

GOD, FAITH AND KEEPING RAINBOW KIDS SAFE

You may believe that the Bible says God doesn't approve of homosexuality and that it is not biblical or even possible for people to change gender.

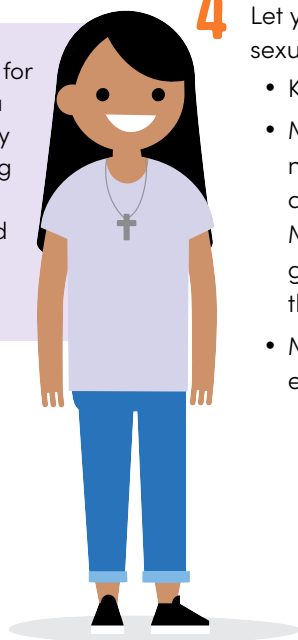
But it is still important that your children are kept safe from sexual abuse.

If your children feel that they have to keep part of themselves a secret from you, they will be more at risk from people who might try to hurt them.

Check out basic safety things by asking your church leader

- Are the workers who look after children in your church police vetted?
- What are the supervision arrangements for youth groups and children's church?
 - Are there guidelines so adults aren't alone with children?
 - Is childcare done in open areas so people can watch?
 - Are workers supervised by someone trained in child protection?

This tip sheet was created for Hohou te Rongo Kahukura from conversations held by Rev'd Gendi Burwell during 2023. Rev'd Gendi Burwell is an Anglican minister and Accountant, and has two adult children herself.



What can you do? Here are a few thoughts from people who are part of faith communities:

- 1 Listen to your environment to imagine what messages your child is hearing
 - Do people say things about gay people going to hell? What feelings would this give a rainbow child?
 - Do people make jokes about gender or sexuality? What does hearing this mean for a rainbow child?
 - Is it possible to challenge these things within your environment so that any rainbow child doesn't start feeling they have to hide?
- 2 Check out how the Bible is interpreted
 - Children should be seen and not heard – what does this mean for a child who needs to tell you they are not safe?
 - The man is the head of the household and makes all the rules – what does this mean for a child who needs help?
 - You should never question God or leaders – what does this mean if leaders are using false testimony to hurt a child?

How will you create a safe place for a Rainbow child to be able to talk to you without fear or risk of dangerous therapies?

- 1 Lean on aunts, uncles or friends who have different beliefs. Ask them to keep an eye out for your child, and allow your child to build friendships
- 2 Look for allies within your faith environment – other people who have rainbow children or relations, or rainbow people themselves.
- 3 See if a different church within your same faith might provide a safer space for Rainbow people.
- 4 Let your child know if you are safe to talk to about gender and sexuality. Being a safe adult in this context means:
 - Keeping a secret for your child, until they can tell someone safe
 - Making sure that any therapy provided is about what the child needs, not changing their sexuality or gender (this is really dangerous with long term negative mental health consequences). Most children will not need therapy about their sexuality or gender, but might need help understanding how adults around them react
 - Making sure they have safe places to talk about and explore what their sexuality and gender means

