go deeper into understanding the language and experiences of trans* and gender non-conforming people. Through stories, examples, and a basic terminology overview it will foster understanding of trans* and gender non-conforming communities.

Last, the curriculum will help youth and young adults think about what it means to be a good ally including a case for the biblical inclusion of trans* and gender non-conforming people and finally, practical tips on being a good ally.

Leaders should plan for about 90 minutes to get through the entirety of the lesson plan. It is recommended to schedule in a break at the 45-minute mark.
My Gender and Me Activity

This activity is intended to help you think about your own gender!!! I know this sounds silly but our genders are just assigned to us and we are expected to act a certain way because of it. It’s important we think about what that means to us and how we feel inside.

Materials: Notecard and Ink Pens

Directions: In this activity take 5 minutes to answer the following questions. Note: You will only be asked to share if you volunteer to.

- When is a time you remember that you were told you MUST do, wear, or act a certain way because of the gender you were given? How did it make you feel?

- When is a time you remember that you were told you could NOT do something you wanted to do because of the gender you were given? How did it make you feel?

- Have you ever been bullied or picked on for being too strong or weak? Too girly or too boyish? Called a fag or tomboy? How did this make you feel? Have you experienced this happening to friends? What did you do?

Take Away: The point of this exercise is that everyone in the room—not only trans* and gender non-conforming folks—are restricted, limited and/or oppressed by rigid gender roles. All people should be able to express themselves in school and play in the ways they feel most comfortable!
The gender binary is the common gender system. It separates people into two categories: Male or Female. The chart below shows this. The problem is that it fails to include a lot of people who do not fit in either one! For example, some people aren’t so easy to assign a gender when they are born and others do not feel like they fit the expectations of the gender they were assigned.

Some people just weren't born that way...
Questions for Reflection:

1. How have you experienced the gender binary at home, as church, or at school?

2. Have you been bullied or corrected for doing something that was called bad for doing something that didn’t fit into the category people expect? For example: If you are seen as female but enjoy sports have you ever been told you shouldn’t? Or, if you are seen as a boy and enjoy dancing have you been told you shouldn’t do that? How did you feel?

3. Have you seen this happen to your friends?

4. Looking back up at the picture of the children playing do you see any problems with this picture? How might the picture challenge the gender binary? Do you think the behavior in the picture is encouraged or discouraged by the gender binary?
A More Accurate Picture: The GenderBread Person

Directions: Have people plot themselves on the chart. It is helpful to guide the process by using yourself as an example. Ask people to share if they are comfortable but make it optional.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Which model do you like better? Did you find it easier to relate to one more than the other?

2. Have you felt restricted by the gender binary? Do you think the GenderBread person helps you think about your own gender in a different way?
Directions: *Give each youth one of the vocab words on the sheet. Have them explain it to the group in their own words. As a facilitator be sure to help clarify if needed.*

**Assigned Sex** – When you were born a doctor looked at your body and told your parents if you were a boy or girl. Sometimes when people are born it’s hard to tell if someone is a boy or a girl. They are called *intersex.*

**Gender Identity** – This is what you feel like your gender is. So, if you feel like you are a boy, girl, a little bit of both, or neither.

**Gender Expression** – This is how you express the gender you feel like you are (or your Gender identity). It deals with the clothes you wear, the things you enjoy, and how you choose to look.

**Cis-gender** – This is a person that feels like their gender is the same as the one they were given at birth.

**Transgender** – This is a person who feels like their gender is different from the one they were given at birth.

**Gender Non-Conforming** – This is a person who feels like their gender does not fit either male or female but something different. Maybe it is neither or a blend of both!

*(Photo Credit: http://wherethegirlsgo.tumblr.com/post/5852152280/transgender-umbrella)*
Meeting Jazz

Jazz is an 11-year-old trans girl who transitioned at a very young age. This will introduce you to a beautiful girl thriving after having supportive parents who supported her in being exactly who she is.

Click Here to Watch Video.

Question for Reflection:

1. How did you feel watching the story of Jazz?

2. If Jazz was your classmate how would you help her feel welcomed and included?

3. What do you think about the quote in the box?

I would have been trans no matter what body I’d been born with. Tell the doctors that we exist for the health of humanity, which needs to find wholeness and belief in complexity. Girl in boy's body or boy inside a girl; call it fate or biology, will, or spiritual choice. But I was not born in the wrong body.

- Scott Turner Schofield, The Wrong Body

Video Disclaimer: Remember this is just one persons experience and no resource is perfect. This video simplifies gender identity and makes generalizations that are problematic like that one is “born in the wrong body." While it is true that many transgender people feel a disconnection between their gender identity and the way they are perceived it is often much more about societies limitations and expectations.
Jesus Welcomed Gender Non-Conforming People...

Did you know there were people in the bible who were transgender and/or gender non-conforming?

Jesus talked about transgender and gender non-conforming people too! He talked about these people called Eunuchs. Eunuchs were people who expressed their gender in ways that were very different from the majority of those around them.

Jesus talks about three kinds of Eunuchs in the book of Matthew: those born eunuchs, those made eunuchs by others, and those who choose to be eunuchs!! (Matthew 19:11-12).

They were different and got picked on and were not allowed into the church but when one of the Disciples of Jesus met a eunuch do you know what he did? HE BAPTIZED the eunuch!

To learn more about Eunuchs read the following passages together: Isaiah 56: 3-8, Matthew 19:11-12, Acts 8:27-36

Questions for Reflection:

1. Are you surprised that there are gender non-confirming people in the bible?

2. What did you learn by exploring the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts?

3. As Christians, what does this mean for how we should treat our friends, classmates or teammates who are trans* or gender non-conforming?
Practical Tips for Being an Ally

Here is a helpful resource to help you navigate being a good ally to your trans* and gender non-conforming friends.

**Question for Reflection:**

1. How might you be a better ally to trans* and gender non-conforming people you know?

2. These are just a few suggestions: can you think of other ways to be a good ally?

3. How would you want people to support you if you were trans* or gender non-conforming?

**Fun Tip:** One way to make this section fun and interactive is to act out different scenarios and have the youth decide if it reflects actions of a good ally! If it doesn’t invite them to act it in a better way!!!
Wrap Up

This program is only the primer to begin the conversation and lay the foundation for engagement and learning. In order to have the greatest impact continued commitment to truly welcoming all gender identities and expressions as well as space for exploration is necessary.

It is recommended that along side this program you find creative ways to continue conversations around gender identity and expression. Ways to do that include:

- Inviting members of the trans* community to come and share their experience.
- Host movie nights that show films exploring topics related to gender identity and expression.
- Volunteer and engage with organizations working for and with trans* and gender non-conforming people.
- Encourage the exploration of gender through hosting book clubs with books that explore those topics.
- Do not split people into men’s only or women’s only groups.

And remember:

[Image of gender identity and expression concepts]
About MCC Transgender Ministries

MCC Transgender Ministries began as an outgrowth of the Transgender Resource Team, formed in 2005 with ten members. In 2010, more than thirty-five people contribute to MCCTM resources through writing, editing, and serving in an advisory role.

Now, under the Office of Emerging Ministries, the MCC Transgender Ministries has convened an Advisory Council and will continue to work towards greater visibility, representation, and inclusion in all areas of MCC. In conjunction with the wider scope of Diversity and Inclusion as commissioned by the Office of Emerging Ministries, MCCTM will focus more intentionally on paying attention to all of the intersections of oppression that affect the diverse grouping of people who identify as trans* or gender non-conforming in MCC.

MISSION:
MCC Transgender Ministries creates, develops and distributes resources to enhance local church and local community ministry to and with trans* and gender non-conforming people. We believe that MCC’s core values of inclusion, social justice, spiritual transformation, and community are integral to healthy and holistic life. MCC’s core values are in great need in transgender and gender non-conforming communities and work to broaden the perspectives of those who are not transgender or gender non-conforming based on an understanding that all individuals are hurt by narrow binary gender roles and restrictions.

VISION:
MCC Transgender Ministries hopes to enhance ministries of spirituality, social action and community in local communities and congregations through resources designated to facilitate inclusion, understanding and activism.

STAFF:
Angel Collie leads the MCC Transgender Ministries and worked on In Our Own Words: MCC’s Archive and Oral History Project. He recently graduated with his BA in Religious Studies and double minors in Women’s Studies and Sexuality Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is currently working on his MDiv at Yale Divinity School where he serves on the Student Council’s Diversity Committee and Co-Leads the Divinity School’s LGBTQ Coalition. In addition, Angel serves on the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies Transgender Roundtable, the LGBT-RAN Advisory Committee, the Freedom Center for Social Justice Board, and the Philly Trans Health Conference Spirituality and Religion working group. He was included in the 2014 Trans 100.

CONTACT:
Angel Collie: AngelCollie@mccchurch.net