

07 Same-Sex Sexuality

LEADER GUIDE

BIG IDEA:

LGB/SSA students need to understand that God loves them, values them, and sees them as a beautiful part of his creation. For many students attracted to the same sex, this message hasn't always been communicated in the church. This needs to change. And you are part of that change. All people need to know that they are beloved by the Creator of the universe. Simply experiencing attraction to the same sex is not a morally culpable sin. Someone can be same-sex attracted (or gay) and faithfully follow God. God gives clear instructions for sex and marriage, and he also loves and cares for all people, including LGBTQ people.

Tips for Conversation:

Before diving into this conversation, you might need help understanding some important words. We do this because words really matter. Millions of people have been psychologically and emotionally hurt by something they were called twenty years ago. Unfortunately, many gay and lesbian individuals have been wounded deeply by an inappropriate or harmful use of words.

Terms to understand:

- Lesbian - A woman who is attracted to other women.
- Gay - A man or woman who is attracted to the same sex.
- Bisexual - Someone attracted to both men and women.
- Transgender - Someone who experiences some level of incongruence with their biological sex.
- Questioning - Someone who is unsure about the nature of their attractions.

- Queer - A catch-all identifier for someone who feels that their sexuality, gender identity, or both are different from the majority norm of their society.
- Nonbinary - Someone who doesn't identify as either male or female, or might not identify with masculine or feminine traits.
- SSA - Same-Sex Attraction.
- LGBTQ - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or queer.
- Gender Dysphoria - The distress some people feel as a result of not resonating with their biological sex. Dysphoria can range from mild to severe.

Terms to AVOID:

- “The Gay Lifestyle” - What most people are talking about when they use this term is sex, specifically gay sex. We don't equate the term “the straight lifestyle” with heterosexual sex, and neither should we reduce gay people to a particular kind of sexual activity..
- “Homosexual” - This is an older clinical term used to describe gay people, but most gay people don't prefer to be called “a homosexual.” Use “gay” or “same-sex attracted” instead, according to the preference of the person in question.
- “Homosexuality” - This isn't necessarily a bad term, but it's very broad. It can include both sexual orientation (who people are attracted to) and sexual behavior (how people respond to their attractions). As a result, it tends to blur the line between people who submit their same-sex desires to the Lordship of Christ and those who don't follow a Christian sexual ethic. It's better to use more specific terms if possible.
- “The Gay Agenda” - Another overgeneralizing term that's unhelpful. Not every straight person shares the same “straight agenda”; likewise, not every gay person shares the same “gay agenda.”



Here are few other things to keep in mind as you have this conversation this week:

Be honest about your own mistakes in this conversation.

If we are to take a balanced approach to our conversation about same-sex sexuality, then we have to be willing to own our own mistakes. This might be hard, but it is needed. Students need to see this humility and know that people in the church are sorry for what has been done to their friends and family in the name of God.

Be okay with the complexities of this conversation.

We highly recommend doing a lot of study on this conversation. You can never do too much learning here. But don't worry if you don't understand everything about the conversation. No one has it all nailed down. Admitting what you don't know will help you be a better teacher and friend in the process. This conversation can be extremely tough, but your posture toward it will influence how you learn and what you ultimately teach.

This is about people.

So often we can get stuck on the question, "Is homosexuality (whether the sexual behavior or the orientation itself) a sin?" Those who identify as LGBTQ+ are a diverse group of people. Be willing to listen to those who are LGBTQ+, and be willing to extend unconditional love to all people—especially those who have experienced marginalization from the church. God is not anti-people. He loves every person. He created all of us in his image. Thus, we need to eagerly love people as he does.

Believe the Bible.

This might sound obvious, but some people are so zealous about being compassionate and loving—which is a good thing!—that they think they need to ignore the Bible to do so. Ignoring the Bible is neither loving nor helpful. God's Word is the best pathway to living a God-honoring and flourishing life. Don't be ashamed to speak courageously about how the Creator has commanded us to live.



Questions for Small Group:

1. In what areas of your life or your struggles has Jesus met you with love first?
 2. How did you change as a response to that love?
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Additional Resources:

VIDEO: Full-length interview with Gregory Coles

VIDEO: Sean McDowell and Preston Sprinkle discuss the term “homosexuality” - <https://youtu.be/noXmiLzbhPY>

VIDEO: Dear Church, I’m Gay - <https://youtu.be/rc6NXB6TP5A>

BOOK: Preston Sprinkle, *Living in a Gray World*

TOOL: Weekly devotional

WEB: centerforfaith.com

