

His Healing Light Ministries

FAQs on Gender and Sexuality for Class Facilitators and Small Group Leaders

We believe that by the grace of God, through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ, spiritual healing is available to all people without exception. The very purpose of Healing Journey is to welcome people who are hurting and/or healing into a safe environment in which to encounter the Living God of the Bible who offers love and healing to all. The goal of Healing Journey is to help people find and/or restore intimacy with Christ. The only prerequisite is a heart searching for God.

As a society, we are dealing with questions around sexuality and gender in ways we never have before, although they are not new questions to God. Below are some questions and answers to explain HHLM's position, as well as guidance in answering questions that may come your way.

The first, and most important, thing to remember is to always lead with love (Matt. 22:37-40). Secondly, if your class is hosted by a church, go over the church's statement of beliefs and policies about gender and sexuality with the pastor over your ministry to ensure that you are in compliance with them. If the church's policies are more restrictive than HHLM's, you would, of course, comply with them, or move to another location. As a facilitator or leader, your legal protection will flow to you from your sponsoring church, not from His Healing Light Ministries.

Glossary:

- * Demisexual: Individuals who feel sexual attractions only with those with whom they form a strong emotional bond first. This could apply to both heterosexual and homosexual relationships.
- * LGBTQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and all other gender identities not listed herein, excluding heterosexual identity.
- * Pansexual: Individuals who consider themselves to be gender-blind, who feel sexual/romantic attractions not based on gender.

1. What does HHLM believe about human sexuality?

In accord with the Holy Bible, we believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as immutably male or female. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Further, we believe that by God's design, sexual relations are intended to be between one man and one woman.

HHLM believes that an individual's identity is derived from, rooted in, and defined by God, and not from anything or anyone else. We understand, however, that many people who identify as LGBTQ+ view their gender and/or sexuality as their identity rather than deriving their identity from who they are in Christ.

If you find yourself conversing with an individual who adamantly believes his/her sexuality is his/her identity, we recommend not entering into debate with them. You might gently ask if they would be able to

join the class with a willingness to focus on each lesson as it comes, giving God a chance to speak to them directly. If this does not seem possible to them, you might then respectfully and lovingly suggest that Healing Journey is not a good fit for them at this time.

2. Does God love those who identify as LGBTQ+?

Absolutely, thoroughly, and without question God loves every person on earth. (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; Acts 10:34-35; I John 4:16)

Further, God has demonstrated throughout history, principally through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that He is a God who saves. He desires that none should perish (2 Peter 3:9; I Tim 2:4).

3. Does God view LGBTQ+ sexual behavior as a sin?

We believe that any form of sexual activity outside of the marriage between one man and one woman (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual behavior, bestiality, incest, or use of pornography) is counter to God's design, desire, and purpose. (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10). We believe that the boundaries God instituted in His original design are for our good. He alone knows what is best for humanity and has directed us in Scripture according to His perfect counsel.

We believe that God views sexual behavior outside of His design, in all its forms, the same as all other behaviors that are not in alignment with His design. However, while sexual choices out of alignment with His plan is not a worse choice from any other choice we make outside of His plan, it does create deeper and more complicated wounds.

Further, God offers redemption, restoration, and healing to all who confess, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; I Cor. 6:9-11). Nothing is beyond His redemption.

We do not recommend getting into a debate about these issues and/or scriptures, especially in your small group. God alone will be the One to convince each person of His Truth in their mind and heart. Allow God to speak through the scriptures themselves. If an individual continues debating the interpretation of the scriptures, respectfully and lovingly invite the individual to consider setting aside this question for the time being as they seek what God may have for them in Healing Journey. If they are not comfortable with this approach, suggest that they may prefer going in a direction other than Healing Journey as they seek healing.

4. Is a person who identifies as gay, pansexual, demisexual, or other, welcome in a Healing Journey class?

Yes! A person's sexual identity does not disqualify them from participating in a Healing Journey class. As you consider these issues surrounding gender identity and sexuality, keep this in mind: Every person comes into the Healing Journey class with issues of pride and lack of alignment with God's plan for them. Someone who shoplifts or refuses to forgive people is living a life offensive to God, just as people who are living a life outside of God's design for sex/gender. As leaders, our role is to accept each person, knowing they are a

work in progress. Accepting each person, whatever their behavior might be, is the key to making them feel welcome.

The purpose of the Healing Journey class is to draw individuals into a more intimate relationship with God in Christ so that He can direct and accomplish healing in that individual's life. As we are trained at Boot Camp, it is not the role of the small group leader to try to fix a person's behavior or thinking, regardless of the issue. Our role as leaders is to provide a safe environment, pointing to Jesus, allowing God to address issues within each individual.

5. What if a transgender man or woman wants to participate in class?

Transgender individuals are welcome to participate in the Healing Journey. We recognize that this may be stretching for group leaders and participants who may not have prior relationship with any transgender individuals. However, we want to be as open as possible to everyone seeking truth and healing in Christ.

The big question, of course, is this: What group would they be in? The one corresponding to their gender at birth or the one with which they currently identify. There are no easy answers here. Only through prayer and with God's discernment can these decisions be made. Here are a few thoughts for your consideration:

Adult Healing Journey groups:

-) Including transgender individuals in all areas of life will become more and more prevalent.
-) From the perspective of the group members, whichever group the transgender individual joins will likely cause discomfort for the group.
-) From the perspective of the transgender individual, they will probably feel more comfortable in the group with which they now identify.
-) If you require the transgender individual to join the group of their birth gender, it is unlikely they will agree to do that.
-) If the transgender individual is not allowed to be in the group with which they identify, and they choose not to do Healing Journey for that reason, they won't experience the amazing healing opportunity offered in this class.
-) If the transgender individual is allowed to join the group with which they identify, other individuals in that group may not choose to stay in the group/class or may not choose to share.
-) In the end, we recommend giving the transgender individual the right to choose for themselves which group they would like to be in, recognizing that most of the time that individual will be in the group with which they now identify.

Freedom Journey groups:

-) From the perspective of the group members, teens are more likely than an adult to accept a transgender student because they are more immersed in the gender fluid world.
-) The student identifying as transgender may or may not prefer the group of the gender with which they currently identify. You won't know without asking.
-) If a student says they want to be in a group other than their sex at birth (a boy wants to be in a girl's group or vice versa), consider the above bullet points for adults in making your decision.

-) Optimally, teens should be in the group that corresponds with their sex at birth, but if they will only do the class if they can be in the group with which they currently identify, prayerfully consider allowing that decision.

We recommend having a conversation with the transgender individual, talking through the options as you seek to understand their feelings and needs. We also recommend having a conversation with the other group members, challenging them to exhibit the love of Christ by making room for the individual in the group. And then make the most God-honoring decision for all involved.

Working through the class one-on-one with a leader may also be an excellent option for a transgender individual who is seeking healing through Healing Journey.

We encourage you to seek out help with these unique challenges as you have need.

6. What does HHLM believe about marriage?

We believe that God created marriage to be exclusively the union of one biological man and one biological woman, and that intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that union. (Gen. 2:18-25; Heb. 13:4) That being said, we accept all individuals, including those who believe differently regarding this issue.

7. Would a married lesbian woman or married gay man be welcome in a Healing Journey class?

Yes. Being in a same sex relationship does not disqualify someone from participating in the Healing Journey. HHLM's beliefs about same sex relationships, however, are based in Scripture. If asked directly, leaders may invite the individual to seek God in and through the scriptures referenced above.

Further, Healing Journey is first, and foremost, a class wherein each individual works on their own individual wounds. Certainly, married couples attend, and benefit from, the class. However, Healing Journey is not intended in any way to be a couples' class that addresses couples' issues. Though an individual's struggles may often involve a spouse, HJ leaders should always encourage the individual to focus on his/her own issues, including responses to the offending spouse, rather than trying to engage in couples' work.

8. What if both spouses in a gay marriage, or partners in a gay relationship, want to attend a HJ class?

Both spouses/partners are welcome in a Healing Journey class. As with any significant relationship among participants, however, the partners may never be in the same small group. If there is only one small group of that gender, only one partner may participate at that location.

9. What if other members of the class express discomfort with being in class with a person who identifies as LGBTQ+?

We believe that every person is loved by God and deserves compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the beliefs of HHLM.

Every year individuals find themselves in Healing Journey groups with people with whom they are uncomfortable. Leaders can help the uncomfortable individual by encouraging them to trust God with his/her placement in the small group, inviting them to dig into why they are uncomfortable with this member of their small group. God often puts us together with people with whom we are uncomfortable as a way to reach places in us that He knows needs healing.

As stated above, Healing Journey is meant to be a place where each individual works on their own issues. Leaders should always encourage the uncomfortable individual to focus on their own healing work, while being open to growing in love for the person with whom they are struggling.