



Voices of Witness: Out of the Box Leader's Guide

“Out of the Box”
is a groundbreaking
documentary giving
voice to the witness
of transgender people of faith,
courageously sharing their
stories of hope, healing
and wholeness.



Bishop Gene Robinson:

“I believe that God is calling us into this conversation now. It's an opportunity to get to understand another part of God's never-ending diversity and another way to live into our baptismal calling to love all God's children.”



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This Leader’s Guide and its accompanying Study Questions are intended for use with *Voices of Witness: Out of the Box*, a documentary created by Integrity USA for use in The Episcopal Church and in other communities considering what it means to fully include transgender persons in their lives and ministries.

For more information about the video,
www.IntegrityUSA.org/ootb

For more information about Integrity USA and our ministry, see
www.IntegrityUSA.org
 or call 800-462-9498.

Here are some notes that are presented in the Study Questions that you’ll provide to your participants. These are for your reference only.

Definitions

- **Gender Identity:** One’s inner sense of his or her own gender, of being male, female or something in-between.
- **Gender Expression:** The manner in which a person expresses his or her gender, through clothing, accessories, activities, grooming, interests.
- **Transgender:** Someone who does not conform or identify with the gender expectations associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Transwoman:** Someone assigned male at birth, but who lives and/or identifies as a woman.
- **Transman:** Someone assigned female at birth, but who lives and/or identifies as a man.

Traditional Gender Model

Boy	Biological Sex	Girl
Male	Gender Identity	Female
Masculine	Gender Expression	Feminine
Date Women	Sexual Orientation	Date Men

Notable Quotes

- “The strain of standing in front of people and talking about truth, while not living my own truth, was slowly destroying me.” – Rev. Carla Robinson
- “My strategy was that we were going to talk about this until people got bored with it.” – Rev. Harold Clinehens
- “When I finally decided to claim my identity and live into it through transition, it felt like Christmas morning – I mean really, literally, felt like Christmas morning – for months!” – Rev. Cameron Partridge
- “I need transgender people in the church, because for me to live into the fullness of God’s reign compels me to be in deep relationship with those that are radically different than I.” – Bishop Ian Douglas

Leader's Guide for use with *Voices of Witness: Out of the Box*

Background

More questions for the group:

- What did Carla mean by saying that a transgender person can be “an icon of the resurrection” for Christians?
- Do you agree with Bishop Douglas’ statement that his faith compels him to be in deep relationship with those that are radically different than he? How does that apply to you?
- How does the bravery of these people in being authentic inspire you to live your truth?

You may also want to discuss the three points brought up by Carla in the film, about the gifts that transgender people bring to the church:

- Their perspective as an outsider enables them to relate to seekers coming to the church.
- They are an embodiment of death and resurrection – passing from one life into another – “an icon of the resurrection.”
- They can be a road in, for those who have had a bad experience with the church – a reason for outsiders to decide to take a second look.

These questions may lead to further discussion that you may or may not have time for. If people are looking for more resources, please direct them to Integrity USA (www.IntegrityUSA.org) or TransEpiscopal (blog.TransEpiscopal.org).

Thank everyone for coming, and make sure they know that this video is also available on YouTube at www.YouTube.com/integriTV.

Objectives – Participants will:

- Understand the basic terminology related to transgender persons, gender expression and gender identity.
- Gain experience hearing the stories of transgender people and seeing them as church leaders
- Reflect on how transgender people are gifts to the church
- Be empowered to live their truth, just as many transgender persons are doing

Voices of Witness: Out of the Box is a documentary from Integrity USA, directed by the late Louise Brooks. It was designed to educate church leaders on transgender issues as we approached decisions about transgender non-discrimination canons at the 2012 General Convention. The video was released on YouTube and then mailed to every bishop and deputy before the convention.

At convention, both the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies voted overwhelmingly to support non-discrimination for transgender people in the ministries of the church, in the ordination process as well as in lay ministries. Integrity believes that this film helped to inform and persuade people as they considered their vote.

Beginning your Event/Class and Showing the Film

Welcome everyone who has gathered to see this film and discuss it. Depending on their familiarity with the film, you may want to use some of the information on the previous page to give them some background.

Explain to everyone that you'll show the film for the next half-hour, and then there will be a time for discussion and questions. Make sure each person has received a copy of the Study Questions (available where you got this Leader's Guide). Ask if there are any questions before you begin.

Show the video at this time. It is 27 minutes long. Please make sure that the lights are appropriately dimmed and the audio is loud enough for those in the back of the room.

Realize that, depending on the group, this film may have introduced many topics that have been unfamiliar to your participants. They may feel overwhelmed for a minute or two.

So after the video is over, give people a few moments to breathe and reflect. Turn the lights back up slowly and let the credits run to completion. Once they appear to have recovered, ask a few questions. Depending on the time you have, and the sophistication of the group, you may want to start with the general questions below, or skip directly to the next page.

- What struck you the most about this film?
- What story meant the most to you?
- What questions do you have about gender identity or expression? Do you understand how they are different from biological sex or sexual orientation?