



Church on the Hill

Open and Affirming Seminar - Seminar 4

The Misunderstood “T” in LGBT Gender and Transgender

Wendy Hinshaw

***Please click through the presentation using
the Down Arrow key on your keyboard.***

Welcome, we are so glad you are here!

At Church on the Hill, we have a tradition of welcoming everyone to our church family, just as they are.

➤ Opening Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for bringing us together today.

Please be with us today to help us listen to and learn from each other.

Equip us, challenge us, comfort us, teach us, help us to follow your lessons of love and acceptance,

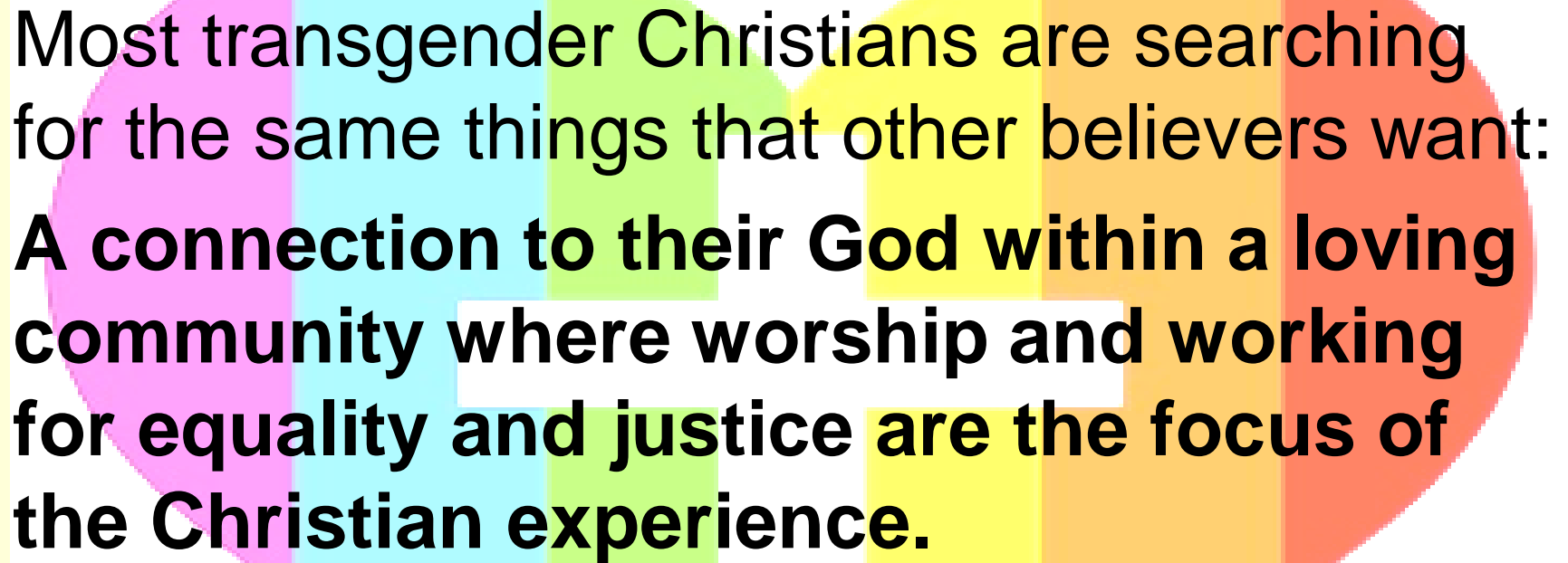
Today and every day. We ask all this in your name.

Amen.

Please participate

- Please participate fully in this process: make time for each seminar and ask your real - maybe difficult - questions that others may need responses to as well.
- We are all here to safely, openly discuss these topics so we can all feel comfortable and make current and new visitors and members feel welcome in our church





Most transgender Christians are searching for the same things that other believers want:
A connection to their God within a loving community where worship and working for equality and justice are the focus of the Christian experience.

Unfortunately, these searching transgender people are too often left without a place to call a “Church home”, because most congregations and religious institutions are not ready to welcome them.

Issues

Gender minorities, much like other minorities in this society, are either symbolically excluded by their invisibility or kept in their place by inaccurate portrayals and perceptions.

This is true for lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals and families, as we have heard.

Especially true for transgender individuals, who face a greater degree of ignorance, misunderstanding, and discrimination.



OF **6450**
TRANSGENDER AND
GENDER NON-CONFORMING
PARTICIPANTS SURVEYED,
THEY FOUND THAT...



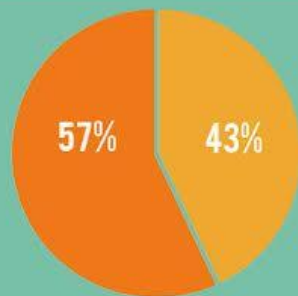
90% EXPERIENCED harassment, mistreatment or discrimination on the job or took actions like hiding who they are to avoid confrontation



50% of transgender youth will have had *at least one* suicide attempt by their **20th** birthday

1.6% OF GENERAL POPULATION
reported attempting suicide

41% OF TRANSPULATION



43% MAINTAINED MOST OF THEIR FAMILY BONDS
57% EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT FAMILY REJECTION

19% REPORTED BEING REFUSED **MEDICAL CARE** DUE TO THEIR TRANSGENDER OR GENDER NON-CONFORMING STATUS WITH EVEN HIGHER NUMBERS AMONG **PEOPLE OF COLOR** IN THE SURVEY



tolerance

acceptance

This workshop and our ONA series is about moving from tolerance to acceptance.

Tolerance and Acceptance are not the same thing.

Tolerance: to endure or put up with.

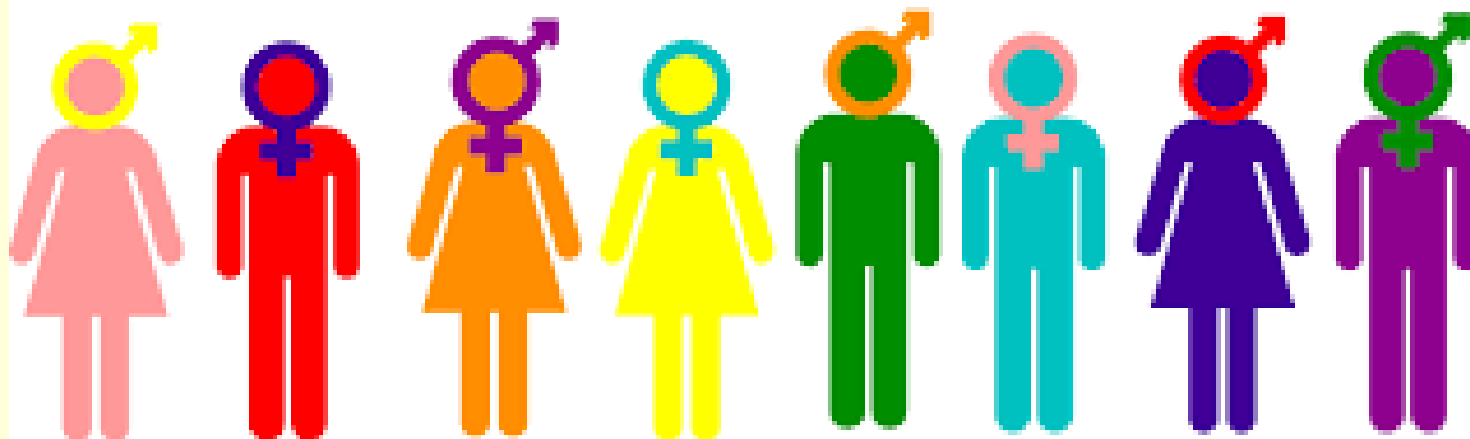
Acceptance: true welcoming and acceptance means being open to accept diversity in all its forms.

As we have discussed in other sessions, There may be things that make us uncomfortable at first, but this is an opportunity to know and understand some amazing people and share our church experience with them.



Church on the Hill calls us to be ourselves, and we can see how this call is actually very similar to the call that LGBT people feel to also be themselves, and express to the world who they are.

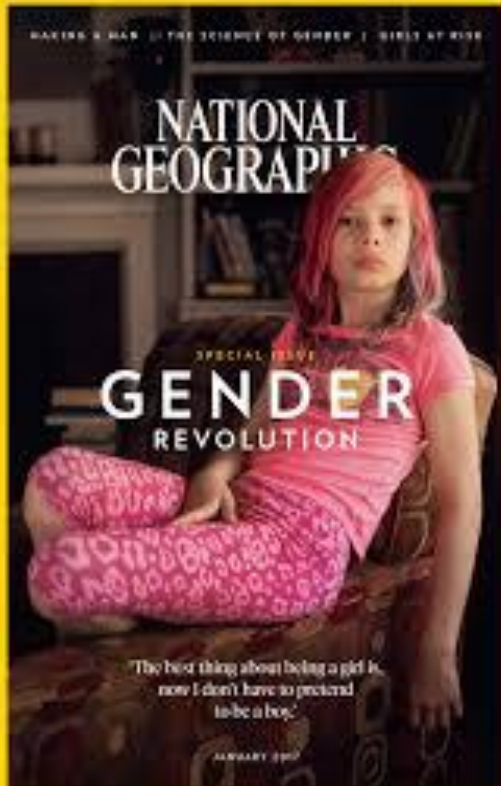
BE WHO YOU ARE.





We are in a place now where more and more trans people want to come forward and say, **'This is who I am.'**

— LAVERNE COX



DANICA ROEM MAKES HISTORY

WILL BE VIRGINIA'S FIRST OUT TRANSGENDER PUBLIC OFFICIAL



HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN P A C

WWW.HRC.ORG



Transgender people have become increasingly visible in the media, and trans people feel called to make themselves visible, to reach out to each other and to their communities, to be celebrated and accepted and participate in their families and communities.



Trans People of Faith: We Are Visible #TDOV



Trans people include the same range of diversity that all people do— not just in gender but in race, in class, in sexuality, in nationality, in ability/disability, and in faith. But there’s still a lot of confusion about the term.

Is it a...



Girl OR BOY.



Boy or Girl?



When a child is born, a doctor says “It’s a boy” or “It’s a girl”, but a person’s gender identity doesn’t always match their biology.

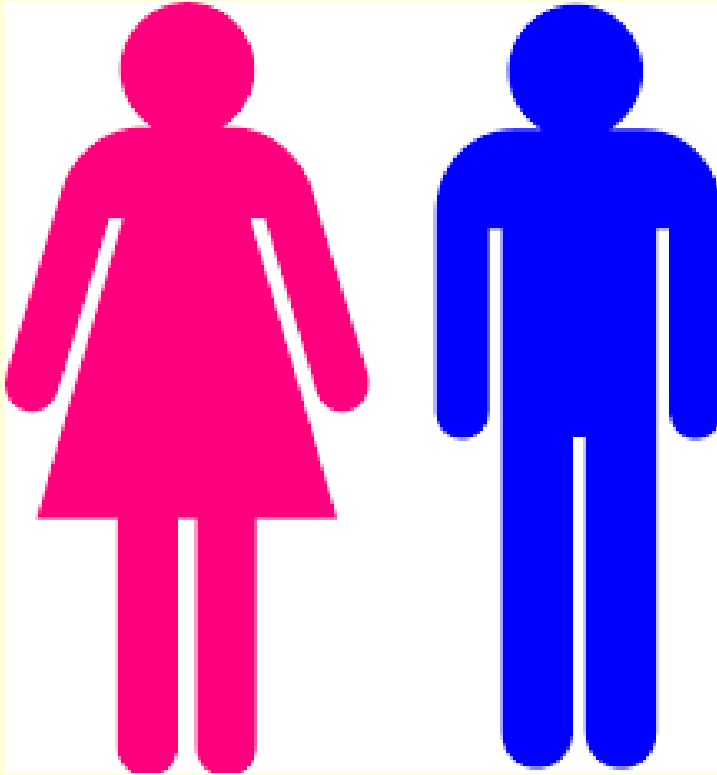
Sex → biology (chromosomes, physical body, hormones)

Gender identity → person (inner sense of being male, female, or both)



Transgender: Feeling like your sex and gender identity do not neatly align.

Many of us experience a gender identity that aligns with our sex. In other words, many people born with the physical and biological characteristics of female feel a gender identity that aligns with that. There's lots of ways to be and feel female that include a range of femininity (pink dresses, short hair, sports, girly-girl or tomboy), but to the extent that someone is born female and feels female, we would say that their sex and their gender identity align. Same with men. Individuals who identify as transgender generally have the experience of feeling like their biological sex and gender identity do not align. Some have the experience of feeling like they were born in the "wrong body", and seek that "neat alignment" between their sex and gender identity that many of us take for granted. We call that experience of feeling like your sex and gender don't align "transgender", with "trans" standing for changing or crossing, in this case crossing or changing genders.



Cisgender:

Feeling like your sex and gender identity align.

We call the experience of feeling like your sex and gender do align “cisgender”, with “cis” literally meaning “on the same side of”, in this case sex and gender aligning on the same side.

♥ TRANSGENDER ♥

In other words, transgender persons identify with a feeling of not being comfortable in their own skin.



*Can you think of a time when
you didn't feel comfortable in
your own skin?*

- When you felt like you didn't belong?
- A “round peg trying to fit in a square hole”?
- A time when you had to pretend to be something you aren't in order to fit in?
- A time when you felt you had to change who you are in order to fit expectations?

Rebekah

Many trans people like Rebekah have the experience of feeling like they were born in the wrong body and want nothing more than to live as and be recognized as a person with the sex and gender that they feel is true and right for them. They want to “live as themselves.” As Rebekah says, she’s “just a girl”.

See her story by clicking here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3M2kdVmeM&feature=youtu.be>

Jack

Transitioning, as Rebekah and her family describe, is a process.

Here's Jack to tell you a bit more about that experience and all of the complications that come with it.

Click here:

https://www.ted.com/talks/jackson_bird_how_to_talk_and_listen_to_transgender_people#t-4456

An umbrella term covering a variety of ways some people think of presenting themselves different from society's expectations.



Trans is an umbrella term that covers not only experiences like Rebekah and Jack's but also experiences of transgender people who feel like their sex/gender alignment isn't on one side of the gender binary or the other, but somewhere in the middle. Rebekah is "just a girl" and Jack wants nothing more than to be "tall handsome man," but some transgender people find themselves outside of, or somewhere in the middle of, our traditional gender binary.

Carly Mitchell

Carly talks about gender transgression and being gender fluid.

To see her story, click here and play through about 2:25mins:

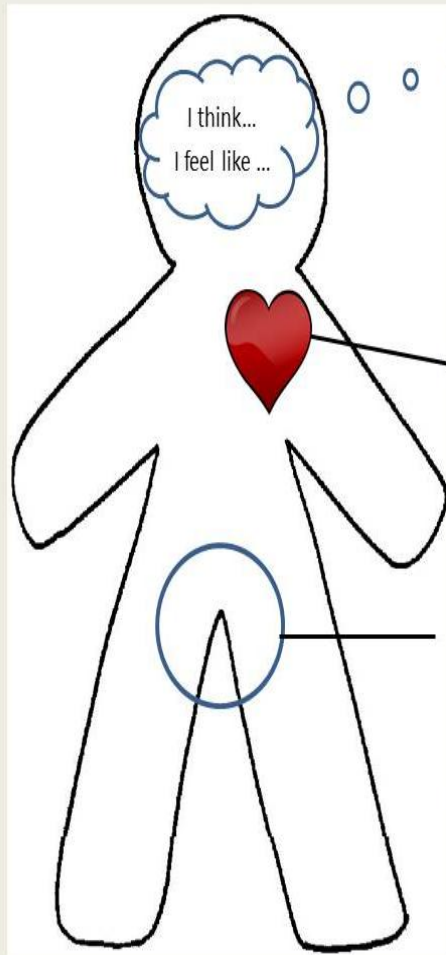
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMrCYPCsLUk>

There are many ways to be transgender



The point is there are many ways to be transgender. Many transgender people “blend” with cisgender people, for individuals like Jack and Rebekah “living as themselves” means looking like someone we would recognize as a traditional male or female. For other transgender individuals, such as Carly, “living as themselves” means falling 21 somewhere in between the male/female binary.

Transgender/any gender identity is separate from sexual orientation



Gender Identity

Girl/Woman
Boy/Man
Transgender/gender non-conforming

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual – Homosexual
[straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual,
queer, asexual]

Biological Sex

Female -- Male -- Intersex

Gender Presentation

– how we present ourselves to others:
Feminine -- Masculine -- Androgynous

The experience of being transgender, the experience of any gender identity, is separate from sexuality or sexual orientation. We say gender identity because gender is part of each of our identities. It's not the only part, of course. As Alicia said last week, "I'm a mother, a friend, I do yoga, etc., and I'm also a lesbian." Gender identity is the gender you identify with; it includes whether you identify as male or female (most of us choose one or the other), and it also includes the kind of male or female we think of ourselves as.

Aspects of femininity and masculinity, how we feel comfortable expressing our identity, what it means to look and feel like ourselves.

Some think I should dress more like a woman. Some think I should dress more like a man.

I may not fit some **ideas about gender**, and I am a proud part of DC.

Please treat me the same way any person would want to be treated: **with courtesy and respect.**

Discrimination based on gender identity and expression is illegal in the District of Columbia.

If you think you've been the target of discrimination, visit www.ehr.dc.gov or call (202) 727-4559.



I like staying in shape, listening to Adele, and shopping in Friendship Heights with my mom and sisters.

I'm a **transgender woman** and I'm part of DC.

Please treat me the same way any woman would want to be treated: **with courtesy and respect.**

Discrimination based on gender identity and expression is illegal in the District of Columbia.

If you think you've been the target of discrimination, visit www.ehr.dc.gov or call (202) 727-4559.



Show your support! Spread word of the #TransRespect campaign by photographing this ad and sharing on Twitter.



Show your support! Spread word of the #TransRespect campaign by photographing this ad and sharing on Twitter.



It's ok not to understand

It's ok not to understand all of this. It's ok to feel like the experience of transgender identity isn't your experience. If you've never thought about your gender identity or never questioned whether your gender identity aligned with your biological sex, this may feel very different from your own experience. Or you may feel like you understand the experiences of Jack and Rebekah, who want their gender identity to align with their biological sex, better than you understand the experience of Carly, who doesn't feel or seek that kind of alignment. Confusion about this is ok!

Understanding

Transgender individuals are going to great trouble and often risk public scorn and private rejection to express themselves authentically.

Simple things, like going to the restroom, have become political hot spots.



But even if there are aspects of the trans experience that some of us may not understand, we can all understand that the experience of being transgender is not easy. They have decided to be authentic to the identity that they feel inside and present that identity. Society does not always appreciate that authenticity.



**WE
ARE
ALL
THE
SAME
INSIDE**

Even if we are confused or still have questions, we can begin with the understanding that we are all the same inside, that we are all children of God created exactly as he intended us to be, all of us with the opportunity to discover and be our authentic selves and to love and understand each other and support each other on that same journey.



People are people. And our goal as individuals and as a church community is to prepare ourselves, work together to make ourselves more comfortable with the experiences and needs of LGBT people so that we can welcome all who visit our church, embrace them as part of our church community, welcome them as guests, as members, and leaders in our church.



Love
is
love

So, the first step is to lead with love, and recognize that gender identity, just like sexuality, is one part of the whole person. Just like for Alicia, her sexuality is one part of her identity; my gender and sexuality are one part of my identity; gender identity (trans, cis, whatever) is one part of our identity.

Embracing the whole person means recognizing all parts of a person- not looking away from or denying our sexuality or gender identity. But it also means we are more than these one or two aspects of ourselves.



What do I call someone? - What they call themselves.

How do I greet someone? - Welcome! I'm glad you're here!

What if I have questions? - Follow their lead.

We learn as children to respect people, address them as they wish to be addressed, and not ask intrusive or impolite questions, and those lessons still serve us.

If someone walks into a worship service and his or her gender is unclear, there is rarely a reason to ask or comment on this. The person is there to pray and be in the community.

If someone looks and acts female, then you can identify them as female using a She or Her pronoun. If you are not sure, ask yourself again, Do I really need to know? Think about how you greet any new member when they come to church.

**TREAT
OTHERS**

The way

you

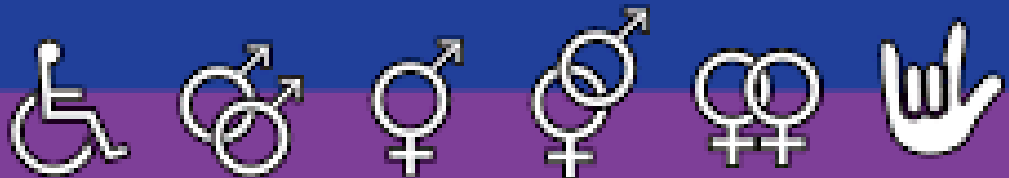
Want to be

TREATED



ALL

Are Welcome Here



Be Positive!

- **Accept** that people have a right to define their gender, regardless of assigned sex.



Be Positive!

- **Respect** people's gender identifications, pronouns and names.



Be Positive!

- **Challenge** anti-trans and sexist remarks, jokes and comments through personal conversations.



Be Positive!

- **Listen** to the stories of people who are trans to better understand their experience.



Be Positive!

- **Say** that you are a trans ally and why.



Resources

<https://www.pflag.org/>

PFLAG

(formerly know as **Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays**)

Institute for Gay and Welcoming Resources, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

Church on the Hill, ONA Sub-Committee

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| •Jeff Newcomb | 561-239-1909 | Sarah Hugus | 561-445-3783 |
| •Julie McBride | 563-357-4965 | Wendy Hinshaw | 614-266-6035 |
| •Jennifer Schmuhl | 561-862-7371 | Bob Rodgers | 813-841-0835 |

Church on the Hill

Open and Affirming Seminar IV – The Misunderstood “T” in LGBT: Gender and Transgender

Presented on March 4, 2018 and repeated on March 5

Questions asked during the seminar, with answers provided

1. Q: What are the laws regarding what bathrooms a gender non-conforming person may use?
 - A. They should use whatever bathroom they are most comfortable with

2. Q: Yeas ago, I had an associate named Dan, who wanted to be called Danielle. He took hormones and had surgery. I have the feeling that this type of surgery results in a higher rate of suicide for these individuals. Is this accurate?
 - A. The higher suicide rates among transgender and gender non-conforming individuals actually comes from the rejection and discrimination they face, NOT the surgery.
 - B. At the last seminar, we talked about the very high suicide rates among LGBT youth that is caused by family rejection and bullying, independent of surgery.

3. Q: Can you clarify the difference between cross-dressing and transgender?
 - A. Cross dressing is done within a particular confine. It may be a way of exploring gender, or not.
 - B. There is a huge range within the umbrella of transgender, from binary (male vs. female) to non-binary. You can see this range in the individuals presented in the videos that were part of this seminar today.

4. COMMENT: In Canada, all the hospitals and other public places have unisex bathrooms as standard rather than male or female bathrooms

5. COMMENT: It is important to understand the different between transgender individuals and gender non-conforming individuals. And it is important to call people what they want to be called.

6. Q: Does information show if a person recognizes their gender early, does it make it easier?
 - A. YES. Recent research indicates that when families and schools are supportive of children who identify as Transgender or who are gender non-conforming, these children develop without a lot of the problems associated with children in rejecting families or schools.

7. COMMENT: I grew up in an environment where we didn't know about gender non-confirming.

8. COMMENT: I had the opportunity to talk with Aiden (Transgender youth at last week's seminar) and I told him 'your light shines so brightly.'
9. COMMENT: I had a daughter who was a tomboy. It is important to pay attention to more than their clothes.
10. COMMENT: I never even thought about any of this before today.
11. Q: If we are genuinely open to it, we know who we are early on (with regards to gender identity).
12. COMMENT: I have a grandson. He wanted t doll. His father was emphatically against it, but his mother let him play with dolls. Then when he was 9, he tried on girl's shoes in Walmart. A few years later, his mother found him dressed up as a girl and paying with other girls. Finally, his family confronted him and said he was ok as he was. He's still a he, but also still hanging out with girls.
13. COMMENT: A family friend gave their boy space to pretend to be a girl. They gave him a safe space to know he was loved, no matter what.
14. Q: We were told sexual orientation is a continuum. Is it safe to assume the same with transgender?
 - A. A: It is the same with gender, a continuum.
 - B. There are also more ways to be and express oneself as a girl than there are as a boy, and still be comfortable and accepted within a gender binary system. The range of options is larger for females than for males.