

CAN WE REMAIN SILENT?

Film 1 of God's Beautiful Story



CEEC

CHURCH OF ENGLAND
EVANGELICAL COUNCIL

LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS KNOW BEST

The following comments/suggestions are not intended to be prescriptive – each church leader knows his/her context better than anyone else and is therefore the person best placed to make a decision about what would help/be appropriate for the people in that context.

The following suggestions are therefore simply offered as **options** – or in the hope that they will **generate further ideas** that might be appropriate for your context.

KEY THEME/MESSAGE

... that whilst the world (especially in the media/culture of the West) focuses continually on sexuality, the church has – by and large – not done well in helping Christians to talk and think about what it means to be human in this regard. This has had substantial and often negative pastoral impact:

- some people are left in confusion, feeling insecure and/or shameful, and ill-equipped to live for Christ and stand for him in the world
- those in our churches experiencing same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria are sometimes left to face the struggles in isolation
- we sow the seeds for upsetting people in the long run if it later becomes clear that we don't endorse certain lifestyles which some had assumed we would support.

It is also the case that the biblical view of sex and sexuality is a good news story in that it is repeatedly identified as a gift from God for the flourishing of humanity - it needs to be told!

AND SO ... the simple message of 'Can we remain silent?' is that we are more likely to be hurting than helping by not talking, sharing and teaching in this area.

HOW TO USE 'CAN WE REMAIN SILENT?'

Since film one is essentially an introduction to the videos that will follow, it could be seen/used as a "trailer". So here are some suggestions in that regard:

- **show the film to your PCC** and ask whether they feel it would be helpful to have a special series of discussions around issues of gender identity and human sexuality (CEEC appreciates that not all PCC's are at the same position on matters of sexuality – and you will need to judge for yourself whether this is the wisest approach).
- Show the film on a **Sunday morning** – having already arranged a series of discussion groups for the following weeks that you (or some other appropriate person) will chair
- In larger churches – you may wish to show the film to your **staff team** to elicit their support for a series of Sunday sermons or mid-week meeting/discussion groups around these issues.
- In **smaller/rural churches** – it might be possible for you as a church leader to host a series of several evenings – thus this film could be used to trail those special evenings
- In **urban/city churches** – you will need to plan wisely to host conversations amongst young people who are being nurtured in cultures whose views on sexuality are antithetical to biblical views

FOLLOW ON ACTIONS AFTER SHOWING THE FILM

If you were to hold a **discussion group** on the back of Film 1 here are some things that you could talk about.

- you can identify the questions that people have around sexuality – and work out how to address them in the weeks that follow
- you could use it simply as an opportunity to hear the stories and views of individuals in the group – which will give you the measure of where people are in these issues
- you could read/study a number of bible passages about sexuality/holiness

You could **invite people to buy a book** (e.g. Ed Shaw's 'Purposeful Sexuality' or 'The Plausibility Problem') and read it as "first step" to a more widespread discussion of these matters in the life of your church.

Launch a **pop-up group** to 'walk through' the films that CEEC will be offering in this suite – an evening on each a film (to watch and discuss).

Ask the **PCC and /or church wardens** if they would like to have an evening studying these things together – or even a whole study day together.

NOTES/GENERAL ADVICE

You don't need to wait till you've seen all the films in the collection to show film 1 and to raise the possibility of a course/series of discussions.

In practice, you could at this stage simply commit to showing 'Can we remain silent?' – and to see what kind of response your people offer. If they are keen to have some discussions about these issues, then the showing will have served its purpose well.

There is a whole range of introductory reading materials for church leaders - from some short/introductory leaflets and books to some in-depth theological study. Can we suggest that as an introduction you familiarise yourself with the following:

- The CEEC website (www.ceec.info) – various resources
- Ed Shaw's books 'Purposeful Sexuality' and 'The Plausibility Problem'
- The EGGs website (www.eggscfe.org.uk) - see the resources/ human sexuality section where there is a whole range of resources/recommended books and articles.
- Ian Pauls website (www.psephizo.com) – for more in-depth articles