

## Expanded Resources

In addition to the Parents Reconciling Ministries, The Reconciling Ministries Network includes the following extension ministries working together to challenge the discriminatory language, practices and policies in the Discipline of the United Methodist Church:

- ▶ Methodist Students for an All Inclusive Church (MOSAIC), a network for young adults
- ▶ United Methodists of Color (UMOC)
- ▶ Reconciling Ministries Clergy (RMC)
- ▶ Transgender Extension Ministry (TEM)

## Taking Steps toward Change

Welcoming LGBTQI children into your church begins with YOU and reaches out to the estimated one-in-five families with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex members in your congregation. It extends throughout your Annual Conference and unites thousands of United Methodists across the nation—standing together in unconditional, welcoming love.



"Welcome one another, therefore,  
just as Christ has welcomed you."

—Romans 15:7

## Our Children Deserve to Be Welcomed in All Our Churches

Our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex children often feel unaccepted in our congregations. Perhaps your pastor and friends don't even realize that your child is homosexual, transgender, or intersex; yet an estimated one in every five families in your church has a LGBTQI family member.

Together we can help your congregation accept our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex loved ones into equal membership and full participation.

Encourage your congregation to join the many UMC faith communities that have taken steps toward becoming a Reconciling Congregation. Inside are ideas from the Parents Reconciling Network (PRN) about how you and your congregation can extend welcome to all people.



## We Invite Your Participation!

Parents Reconciling Network is an extension ministry of the Reconciling Ministries Network. For more information, to join, or to send support, contact us at:

[www.RMNetwork.org](http://www.RMNetwork.org)  
123 W. Madison St., Ste 2150  
Chicago, IL 60602  
773-736-5526

Local contact:

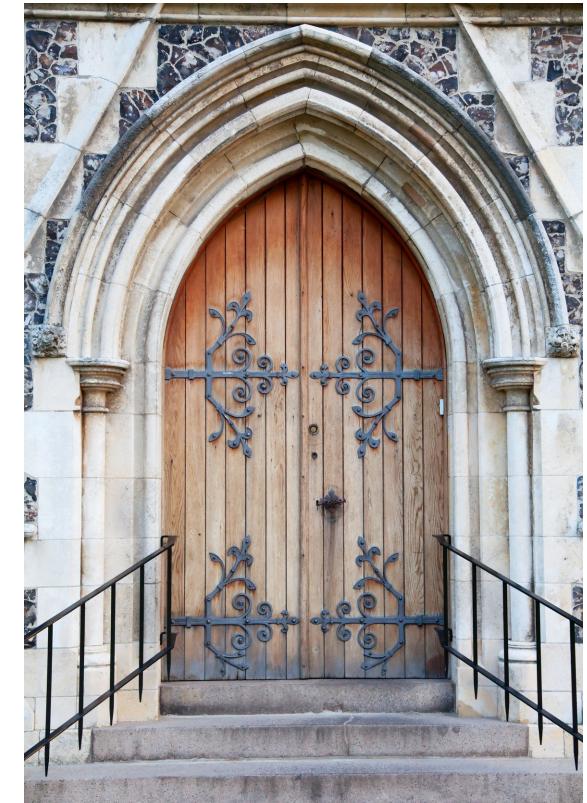


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Permission granted for duplication. This brochure is one in a series. Download additional brochures and information at [www.RMNetwork.org/connect/extension-ministries/prn/](http://www.RMNetwork.org/connect/extension-ministries/prn/).

## Helping Our Church Welcome & Accept

### Our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Intersex Children



- ▶ Do members of your congregation recognize that your LGBTQI child is acceptable to God?
- ▶ Can you talk about your whole child with members of your congregation?
- ▶ Does your child feel safe and welcome in your congregation?

## Ways to Help Our Church Grow in Grace, Love, and Acceptance...

# Steps Toward Becoming a Truly Welcoming United Methodist Congregation

## 1 Quietly let others know.

Never “out” any LGBTQI person without their permission. The first step is to get an “okay” from your child. When you have it, you may wish to begin by sharing with one or more people in your congregation who you know to be supportive of LGBTQI concerns or issues of inclusiveness. Your willingness to be open may help embolden others who have not yet felt free to share their own stories. Remember that “coming out” is a continual process.

## 2 Connect with families.

Connect with other families that have LGBTQI members. You already have a bond with them — the unconditional love for your children. This connection lessens your isolation and helps other families like yours realize they are not alone. Together you can be fully open and honest. Include families in other churches and denominations, too.

## 3 Form a support group.

Invite people to an informal gathering – a confidential setting for sharing stories, mutual support and learning, prayer and Bible study. It may be helpful to invite a facilitator, someone comfortable with LGBTQI concerns from another Parents Reconciling Network support group or community group such as PFLAG.

## 4 Express your needs—heart, mind, and soul.

As you are able, articulate your needs to friends, extended family, pastors and your congregation.

### ► **“I need love, Christ-like and unconditional.”**

Like our children, we long for an accepting place to worship and grow in faith.

### ► **“I need an affirming view of all sexual orientations and gender identities grounded in Christian values.”**

God created our children, loves them completely, and honors the beautiful truth of their lives.

### ► **“I need to tell my story and share new insights.”**

No witness is more powerful than our own.

### ► **“I need to help end the exclusion that wounds our children.”**

Talk with your pastor, church council, and the Reconciling Ministries Network about ways your congregation can be open to all.

## 5 Be a witness.

Celebrate family. When you are able, casually insert comments about your child into your conversation to normalize your child’s sexuality or gender identity. Volunteer to speak to a church or community group. March in a parade or attend a rally.

## 6 Join our PRN Family.

The Parents Reconciling Network is an extension ministry of the Reconciling Ministries Network. We are United Methodists and are a national fellowship of parents seeking change in our denomination.

Through counseling, presentations, and small group interaction, PRN helps parents support their LGBTQI children and each other, shares information, and works for understanding and justice.

## The Parents Reconciling Network Offers:

- Printed materials including biblical and spiritual resources and suggestions for obtaining various media resources
- Individual consultation by email, phone, letter, or in person. Connection with volunteer coordinators is available in many Annual Conferences
- Our annual newsletter, *Kindred Connection*
- A PRN contact list on the RMN website
- Church-wide study courses and information to guide your church toward becoming a Reconciling Congregation
- Special sessions for parents at the national Convocation, a biannual gathering of the Reconciling Ministries Network

## Some Additional Resources

- **PFLAG** (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)—[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)
- **The Human Rights Campaign**—[www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org) (click on “Religion and Faith”)

## We’re Working to Make Church a Safe Place for Our Youth

The Parents Reconciling Network (PRN) believes it is time for United Methodist parents to connect in a local and nationwide program of support, advocacy and witness for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) individuals.

We are helping congregations and the entire church realize that change is coming, justice will prevail, and our United Methodist Church must be open to all of God’s children ...including ours!