



Recommendations for Church Youth Groups with Gender Dysphoric Youth

Advocates Protecting Children

What might be the best response for youth groups when kids announce a transgender identity at church?

Ultimately, the church (and by extension the youth group) is meant to spread the gospel and make disciples for Christ. Keeping that goal in mind, one can start to parse out what the youth group's role might be when it comes to an issue like transgender identity. It's important to recognize that these kids are gender dysphoric, and there is no such thing as a child who was born in the wrong body. Therefore a transgender identity is, at its core, a deception.

We believe that the three most important things to consider are:

- 1) what Scripture says
- 2) how the child's parents want to handle their child's identity issues, and
- 3) upholding truth for everyone who is in the youth group.



A church whose foundation is built upon scripture is likely to agree that God created humans to be either male or female. While personality and preferences may be on a continuum between what society considers “masculine” and “feminine,” sex (maleness or femaleness) is binary, determined by God, and fixed from the moment of conception. To interpret otherwise suggests a possibly heretical deference to cultural tides over biblical truth.

When one family's daughter first announced a transgender identity, she was registered to attend a Christian summer church camp just weeks later. The camp handled the situation deftly. The staff indicated a warm welcome to the girl, but said that she would bunk with other girls, and be referred to as “she/her” by the staff. They also said that the transgender-identified girl was not to discuss transgender ideology with any of the



other campers, but if she wanted to talk about it with a staff member they could do so in private, away from the other kids. The girl agreed to those terms.

The parents very much wanted their daughter to be around adults who would confirm her TRUE, God-given identity, and who would show Christ's love to her. We believe that having all the nearest adults in this girl's life confirm the same message to her (that she is a young woman designed by God) was integral to the girl finally desisting from the transgender narrative and accepting who God made her to be.

The church youth group can come alongside families around this issue and provide a valuable partnership toward combating the lie that one can be “a girl in a boy's body” or vice versa. Youth groups, however, have a more challenging job than does the staff at summer camp, since the youth group will have a long-term and weekly relationship with the child, rather than just an intensive one-week experience.

Church and youth groups straddle a delicate line between standing up for truth and being able to minister to sinful people (which describes every one of us). Keeping in mind that Christians' primary responsibility is to share the gospel and make disciples, we must continually ask ourselves whether our actions are helping or hindering that goal. Well-intentioned youth groups may hope that if they go along with trans names and preferred pronouns, the gender-confused child will stay in youth group and eventually come to Christ and accept the gospel.

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cannot lead to the child growing closer to God or to truth.**

But we believe it is a mistake to agree with an anti-biblical lie (that people can change sex, or be “born in the wrong body”) as a way to keep kids coming to church or to youth group. These kids are being lied to everywhere else today; the church needs to be a place they hear the truth. **Affirming a confused child in a desired alternate sex cannot lead to the child growing closer to God or to truth. Rather, affirming a lie will only usher the child further along the path to self-destruction.** Preliminary studies are showing that nearly 100% of kids who socially transition (pronouns, names, clothes) go on to start cross-sex hormones, which are poison.^{1,2}

Once the youth group has solidified its position on what Scripture says about transgender ideology, the second step is to talk to the child's parents and find out what the family's position on the matter is.



¹ de Vries, A. L., & Cohen-Kettenis, P. T. (2012). Clinical management of gender dysphoria in children and adolescents: The Dutch approach. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 59(3), 301–320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2012.653300>

² Laidlaw, M. K. (2018, October 9). *Gender dysphoria and children: An Endocrinologist's evaluation of I am jazz*. Public Discourse. Retrieved December 3, 2021, from <https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2018/04/21220/>.

The best case would be that the child's parents do not wish to affirm the transgender identity. **If the parents *do not* want their child to be called by a different name and wrong-sex pronouns, the church should absolutely honor that and do the same.**

One of the most insidious things about transgender ideology is how it has pressured schools, therapists, and the world at large to dishonor the family. Those who support transgender ideology tell kids that if their families don't agree to let them change sexes, the family is toxic and should be cut off. **Adults who buy into this ideology actively work to undermine families, out of a misguided desire to become the child's valiant savior.**

Unfortunately, nearly every “expert” will tell the family that they must “affirm” the child’s idea that s/he is a different sex. By the time the parents come to the youth group leader they have likely already been misled by the teacher, school counselor, principal, therapist, and/or pediatrician that if they don't affirm the transgender identity, the child will commit suicide.

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If parents insist that they want their child to be affirmed in a transgender identity, that will be a much more difficult position for the youth group. If at all possible, we strongly encourage the youth group to try to move “transgender-affirming” parents toward taking a stand on truth with the child.

Affirming a transgender delusion will almost inevitably lead through social transition (clothes & hair) to medicalization (cross-sex hormones and gender reassignment surgery).³ The truth is that people cannot change sex; attempting to do so only damages the body in an attempt to impersonate the other sex. The earlier that the child is encouraged to agree with that reality, the better. Thousands of people are desisting and detransitioning, and are horrified at what’s been done to their bodies.⁴ Simply google “detransitioners” to view some of their stories, which activists try very hard to conceal and silence.

Christian parents and youth leaders can say, “By asking us to call you they/them instead of she/her, you are asking us to do something that we don't believe God agrees with. God made you the sex you are, and the Bible is very clear that people only come in two varieties: male and female. There is no escaping that reality. If we must choose between offending you or offending God, I'm afraid we're going to have to choose to offend you.” This is a healthy and helpful position which honors God and scripture (Acts 5:29), while not disparaging or discounting the child’s real struggles.

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³ Zucker, K. J. (2019). Debate: Different strokes for different folks. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 25(1), 36–37. <https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12330>

⁴ Curtis, P. (2021, July 9). *How many Detransitioners are too many?* Parents with Inconvenient Truths about Trans (PITT). Retrieved December 3, 2021, from <https://pitt.substack.com/p/how-many-detransitioners-are-too>.

We feel so strongly about churches not agreeing with transgender ideology, and not using trans names and preferred pronouns, because there is no good end to that road. **Using the child's trans name and preferred pronouns is not “being kind” or “affirming”;** it is ushering them onto a path of physical and psychological destruction. This is not a phase kids will outgrow or a trend they're trying on.

Another important consideration for adults who are dealing with this issue in a group setting, such as a school or youth group, is the example that's being set for the other children, as well as what is required of the children by the adults' actions. In public schools, for example, teachers and counselors are told to deceive parents about their children's sexuality and transgender identity, if the child wishes the parents not to be told. In that case, all the other children in the class must also deceive their parents about the transgender-identified child as well. Children should never be encouraged to hide something from their parents, as we know that this is a primary tactic of child predators.

If the parents remain determined to foster their child's gender dysphoria by affirming a transgender identity, this will be a difficult situation for the youth group. The youth group would not promote a child's drug abuse, even if the child's parents enabled it; the child would be welcomed to youth group, but not if he arrived drunk or stoned. In the same way, a child with gender dysphoria should always be welcomed to youth group, but not if she demands that others at youth group participate in the transgender deception.

Requiring other children to use an inaccurate name and pronouns is forcing them to lie, and it also encourages the belief that they, too, could have been born in the wrong body. It is clear that transgender ideology is a social contagion that could easily be a destruction influence on other kids in the youth group.

Our hearts are so heavy for families who are dealing with this. **Parents are desperate for real help to survive this and save their children.** The stories of those who have lost their children to transgender ideology are gut-wrenching.

Below are a few resources, in case you or your youth group leaders want to do a little more investigating. Advocates Protecting Children has created a video series specifically for educators; *Teacher Talks* goes into more depth about various aspects of this issue. If we could just accomplish one thing with respect to this issue, it would be to help parents know the truth as they struggle to save their kids.

Thank you for all you're doing to help this vulnerable population of kids and families.

Schools are actively transing kids and deceiving parents:

<https://www.partnersforethicalcare.com/post/transgender-religion-codified-enforced-at-school>

Kids are being medicalized for profit:

<https://youtu.be/Vr8rz8THpk0>

A parent's experience with a transgender-identified child:

<https://thefederalist.com/2019/09/18/7-things-ive-learned-since-my-child-identified-as-transgender/>

Sex-change surgery is now considered a "growth industry":

<https://www.partnersforethicalcare.com/post/all-about-the-money-sex-reassignment-surgery-touted-as-growth-market>

Teacher Talks Video Series

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL14HpowPtWbkaQJ28nrIqfA5XzkwoDZYs>

Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria Study (Lisa Littman, Brown University)

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0202330&type=printable>

For more resources, please visit www.advocatesprotectingchildren.org.

There is no such thing as a transgender child.