

Equipping Parents to Respond to Gender-Confusing Messages in Schools

A project of Focus on the Family (summary)

Responding to Confusion with Truth –

2014 – TV show, “Transparent” – family discovers their father is “transitioning” into a woman began airing and has been awarded many awards.

2015 – Olympic decathlete gold medalist Bruce Jenner announced to Diane Sawyer “For all intents and purposes, I am a woman.”

2016 – Target stores announced, “We welcome transgender team members and guests to use the restroom or fitting room facility that corresponds with their gender identity.”

2017 – January, National Geographic featured a 7-year-old boy who lives as a girl – with two “Gender Revolution” covers for the issue. March 27, the cover of Time magazine featured a 26-year-old who identifies as “queer and gender-nonconforming.”

These are the times in which we live. Christians must respond with grace, truth and courage, and we must also teach the next generation about God’s creation of humanity in His image – male and female. Gen. 1:27

Modern “*gender ideology*” seeks to completely redefine God’s creation of humanity, which He separated into male and female. Instead of two sexes, this ideology says there are a multitude of “*genders*” – a recent construct that separates *bodily sex* – being *male or female* – from what’s inside people’s minds – who they believe and think they are. So, *sex* defines how you were born (male or female), but *gender* is how you see yourself. 2 Cor. 4:3-6

How to Respond When...

Scenario #1 – Your child is introduced to the idea that a person can change genders and told that “transgender” means “the sex a person with doesn’t match the sex they feel like inside” their head and heart.

Scenario #2 - A teacher reads a book or gives a coloring activity to your child that promotes cross-dressing behavior, such as stories or pictures featuring a boy who dresses like a girl.

Scenario #3 - A boy dressed as a girl is attending your child’s elementary school. Your child has encountered this new classmate at recess and is confused about it.

Scenario #4 - A boy in your child’s high school decides to identity as a girl and begins using the girl’s restroom – or vice versa. Your child expresses concern about going to the restroom.

HELPING KIDS RECOGNIZE THE MYTHS IN TRANSGENDERISM

- BY GLENN T. STANTON MARCH 8, 2019
Male and female are not what we feel we are, but what we actually are. Help your kids sort the truth from fiction regarding transgenderism because transgenderism doesn’t physically exist

Your daughter comes home from school one day, and you ask how the day went. She has a lot more to say than, “It was OK.” One of her classmates doesn’t want to be “Andy” anymore. Instead, he wants to be called “Andrea.” He is now a she, or at least that’s the new story that

everyone at school is required to play along with. Welcome to the mad new world of transgenderism.

How in the world do you handle such a topic with your child? How do you answer their questions?

In some ways, the transgenderism trend can be difficult to get a handle on. It's really "out there," something we never could have imagined reasonable people taking seriously. Yet many people do take it seriously. The issue is further complicated by the tsunami-like cultural forces declaring that anyone who doesn't totally accept and affirm the belief that boys can become girls is an intolerable bigot.

But if we look past these cultural forces, the issue is a little easier to understand. Simply put, transgenderism is a belief system, an ideology, with no basis in reality. When discussing this issue as a family, parents can trust that science and reason can help kids see through the madness.

A myth like no other

Children understand the basic science of sex without much trouble. It is one of the most universal and objective facts that humanity (and much of the animal kingdom) is created male and female. Penises and vaginas correspond with XY and XX chromosomes that exist in every bit of DNA in our bodies. Yes, there are intersexed people, an extremely small percentage of individuals born with ambiguous genitalia or chromosomes. These few cases don't represent a different kind of sex or gender, but an unfortunate malformed body.

Male and female — it's really that simple. Science knows of no other models of humanity. Thus, the transgender trend is not rooted in any kind of objective science or medical reality.

Healthy bodies, confused minds

So why do some children and adults report confusion about what gender they are? Why does Andy want to be Andrea? There aren't easy answers. Leading scholars and clinicians in the Netherlands — writing in a textbook about treating gender dysphoria — explained that "no unequivocal etiology [root cause] factor determining atypical gender development has been found to date." In other words: We're just not sure what causes it.

With no medical basis for gender confusion, the condition exists largely in an individual's mind. It doesn't physically exist in one's body, and it certainly isn't the "way someone really is." It must be understood that most kids who say they are the opposite sex snap out of it by the time they reach puberty. A very low percentage of gender dysphoric kids — between 2 and 27 percent — stick with the belief that they are the opposite sex. Something can't be a real, objective "thing" if it is only temporary.

These two facts — that gender confusion has no medical basis and that it's almost always temporary — are the primary reasons that many leading clinicians say that parents and other

authorities in the child's life should absolutely not allow or support the switching of a gender dysphoric child's name, clothes, room décor and other identifiers to those of the opposite sex. What's more, these professionals view hormonal treatments and other body changes as not only irresponsible, but psychologically harmful. Supporting a child's temporary desire to transition makes it terribly difficult to move back in identity to their natal gender when they realize they actually are who they were born as. For parents with moral objections to gender transitioning in children, it's important for them to understand that science and the best clinicians in the field support their position.

Parents should also be aware of the social influences behind gender confusion in young people. Researchers at Brown University's School of Public Health discovered that social and peer influences are often a strong driver for young people who announce that they are transgender. Researchers refer to the phenomenon as "rapid-onset gender dysphoria," in which teenagers, seemingly out of nowhere, announce they are transgendered. The authors of the study explain that many parents are reporting that their child's gender dysphoria seemed to begin when belonging "to a peer group where one, multiple, or even all of the friends have become ... transgender-identified during the same timeframe." In other words, a great many of these children are influenced more by friends than anything in nature.

Recognizing God's design

Being transgender is at odds with science and God's design. Male and female are not what we feel we are, but what we actually are. Indeed, every cell in our bodies is marked either male or female. Our very bodies demonstrate Scripture's account of our creation, first described in Genesis 1:26-27 and later affirmed by Jesus in the Gospel.

Somehow, in some mysterious and wonderful way, the human male and female — in both body and spirit — are the image and likeness of God in the world. Satan hates God and His image with his whole being. Thus, he hates what it means to be male and female because of what that represents. He'll do everything he can to destroy this divine image. He is sowing confusion in the minds of our children and community leaders. Every Christian leader and parent must understand this with great seriousness.

Responding to the myths

Countering Satan's transgender agenda starts with a basic understanding and response to two main myths of transgenderism. In schools today as it relates to children:

Myth No. 1: Some people are simply born in the wrong body.

Response: There is no scientific development that tells us being transgendered is naturally occurring. This feeling is not the way someone physically is, nor has this person become a different kind of person. People are simply not born in the wrong body. Unfortunately, according to the academic field of gender theory (not fact, but theory), there is nothing anyone can say about the transgender-identified person's belief about him- or herself. People are who they believe they are, regardless of physical facts. That's not true in any other area of life, and it's not true here.

Myth No. 2: Transgender children must be supported in their change or they will commit suicide.

Response: There are two falsehoods here. First, many of the best mainstream clinicians and researchers on this topic absolutely do not encourage parents, teachers and playmates to go along with a child changing their sex identity before puberty. This is because, as explained earlier, the vast majority of kids who say they are the other gender (studies show well over 75 percent) come to see themselves as God created them. Thus, changing a child's whole life — name, clothing, public identity and room décor — will create an extremely difficult situation for the child when they come to realize they really are their natural bodily gender.

Second, there is absolutely no evidence that failing to go along with a child's gender dysphoria directly and exclusively causes them to want to take their lives. Such research simply does not exist. In fact, the research noted earlier from Brown University documents how youth are actually using suicide as a “narrative to manipulate parents and doctors into supporting and providing transition services.”

Overly simplistic explanations of suicide are something wise clinicians see through for the activism they are. What is more, the suicide rate for trans adults who have undergone their desired surgeries is still more than 20 times higher than the rate for the average population. To make this figure even more dramatic, this research was done in Sweden, one of the most permissive and “inclusive” countries in the world. Suicide in gender dysphoric youth and adults is not caused by lack of support.

Responding to the trans person

So People who honestly struggle with their actual gender do not typically do so because they want to start a cultural revolution or resist God's design. For the most part, they truly suffer from a great psychological battle in their mind. Such suffering should receive our compassion and kindness. Yes, we must stand absolutely true on the issue that God has created us as male and female and not be intimidated or bullied by ideological pressure, but we must always treat the hurting person with grace and teach our children to do so. We must help them recognize their need for true treatment, that changing their names, dressing differently or cutting and changing their bodies will not heal their minds. We must graciously and compassionately help these sufferers recognize what God lovingly and carefully created them to be.

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