

New Transgender Education Resource for Churches from the Institute for Welcoming Resources

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The Institute for Welcoming Resources (IWR), a program of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, today announced the release of transACTION, a new curriculum designed for churches and religious institutions to help congregants and members understand and welcome transgender persons into their congregations and faith settings.

"Too often transgender people looking for a place to worship can't find one to call their spiritual home because most congregations and religious institutions are not ready to welcome them as their companions in faith," says the Rev. Rebecca Voelkel, Institute for Welcoming Resources and faith work director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "Yet, many transgender people of faith are searching for the same things that other believers want: a loving community where worship and working for equality and justice are the focus of their faith experience."

transACTION is designed to help churches and institutions address this issue of understanding and welcome by providing step-by-step training about the needs, apprehensions and fears of transgender people - as well as the wealth of gifts and graces they bring - while responding to the concerns of the church or religious institution.

The program can be used in three sessions: How Do We Get to Understanding, How Do We Get to Acceptance, and How Do We Get to Welcoming. All sessions include discussions and activities to go along with the information provided in the curriculum.

"We tried to make this a learning experience that would go beyond just the basics of gender identity and gender expression in order to give participants an understanding of the issues and concerns that transgender people have when trying to express their faith and spirituality in a church or any religious setting," says Barbara Satin, author of the curriculum and a transgender advocate around issues of faith and aging.

transACTION is available for download from the Institute of Welcoming Resources Web site at www.welcomingresources.org. There are two versions of the program: a leader's version and a participant's version.