How can theatre be used in faith-based communities to support LGBTQ youth?

Add Verb Productions is a program of the University of New England. Headquartered in Portland Maine, Add Verb Productions provides health and wellness education through provocative theatre performances. The ultimate goal is to build stronger, healthier communities and effectively engage bystanders.

A Youthful Perspective

93% of young adults feel that talking about sexual issues and concerns is helpful and appropriate to do in church settings; only 39% of older adults agree with that view.

Young adults are almost three times as likely as older adults (81% versus 28%) to feel that homosexuality is not a sin and to feel that homosexuality is not something that people “choose” but rather that some people simply “are” homosexual.

Growth

Churches who welcome and affirm LGBT people can expect to see growth in many categories including:

- Those who are family members of LGBT people want to be a part of a faith community in which their loved ones are fully accepted.
- Those who are young adults and have a more accepting view of the LGBT people. Such young adults may be more open to invitations to participate in welcoming and accepting church.
- Those of any age who are accepting of LGBT people and who want to be in a faith community that is accepting of them.

Safety

In the “Faith Matter” study, a third of 11th and 12th grade girls reported unwanted sexual experiences. Instances of sexual abuse of children, youth, and adults are of deep concern to all of us. While there is no single action that can keep people completely safe, sexuality education can provide knowledge and skills to help people be safer.

LGBTQ youth are at a significantly higher risk than heterosexual youth to behave in ways that contribute to unintentional injuries, violence, and related to attempted suicide, including drug use, sexual behaviors, dietary behaviors, and weight management.

According to the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, the prevalence of these behaviors in gay and lesbian youth is, on average, 63.8% higher than among heterosexual youth.

The prevalence in Bisexual youth is 76% higher.

How to find and develop the best stories:

1. Find
2. Interview
3. Develop
4. Test
5. Refine

Victim of Dating Violence

Forced to Have Sex

Attempted Suicide

Ever Used Cocaine

Ever Used Heroin

Had first Sexual Intercourse before the age of 13

Did not go to school because of safety concerns

Did not eat for 24 or more hours to lose weight or keep from gaining weight