

Small Group Ministry
Group Session Plan
Heterosexism

Opening Words “Every One of Us”, by Grace Lewis McLaren, verse 1 and 2*

Ev’ry one of us has been a stranger, ev’ry one of us has been alone.

Welcome the open, welcome the hidden, welcome the darkness, welcome the light.

Welcome the seeker, welcome the wounded, welcome the courage, welcome the fright.

Ev’ry one of us has been a stranger, ev’ry one of us has been alone.

Ev’ry one of us is whole and worthy, ev’ry one of us has strength to give.

Honor the gay one, honor the straight one, honor the changer, honor the search.

Honor the quest for fairness, for justice. Honor the struggle for equal rights.

Ev’ry one of us is whole and worthy, ev’ry one of us has strength to share.

Check-In/Sharing How are you feeling at this moment?

Topic/Activity

From *Breaking the Silence-Overcoming the Fear* by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott (quoted in *Weaving the Fabric of Diversity*, p. 28)

Churches everywhere face a difficult challenge. That challenge is the task of overcoming our internal heterosexism and then helping society as a whole to do the same. I am aware, of course, that in recent years the acceptable term has been *homophobia*, but after a great deal of thought, I have come to prefer the term *heterosexism*. It is too easy for people to relegate any phobia to other people only, as a morbid and hysterical private abnormality we ourselves do not share. But there is nothing private about heterosexism; it is institutionalized throughout our society.

Considering a continuum of

Homophobia	←-----→	Heterosexism	←-----→	Diversity
Fear of difference		Conforming to a norm		Embracing difference

1. Share an example of how you have been limited by or witnessed homophobia, how that felt and how you reacted.
2. Is the term 'heterosexism' new to you? How do you see it being useful (or not)?" How has heterosexism affected you? Who is hurt and/or excluded by heterosexism?
3. Where do you see yourself on the continuum? Where would you like to be on the continuum? What is needed for you to get where you want to be – or stay, if you are already there?

Likes and Wishes How was this session for you?

Closing Words “Every One of Us”, by Grace Lewis McLaren, verse 3

Ev’ry one of us can rise and triumph, ev’ry one of us can sing with pride.

Sing out in friendship, sing out in safety, sing out for justice, sing out for joy.

Sing out for all who dwell in seclusion, sing out for hearts sprung open by love.

Ev’ry one of us can rise and triumph, ev’ry one of us can sing with pride.

*This song was written by Grace Lewis McLaren for the Northeast District Welcoming Congregation Conference at Ferry Beach, copyright 2007. Words used here with permission. Contact Grace for the music at 207-798-4074, 6mainer6@suscom-maine.net

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