



**AFTER THE FACT:
REDUCING THE RISK OF SUICIDE
AMONG SEXUAL MINORITY
YOUTH**

**WALLINGFORD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON**

APRIL 2008

AFTER THE FACT:

**REDUCING THE RISK OF SUICIDE AMONG
SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH**

A resource for teaching, preaching and intentionally extending Christian compassion to all people impacted by the alarming connection between teen sexual identity and suicide risk.

After The Fact Copyright © 2007 by Wallingford United Methodist Church, Seattle, WA
First published June 2007, revised April 2008.

**Wallingford United Methodist Church
2115 N. 42nd Street
Seattle, WA 98103**

**Website: WallingfordUMC.org
E-mail: Office@wallingfordumc.org**

The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture taken from THE MESSAGE. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	9
<i>Part One: A Biblical Foundation</i>	13
Core Faith Fact: The Sacred Worth of Each Individual.....	13
Five Points: A Biblical Context for our Conversations	15
Whose Children?	22
<i>Part Two: Some Numbers & Names</i>	23
Quiz: Some facts about GLBT Youth & Suicide	24
Trevor-the film.....	25
Portrait of a GLBT Teenager in Danger.....	26
Fit In, Hide, or Be Gone.....	28
A Story To Think About and Discuss:	
<i>A Cure For Electricity</i>	30
<i>Part Three: A Christian Response</i>	35
The Church as Sanctuary: Creating A Safe Space for GLBT Youth.....	35
With A Listening Heart.....	36
With A Concrete Plan of Action.....	37
<i>Conclusion</i>	39
<i>Appendix:</i>	
<i>Resource for Further Study and Action</i>	41
<i>Answer Key to Part Two Quiz</i>	44
<i>Lesson Plans</i>	45

Introduction: Why This Study?

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transsexual youth often experience confusion about their orientation, especially as they encounter the negative assumptions of their culture, their families and their faith denominations. High risk and self destructive behaviors, suicide, and isolation are often used to cope with internalized negative self worth. The 2004 General Conference of The United Methodist Church resolved to address the connections between teen sexual identity and suicide risk. Yet, until the efforts of this resource, no obvious efforts have been carried out to address the resolution.

Recently, Stephanie Marston, a well-known artist and author used the following question to help guide her in prioritizing the selection and arrangement of her work: “*If not now, when?*” That question can help guide us as we sort through the questions and concerns we bring to this issue of suicide risk among sexual minority youth. More importantly, “*If not now, when?*” keeps our study focused as we address our own timely and thoughtful Christian response—how are we to act now? For it is our actions that best express our faith and understanding.

After the Fact, is formed to convey the two aspects of the goal we seek to achieve through this process together—in large or small groups, in classrooms or a retreat setting:

- To confront the reality of the experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transsexual (GLBT) youth and of their vulnerability to discrimination and of suicide as a potential and real outcome of their experiences?
- To move forward with a plan for action: What can we do to learn how to work with youth as they explore and understand their identity and orientation? How can we reduce the discrimination and suicide among GLBT youth?

We aim to be *after the fact(s)*—in terms of learning about the statistics, best professional insights and the realities in the lives of GLBT youth. Then we will bring it all together using the whole of scripture and our intelligence, the whole of our hearts, minds and imagination. At the same time, we should determine how we can *act now*—before more GLBT youth feel compelled to engage in high risk behaviors and to take

their own lives. It is far too costly to delay addressing this issue until after the fact--when one of our loved ones becomes such a statistic. *“If not now, when?”*

An appendix to this study is provided in order to direct individuals and groups through the process in a variety of time formats and place settings, from a one-time hour-long Sunday Adult Education class to a 3-week Christian Education program; from the classroom to a retreat setting. The appendix also features additional resources for further study and action.

This study was initiated by the leadership, members and friends of Wallingford United Methodist Church in Seattle, Washington. It was submitted and later approved by the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference as follows:

Implementing the General Conference Resolution on

“Teen Sexual Identity and Suicide Risk”

Be it resolved that the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference endorse *“After the Fact: Reducing the Risk of Suicide Among Sexual Minority Youth”* as a resource for teaching, preaching, and intentionally extending Christian compassion to all people impacted by the alarming connection between teen sexual identity and suicide risk. The Conference hereby commends this resource to local congregations, pastors, and annual conference staff, particularly those who work directly with youth and families. Furthermore, the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference petitions the General Conference of The United Methodist Church to adopt this resource as a good faith effort to begin to live toward the commitment made by the General Conference in 2004, as found in *“Teen Sexual Identity and Suicide Risk,”* resolution #158 of the Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church – 2004 (p. 410).

Explanation: The General Conference of The United Methodist Church in 2004 voted to “establish and fund a task group which will” publish a summary of current research, provide resources for ministry, and make recommendations for further legislative and program priorities to address the connections observed between teen sexual identity and suicide risk (Book of Resolutions, #158, p. 410). Ironically, the final budget passed on the final day of General Conference failed to provide funding for this effort. As a result,

no general church board or agency can be found to have taken any steps to fulfill the clear mandate of resolution #158, despite the precious lives that continue to be lost while the church remains largely silent. The church has been gifted by God, “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ,” (Eph 4:12). Yet young lives continue to be lost while the church falls short of its own commitment to act urgently and compassionately to stem the rising tide of teen suicide. As the 2004 Book of Resolutions enumerates, suicide rates among teenagers are rising dramatically, and “teens dealing with issues of sexual identity are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than are other youth” (BOR #158, p. 410). The United Methodist Social Principles encourages pastors and congregations to address the issue of suicide “through preaching and teaching. We urge pastors and faith communities to provide pastoral care to those at risk, survivors, and their families, and to families who have lost loved ones to suicide, seeking always to remove the oppressive stigma around suicide.” (BOD ¶161N). It is time for the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference and The General Conference of the United Methodist Church to not simply pass another resolution to study this problem, but to implement a strategy for educating and equipping congregations, pastors, families and youth to respond with Christian compassion to the crisis of teen sexual identity and suicide risk. This resource is a first step toward such a strategy.

Conference Resolution and *After the Fact* study task force:

Barbara S. McCann, Ph.D.

*Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
University of Washington
Wallingford UMC*

Margaret A. Cashman, M.D.

*Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
University of Washington
Wallingford UMC*

Rev. James Carter

Pastor, Wallingford UMC

Kari Olson

Minister for Children, Youth, and Families, Wallingford UMC

James Davidson, curriculum author

Wallingford UMC

Mary Fry, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Nursing

Seattle Pacific University

Wallingford UMC

Sue Sherbrooke

Wallingford UMC

Nancy Speer

Wallingford UMC

Joe Belcher

Wallingford UMC

Rev. Mark Williams, MSW

Part One:

A Biblical Foundation

As a community of faith, Christians are *to follow the example of Jesus by practicing a ministry of teaching and healing*. We offer this study as a way to further such a ministry. This study is designed to foster a conversation about how GLBT teens who are vulnerable to suicide. The reality of this situation will be explored within the explicit context of Christian concern and response, grounded in Biblical principles.

Christians often fail to make explicit the important connection between biblical faith and the work of Christian ministry in the world. We take for granted that what we do, we do because of what we believe. Yet, our faith and actions are best informed when they spring from hearts and minds shaped and molded by the biblical witness.

Core Faith Fact: The Sacred Worth of Each Individual

The sacred worth of each individual is the core belief upon which to build an understanding of how to respond to the need to reduce the risk of suicide among sexual minority youth.

Just how much is a human being worth? Every now and then you'll hear or read in the news that some wealthy entrepreneur or famous celebrity has amassed a great fortune and is now estimated at a worth of millions or billions of dollars. Astronomical figures follow the dollar signs marking the financial worth of individuals such as Bill Gates and Oprah Winfrey. In modern North American culture, it is very easy to equate a person's worth or value with the amount of money they possess.

Down through history, people have used a wide variety of factors when trying to measure human worth. More traditional valuations are based on wealth, class and education, as well as being a healthy and productive member of society.

In the New Testament, Jesus touches upon the subject when he compares the sparrow to human worth:

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

– Matthew 10:29-31 (NRSV)

Listen to the same verse as it is retold in *The Message*:

What's the price of a pet canary? Some loose change, right? And God cares what happens to it even more than you do. He pays even greater attention to you, down to the last detail—even numbering the hairs on your head! So don't be intimidated by all this bully talk. You're worth more than a million canaries.

– Matthew 10:29-31 (*The Message*)


In scriptures, the frame of reference shifts completely. From a biblical perspective, God determines the worth and value of God's creatures and creation. Scriptures declare that God has determined that human beings are worth creating, worth redeeming, worth sustaining and perfecting.

The story of the Bible is our story—the story of every human being that ever was or ever will be. Personal worth is not determined by our might or money, not by our intelligence or influence, not by our own righteousness or religious beliefs, not by our position or popularity, not by what we think of ourselves or what others think of us. We are to look to God to find our individual worth. *The sacred worth of each human being is derived from God—from the God who creates and redeems, sustains and perfects us. That is our core belief.*

How does *the sacred value of each human being* relate to the subject at hand? How do we think and act with regard to preventing suicide among sexual minority youth? The following five points are explored from a scriptural perspective.

Five Points: A Biblical Context for our Conversations

1. The acknowledgement that God is both the origin & destiny of all of creation.

 In small groups, read aloud the following verses:
Genesis 1:28-31, John 1:1-5.

Genesis 1.28-31

²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

²⁹God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (NRSV)

John 1:1-5

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (NRSV)

! Discuss the following:

If we are all created in the image of God, what is it that determines, among us as humans, that some individuals are attributed more or less worth than others?

What harm is done when we usurp the role of God and presume that we can assign and consign persons to acceptable or unacceptable status,

5 Points: A Biblical Context for our Conversations

1. *The Acknowledgement that God is both the origin & destiny of all of creation.*
2. *How can our beliefs and attitudes harm others? Can our words kill?*
3. *What is our calling as a community of faith to continue Jesus' ministry of teaching and healing?*
4. *The standard of love.*
5. *Our special concern for those who are marginalized.*


who's in, who's out, who goes to heaven, who goes to hell? Have you observed or experienced such harm in your own life or the life of another? What was the context? How did you feel? What did you perceive that another may have felt?

All teenagers face certain developmental challenges, such as developing social skills and fitting into a peer group. Sexual orientation is one component of a person's identity. When youth begin to process their growing awareness of their sexual orientation as possibly gay, lesbian, or bisexual, they must also cope with prejudiced, discriminatory, and violent behaviors and messages in their families, schools, churches, and communities.

Reflect on your own beliefs and attitudes regarding GLBT orientation. What questions of concern arise for you? What roles do you see that you play in helping all youth with developmental challenges? What unique needs do GLBT youth have in processing the development of their self identity and sexual orientation?

How do these issues of concern fit in with your understanding of the nature of God and the biblical witness?

2. How can our beliefs and attitudes harm others? Can our words kill another?

 In small groups, read aloud the following verses: Matthew 5:21-22. Consider comparing and contrasting this passage from several versions, i.e., the *New Revised Standard Version* and *The Message*.

“You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’, and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire.” (NRSV)

“You’re familiar with the command to the ancients. ‘Do not murder.’ I’m telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder. Carelessly call a brother ‘idiot’ and you just

might find yourself hauled into court. Thoughtlessly yell ‘stupid’ at a sister and you are on the brink of hellfire. The simple moral fact is that words kill.” (The Message)

J.B. Phillips translates the last line here as, “Anyone who looks down on his brother as a lost soul is himself heading for the fires of destruction.”

There are four themes that Jesus links together:

- Murder
- Speaking ill of brothers and sisters
- Judgment
- Hell

! Reflect on these connections: In what ways can our attitudes be harmful? How can our words kill?

In Matthew 18:2-6, Jesus illustrated both the need for humility and responsibility in our relationships with one another.

²He called a child, whom he put among them, ³and said, ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. ⁶If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. (NRSV)

How does this scripture apply to our responsibilities for being present for GLBT youth struggling to understand who and why they are?


Can a change of your heart and mind lead to healing and wholeness?

Suggested exercise: The Paper Doll

You may wish to try this exercise with a paper doll. Before class cut a simple “human form-like” doll out of construction or other paper. You’ll probably want to make the doll a little larger than your hand. You will also want to bring with you to class a roll of tape. In class, after you’ve discussed how words can kill, ask the members of your small group to think of a time when they were called a name or a word was used against them that hurt them. Then pass the doll around from person to person. When the doll is received, the person is asked to remember silently the hurtful word or name and to tear off a small portion of the paper doll, then pass it on to the next person. The next person will do the same until every group member has handled the doll, which is now “in pieces.” Next, starting from the last person to have the doll and working back to the first, ask each person to think of a blessing or words of encouragement that might have made a difference instead of the hurtful words. And as they do so, ask them to attempt to tape back their torn piece with the torn piece from the person next to them. Continue until everyone has had a chance to try and make repairs to the doll. One of the obvious lessons learned from this simple yet powerful exercise is that it is far easier to tear someone apart than it is to try and put them together again.

3. What is our calling as a community of faith to continue Jesus’ ministry of teaching and healing? *We pursue truth and wholeness.*

Our Calling and Commission


 In small groups, read Matthew 11:28-30. Again, consider reading this familiar passage of scripture in two different versions—the NRSV and *The Message*.

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced

rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly. (The Message)

²⁸*'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'* (NRSV)

That is the invitation Jesus gives us: to begin a life of discipleship—a life devoted to following him. It is our calling. And our calling to a life-long following of Jesus has both an individual and a community aspect to it. As a community of faith, Jesus commissions us to continue his ministry of teaching and healing.

 Read Matthew 28: 18-20, “the Great Commission.”

And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' (NRSV)

! Compare and contrast our calling with our commission. Discuss what it means to speak and act in God's name or in the name of Jesus. Reflect on the following:

As we listen to these words of Jesus—words of calling and commission—we recognize a pattern. It is the pattern of our own continuing journey into discipleship, of following Jesus... it is spending time with him, keeping company with Jesus and companionship with God: in prayer and meditation, in worship and study—as we follow Jesus through the pages of the gospel—getting to know his character and allowing his character to shape our own life and living... following Jesus out of the scriptures and into the streets of our own day and time—in work and service, teaching and healing as he taught and healed; passionately pursuing the truth that sets people free and acting decisively for the peace and wholeness—the shalom—that our broken and war-weary world so desperately needs. All this we do in God's name.

However, many times harmful things are done in God's name and in the name of Jesus.

❗ Discuss some of the ways in which the voices claiming to represent Jesus and /or Christianity may be doing great harm.

4. The standard of love

As Christians, we believe that part of the high calling to be human (children of God) and in the world is to come to trust and experience being held and sustained by nothing less than the love of God. Such is our need and our desire. Such is the standard to which we are held. This is a high and holy gift, offered to and available to everyone. Amazing grace is all we are and all we have to give.

📖 In small groups read: 1 Corinthians 13, “the Gift of Love” and discuss the following question: What is such love expressed in our daily lives?

5. Our special concern for those who are marginalized.

📖 In small groups read: Matthew 18:10-14. Discuss what it may mean to be or to feel lost.

¹⁰‘Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven. ¹²What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? ¹³And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost. (NRSV)

📖 Next read: Matthew 25:31-45. Answer the questions: Who is the least among us? Who are those on the margins of our society?

³¹‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a


shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” (NRSV)*

 Read: Matthew 10:42

‘and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.’ (NRSV)

Whose Children?

GLBT sons and daughters have routinely been rejected by their families — “You’re no longer a son or daughter of mine!” — and turned out of their homes and abandoned for revealing their sexual orientation. A brief survey of what the Hebrew prophets had to say about God’s concern for the orphans may help answer the question: *Whose children are these? And who is to care for them?*

 Read aloud the following verses:

- Exodus 22:22,
- Deuteronomy 10:18, 24:17-21, 27:19
- Psalm 10:14; 10:18; 82:3; 94:6; 146:9
- Isaiah 1:17; 1:23
- Jeremiah 5:28; 7:6; 22:3
- Ezekiel 22:7
- Hosea 14:3
- Malachi 3:5

Now that we have established our core faith fact—the sacred worth of all persons—and we have explored and discussed five points that will guide our study and conversations, setting the study within a biblical context, we are ready to take a look at some names and numbers. We are ready to put faces to statistics and see what we can learn about how vulnerable sexual minority youth are to suicide.

Part Two:

Some Numbers & Names: Putting Faces to Statistics

We live in an age of information. Each day, usually several times a day (and night), many of us log on and travel the “information highway.” That’s just one of the names for the Internet, that vast network of websites, streaming videos, RSS feeds, podcasts, downloads, uploads, search engines, e-mail and blogs. By way of the Internet, as well as other electronic and print media (such as radio, television, newspapers, etc.), we keep up-to-date with what’s going on in our world.

In a matter of seconds we can check out the weather forecast or browse through the latest news headlines. We can watch live broadcasts from the other side of the planet. We can take a virtual tour of almost any major art museum or educational institution. We can do scholarly research or catch up on celebrity gossip. So much data and information (and mis-information!) is available to us that it is easy to be overwhelmed.

Inundated daily with news reports of war casualties and mounting death tolls, for example, we begin to become numb to the numbers—not seeing the humanity behind the statistics. How quickly we forget the fundamentals of our faith, particularly that each human being is unique and irreplaceable, so that the tragic death of just one person (let alone hundreds or thousands!) is understood and felt to be a great loss.

With this study, we want to educate ourselves by confronting the facts, sorting through the data and research, and making use of the additional articles and resources suggested in the appendix. We’ll want to read and reflect, to pray and to ponder, to discuss and debate. We’ll want to do some of this privately and much of this publicly (in small groups). And we’ll want to fully engage our hearts, minds and imaginations in the process, so that we can avoid our natural tendency to become numb to the numbers—not seeing the faces behind the statistics. Let us remember to hold before us (in all that we say or do in this study) the sacred worth of all persons.

Quiz: Some facts about GLBT youth and suicide

As one way of getting into the information, break into small groups and take the following quiz. You may wish to have each member of your small group complete the quiz on their own or, you may wish to do the quiz all together, as a group. (*Answer key can be found in the Appendix section of this study.*)

1. True or False: Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young adults.
2. True or False: Gay teens are just as likely to attempt suicide as their straight peers.
3. Multiple Choice: While suicide rates among adults have steadied in the past few decades, it has increased (what percentage?) among teens and young adults.
a. 10% b. 15% c. 25% d. 300%
4. True or False: There are more suicides in the US each year than there are homicides.
5. Multiple Choice: According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, someone dies from suicide every _____.
a. 45 minutes b. 30 minutes c. 18 minutes d. 5 minutes
6. Multiple Choice: According to a U.S. Government report from 2003, how many high school students attempted suicide that year.
a. 1 in every 13 b. 1 in every 15 c. 1 in every 21 d. 1 in every 33
7. True or False: For every two homicides, there are three suicides.
8. True or False: nearly 60 percent of all suicides are committed with a firearm.
9. True or False: According to a Seattle school system study, gay and lesbian youth in grades 7-12 are two times as likely to make plans to commit suicide than straight youth and four times more likely to make a suicide attempt that requires medical attention.
10. True or False: According to the World Health Organization, for every teen who takes his or her life, there are 20 others who try.

Trevor—the film

As part of this study, we recommend viewing the 18-minute, Academy award-winning short film, *Trevor*. For more information about the film, plus news about the Trevor project, as well as several free and outstanding resources, visit www.thetrevorproject.org online.

Here is what one reviewer wrote about the film:

Get out the tissues and prepare to laugh. This short film was excellently written, directed and produced! So many people believed in this project and I see why.

This film is saving lives! It's teaching so many adults about what children go through in their young lives. It tells the story but doesn't make it heavy with depressing moments but lightens things up with humor. I cried at the end because of the joy I felt yet the sadness I felt as well because I knew that many children are still suffering today.

This should be a requirement for EVERYONE to see!

Check your local video store or Netflix for renting this film. If you'd like to purchase a VHS or DVD copy of the Trevor film, please contact Moi Garcia at Moi.Garcia@TheTrevorProject.org or (310) 271-8845 ext 229. All sales go directly to support The Trevor Helpline. Also online at www.thetrevorproject.org is an excellent set of questions to use with your group after viewing the film.

Portrait Of A GLBT Teen In Danger

So, how do we recognize when someone is suicidal? What are the signs to look for? And, are they different for GLBT youth? Are all GLBT youth prospective candidates for suicide?

Risk Factors

According to The Trevor Project Teaching Kit (written by John Misfud and revised by Ian Stulberg, LCSW), the thirteen top Risk Factors of youth suicide include the following:

- **Affective Disorders** including major depressive, anxiety and bi-polar disorders
- **Alcohol and Substance Abuse**—intoxication is present in half of all youth suicide
- **Accessibility of Fire Arms**—firearms are the most common method of suicide
- **Family history** of suicide, medical and/or psychiatric illness
- **Homelessness**
- **Family crisis** such as separation, divorce, remarriage, alcohol/addict parent, family conflict, abuse, economic hardship
- **Academic crisis**—failing in school, failing a test, losing a competition
- **Previous suicide attempt**
- **Loss of a loved one**—breaking up with a boyfriend/girlfriend, fight with a loved one
- **Risky sex behavior**
- **Eating disorders**
- **Victimization**—bullying
- **Social and/or familial isolation**

Sexual orientation and gender identity alone are *not* risk factors for suicide. However, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth face many social factors which put them at higher risk for self-destructive behaviors, including suicide.

Warning Signs

Again, the following information is quoted in full and directly from The Trevor Project Teaching Kit.

1. **Expressing suicidal feelings** directly (“I want to die.” “I am going to kill myself.”) or making indirect statements that suggest these feelings: “Sometimes I think I would be better off dead.” “Nothing seems worthwhile anymore.” “No one will miss me anyway.”
2. **Making “final arrangements”**—giving away prized possessions, writing a will
3. **Signs of depression**—loss of pleasure, sad mood, changes in sleeping or eating patterns, feelings of hopelessness, expressing a lot of guilt
4. **Change in regular behavior**—doesn’t care much about schoolwork, starts failing tests, disinterested in personal hygiene, change in sleeping pattern
5. **Starts engaging in risky, self-destructive behavior**—including self-injury (cutting), violently acting out, or showing aggression toward others
6. **Alcohol and/or drug use increases**
7. **Increased isolation** from regular friends and family
8. **Describes a specific plan for suicide**
9. **History of suicide** in the family
10. **Previous suicide attempt**

Fit In, Hide, or Be Gone**GLBT Youth and The Need For Genuine Community**

It is not only the poets who find parables everywhere and “sermons in stones.” The truth is, like the best of mysteries, almost always hidden in plain sight. Sometimes all it takes is for a simple metaphor to break through, lifting the veil (as it were) for the jig to be up. You see the mundane for what it truly is: a holy miracle. You recognize in the scene before you, not just a plain-old, ordinary family: Three unremarkable human beings, out for a stroll. One of them—who just happens to be the size of a loaf of bread—has no hair, but there is a silly bow stuck on its head and it is being held close and carried as if it were some great treasure. Both of the two taller, older ones keep fawning over it. A scene replayed, with variations, all over the planet, on just about any street you care to travel. But something stirs within you... it reminds you of indigestion, but later you’ll swear it’s the Holy Spirit. Somehow or other, you recognize in the scene before you: not just a plain-old, ordinary family... three (more or less) unremarkable human beings... but, truly, the pattern, the blueprint for community. A light bulb comes on and you get it. It is no accident that babies are born into families. *It’s how human beings are supposed to be loved and nurtured into becoming human.*

And it doesn’t stop there. *Our need for community is a life-long need.* A part of what it means to be human is to be connected, to be in relationship with others. That is why we form friendships and join clubs, churches, support groups. We have all kinds of ways for seeking out and finding community, some healthy and some not so healthy.

With the advent of the Internet, we now have the technology for seeking out and finding “virtual” communities. And you’d think that with all of our advanced communication technology—our cell phones and text messaging, our instant messaging and chat rooms and e-mails—we’d be and feel more connected than was ever possible before. Sadly, that doesn’t seem to be the way things are for most people. Most people who use most these wonderful and amazing advances in communication technology somehow find themselves feeling even more

disconnected. We find within ourselves a longing for genuine community. Nothing seems to be able to replace those personal, “live, in-person” connections.

When you factor into this equation (increasingly impersonal forms of communication plus greater opportunities to isolate from one another) both the pressures of being a teenager (no longer a “kid”, yet not quite an adult either) AND the added element of being a sexual minority (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered) then you have a situation that can be overwhelming, spirit-crushing, de-humanizing, and ultimately fatal. Sexual minority youth often—most of the time—find themselves in the unenviable position of having to choose between hiding who they really are in order to fit in, or going off on their own. Either way, the isolation can be unbearable.

The statistics show that the pressures of simply being a teenager today is so great that the suicide rate among teens has risen 300% in the past few decades. Add to that the pressures of being a sexual minority youth or teenager and you have a group that is two to three times more likely to commit suicide than their straight peers.

These are alarming statistics, and even more alarming when you consider that these are not merely numbers we’re talking about. These are young people—our children!

! Spend some time in small groups discussing what kind of community you have to offer GLBT youth.

A Story To Think About And Discuss

A Cure For Electricity

by James Davidson

The following is a fictional short story. You may want one of your group members to read this aloud, after which we encourage a period of discussion. Share your thoughts and feelings. Talk about the story and about the need for community. Try to imagine what it must feel like to be an outsider—particularly a sexual minority.

There was this guy. I knew him. And, talk about odd. Strange. Major goofball. Possibly brilliant? Nah—probably not. But, talk about your obviously square peg—always trying to, but never quite fitting in to your basically round hole. Not ‘round about here anyway.

‘Slike he had this whole other source of energy (I guess you’d call it) that seemed to have come, like him, from some other planet or somethin’. I mean, he was, like *wired*...all of the time! Only, the stuff he got excited about was just so gay.

Guess I’d known the dude since, like, daycare and kindergarten. He was always coloring outside of the lines. ‘Sname was Franky Fitzbaum. We called him Franky Fit. Partly ‘cause he was such a drama queen who when he didn’t get his way would throw a “Franky fit.”

We... well, that is all of the kids used to make fun of him... for being so skinny. He was a bean pole. All his clothes hung on him. Mosta time, he couldn’t even keep his pants up, they were so big for him. (Probably were hand-me-downs. Had a huge family, Frankie did. Musta been Catholics.) Anyway... we started calling him... er, everyone started calling him, “Franky Mis-fit” On account of his clothes and all. Which, and ... I shouldn’t laugh. But, you know—it is kinda funny. When you think about it.

And like, when we were in Middle School and all... and it would be raining and stuff, so that for P.E. we hadda divide up into teams—shirts vs. the skins—and then we’d bring the cage ball outside in the rain and mud to play, “Smear The Queer With The Ball!” God, how I loved that game! Jeez, but we’d all get all muddy and stuff. But, of course, Franky... whichever team got stuck with him, he’d always—and I mean *always* get creamed. Bad. (And it was too bad, too. Because, you know, Franky was fast—the kid could run! Sports just wasn’t his kinda thing, though. So, lots of guys had it out for him, like.)

Then there was this time in Boy Scouts when, after doing a bunch of crappy craft projects (we hadda make junk to take home to our moms), Frankie announces... we were on this camping trip... and Frankie tells everybody that he was going to be rich and famous someday (we were to just wait and see). Rich and famous... for what, you ask? Well, let me tell you... you’re not gonna believe this: for inventing the Pine Cone Pillow. No kidding! That’s what he said. And he did it, too—stuffed a pillowcase with a bunch of pine cones in it. (I have no idea how he came up with such a lame... anyway) He was convinced he should sell ‘em—to other Boy Scouts and campers, I guess. And that... The Pine Cone Pillow... would make him rich and famous.

He wanted (I just remembered this) he wanted to get a group together—some kind of collecting club... to collect stuff. But, really gay stuff... like Moon Pie wrappers and scratch n’ sniff cards (like you’d find in magazines), and swizzle sticks and those little cocktail umbrellas, Big Band records (but on the 78’s)...and, oh yeah—fireflies. Real sissy junk. Nobody joined.

Had to say one thing for him, though...that Franky was persistent. Never quit trying to be one of us. Kept trying any scheme to get us to do stuff with him. Sheesh. Some guys just don’t get it.

God, I remember that time my mother made me go to one of Franky’s lame and flamin’ birthday parties—the embarrassing kind where they make you wear really gay hats and everyone wears nice clothes and there are no firecrackers and cool stuff like that. None of the guys wanted to go, only the girls did. By this

time we were all pretty sure that Franky was... well, you know...I mean, sure, we were still kids and all, but... there's just no other way to say it but that he was a fag! 'Course, I can't say for sure. But, he hadda be, it would explain a lot. Least that is what everyone of the guys was saying. (We...they... everyone called him Franky "Miss-fit" then—with a stress on the sibilant, like a gay snake!) Anyway... I kinda always thought he was... you know... that way, myself. 'Cause he wore glasses, hated sports (except beach volleyball), was pretty much of a nerd (read books)... and, he hung around Bruce Reynolds—who, my sister's best friend's brother's cousin is absolutely dead certain had to be that way! Anyway... I was forced to wear a frickin' bow tie and go this gay birthday party. And get this—Franky actually stuffed this enormous pink pansy piñata with Rotel Cheese Dip! I mean it! No kidding. I remember the blindfolded kid first in line—Ellen Montfort's younger cross-eyed goofy brother—what was his name? Arnie, I think... he smacks open that pink pansy piñata with one great whack of the bat and—thud!—Rotel Cheese Dip shot out, splattering every which way. It was freakin' hilarious!

Of course, Franky's mom was furious with him. And us. I remember him saying, "Well, I thought it was in keeping with the festive Mexican theme."

Guess he's been on my mind since I heard from Brian Gault's younger brother Ted that Frankie offed himself in the dorm at some Bible college in Tulsa. That's not the official word, mind you. What the Fitzbaum's are saying is that he was in an accident. Yeah, right. Accidentally shot himself.

Can't stop thinking about him. Jerk.

I remember the last thing he said to me. Right before our High School graduation. And, oh yeah... Franky had bleached his hair, which was normally very dark, so that it became this bright orange sort of stickin' up spikey mess. Total twit. By then, by our senior year, he'd clearly given up on trying to blend in, be one of the guys. His "friend," Bruce Reynolds, had moved away long ago. Franky kept mostly to himself. And that afternoon we were seated next to each other, on account of us having to be in alphabetical order. (Seemed that'd been

happening a lot of times in our life.) And, outta the blue, he just blurts out to me that I'd always been his best friend. His best friend? No way. I'm not gay! But I couldn't say anything. Just sat there. After awhile he asked me what I was gonna do with my life. I told him I thought I'd go to college on a football scholarship. (And I did, too.) He said that was real good. He seemed, I thought, kinda sad really. Don't know why. He was finally getting' outta this dump. He said that he didn't know exactly what he was gonna do with his life. He said—and I remember this part word-for-word, just like it was yesterday—he said he “might try and find a cure for electricity.”

“A cure for electricity?” And all I could think of was that this dude was definitely not from around here (in the planet earth sense of not being from around here.) Must have been from sleeping on the pine cone pillow of his! “A cure for electricity?” Just what is that supposed to mean anyway?

Part Three: A Christian Response

The Church as Sanctuary: Creating A Safe Space for GLBT Youth

How safe a space for sexual minority youth is your community of faith?

! In small groups, try asking and answering the following questions to and about your particular community of faith:

- Does our church teach the sacred worth of all persons (regardless of race, color, nationality, political affiliation, creed, mental & physical ability and sexual orientation)?
- Does our church welcome and embrace a diversity of persons, including GLBT persons?
- How comfortable would coming out be for a youth in our church?
- What programming does our church have in place to promote awareness of suicide among sexual minority youth?
- Is there a support group for GLBT teens either in or affiliated with our church?
- What is our wider denomination's official position on homosexuality?
- What is our wider denomination's plan of action with regard to suicide among sexual minority youth?
- What are some things our church can do (or do better) in order to create (or improve) a safe place for GLBT youth?
- How would you rate your local congregation, with regard to faith and practice, as it is specifically related to the task of reducing suicide among sexual minority youth?
 - all talk and no action
 - some talk and some action
 - no talk and no action
 - a seamless unity of faith and practice

Earlier in our study we identified certain factors that were key to understanding and responding to the subject of our study. One of those was how certain attitudes can poison and words can kill. Having come thus far through our study, what are some ways we can keep a check on our poisonous attitudes and our deadly words? *What are some ways we might want to encourage healthy and loving attitudes and life-giving words—to implement blessings instead of curses?*

Now that we've begun to address some crucial questions and answers with regard to our Christian response, let's conclude our study with a resolve to *do two things*:

- First, let us resolve to be a people with listening hearts.
- And second, let us together devise a plan—concrete steps we can take, things we can do to spread awareness of this issue and to work toward preventing suicide among sexual minority youth.

❗ *Let us commit ourselves to putting this plan (and our faith) into action!*

With A Listening Heart

Some things are hard for us to hear. And not in the sense of volume—as when we must adjust the loudness of the television or the receptivity of a hearing device. Instead, some things are hard for us to hear because those very words may jar us into a reality we don't want and feel unprepared to face—as when we are confronted with a truth we'd rather ignore altogether. (Something far more alarming than the mere embarrassment of being told that you have a bit of spinach stuck in your teeth. For that kind of news, although embarrassing, can be dealt with. And we are usually grateful to the kind and brave soul who spoke up.) Surely though we can at least imagine with some empathy how a parent may feel when a beloved son or daughter has confided that they are gay. How would we feel? (Or how indeed did we feel, if such a thing has already happened.)

More importantly than how we feel at the time when such (potentially) hard-to-hear words are spoken is *how we listen*, specifically, *how do we engage a listening heart?*

One thing we can do is to try to understand that, more than likely, at the very same time we are receiving words that are hard to hear, *we are hearing words that are hard to say—words that, until they were actually spoken, were probably felt next to impossible to say*. And to be aware that someone we love has somehow mustered the courage and the faith to entrust us with their deepest personal truth (even though they might just be the very words we'd have given anything not to hear). We are being given one of the greatest gifts of all: that of an open heart. (Think of how much of our lives is spent hiding our true thoughts and feelings!) Open hearts are best met by listening hearts, so as to keep them alive and beating...so as not to cause them to close and harden.

One of the skills you learn while training to volunteer at a suicide and crisis hotline is active listening. At intervals, you repeat back in a paraphrase of your own what you understand the caller to have said (*What I hear you saying is...*). The point being that it is important for the caller to know that she or he is being heard. Regular (though not robot-like) practice can equip you with good active listening skills. Gradually you'll begin to appreciate this tool that you can use for better communication in almost any situation. But, particularly when we are speaking of confessions, of words hard to hear and hard to say, how urgent is the need—especially now—for the church to be a people of *open hearts, open minds, open doors*—and for that to be the reality and not just the advertising campaign!

With a Concrete Plan of Action

Hopefully you've already generated some ideas toward your plan of action (during the questions we asked as a part of the *Church as Sanctuary: Creating A Safe Place for GLBT Youth* section.) If you'd like additional ideas, please refer to the appendix of this study for further resources.

Now is the time to begin putting it all together—everything you've learned from this study and your best ideas for what to do as your Christian response. You may wish to form a special committee or task force dedicated to exploring options. But whatever

you do, commit yourselves as disciples of Jesus to follow his lead in this matter, to move out into the world, continuing his ministry of teaching and healing.

❗ In your gathered assembly read aloud your resolution to act.

Conclusion:**To Be The Church Following Jesus in a Teaching and Healing Ministry**

By entering into and participating in this study we have already accomplished something vitally important. Of course there is much more to be said and done. But let us also celebrate where we are in our journey of following Jesus by continuing his ministry of teaching and healing.

As disciples (followers of Jesus) we are all about pursuing the truth: the truth that sets us free and the truth that brings healing and wholeness. Learning what we can about suicide and how sexual minority youth are especially vulnerable to it... learning what we can do as a part of our Christian faith and response to this situation... and then, with a sense of urgency, passing on this awareness, along with our creative ideas and action plans... this is part and parcel of what discipleship is all about.

Christian education doesn't end when we grow up and no longer have to go to Sunday School. We have ever-greater needs and reasons to support and participate in vibrant and on-going Adult Education programs in our churches! And Christian Education is not limited to the classroom, Bible studies or retreats—though we can and should be grateful for those wonderful opportunities to stretch heart, mind and imagination by the largeness of the gospel. Christian education is what happens when we follow the lead of our teacher/healer, Jesus.

When our GLBT youth learn from us that they are of sacred worth, then there is a teaching/healing ministry. When our GLBT youth sense and trust our community of faith as a safe place for them to be who they are, and that open hearts will be met by listening hearts, then there is a teaching/healing ministry. When our GLBT youth see that our “family values” mean that we're all family and that you can't be kicked out of the family, then there is a teaching/healing ministry. When we sincerely and visibly align ourselves with the programs and groups that reach out to and support our GLBT youth, that seek to understand and be understanding, then we are at the very heart of what it is to be *Jesus people* in the midst of his teaching and healing ministry with and to and for all the world. God grant us the grace to be such a people!

Appendix: Resource for Further Study and Action

From The United Methodist Social Principles

We believe that suicide is not the way a human life should end. Often suicide is the result of untreated depression, or untreated pain and suffering. The church has an obligation to see that all persons have access to needed pastoral and medical care and therapy in those circumstances that lead to loss of self-worth, suicidal despair, and/or the desire to seek physician-assisted suicide. We encourage the church to provide education to address the biblical, theological, social, and ethical issues related to death and dying, including suicide. United Methodist theological seminary courses should also focus on issues of death and dying, including suicide.

A Christian perspective on suicide begins with an affirmation of faith that nothing, including suicide, separates us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39). Therefore, we deplore the condemnation of people who complete suicide, and we consider unjust the stigma that so often falls on surviving family and friends.

We encourage pastors and faith communities to address this issue through preaching and teaching. We urge pastors and faith communities to provide pastoral care to those at risk, survivors, and their families, and to those families who have lost loved ones to suicide, seeking always to remove the oppressive stigma around suicide. The Church opposes assisted suicide and euthanasia.

- From The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church - 2004. Copyright 2004 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.

Online Articles:

Teen Suicide by Melissa Lauber, May 6, 2004, United Methodist News Archives.

<http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=17&mid=4611>

Religious leaders confront need for addressing suicide problem by Alice M. Smith,

April 12, 2000, United Methodist News Archives. [http://archives.umc.org/umns/](http://archives.umc.org/umns/news_synd.asp?ptid=&story={514FD566-F75D-4CE9-A660-4D1C1ABE5AC8}&mid=883)

[news_synd.asp?ptid=&story={514FD566-F75D-4CE9-A660-4D1C1ABE5AC8}](http://archives.umc.org/umns/news_synd.asp?ptid=&story={514FD566-F75D-4CE9-A660-4D1C1ABE5AC8}&mid=883)

[&mid=883](http://archives.umc.org/umns/news_synd.asp?ptid=&story={514FD566-F75D-4CE9-A660-4D1C1ABE5AC8}&mid=883)

Teen Sexual Identity and Suicide Risk, *From* The Book of Resolutions of The United

Methodist Church — 2004. <http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=4&mid=996>

Suicide: A Challenge to Ministry, *From* The Book of Resolutions of The United

Methodist Church — 2000. [http://archives.umc.org/Calms/Resolution.asp?](http://archives.umc.org/Calms/Resolution.asp?mid=2886&Number=145)

[mid=2886&Number=145](http://archives.umc.org/Calms/Resolution.asp?mid=2886&Number=145)

HSPH Researchers Present Data on Suicides and Firearms at CDC, June 28, 2002,

Harvard Public Health NOW. <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/now/jun28/data.html>

The Trevor Project Teaching Guide, free PDF download. [http://](http://www.thetrevorproject.org/education.aspx)

www.thetrevorproject.org/education.aspx

When Your Child “Comes Out”—Information For Parents Of GLBTQ Children by

Kathy Byrd, <http://www.wallingfordumc.org>. First appeared in *The Forecaster*, a

publication of Far West Family Services.

Online Media:

At the time of publication these short YouTube.com videos were available and are recommended for watching & discussing:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvjGueLq20M>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9H7kXLO5Wb0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I49vALmTcZ4>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90qg_oVD1cc

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYo_IYiISwk

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=979ON7wOMZs>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9qfzI5-OgM>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5XnZTYbOkc>

Resources:

The Trevor Helpline, 866/ 4-U-TREVOR (66/488-7386), thetrevorhelpline.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 888/333-AFSP, www.sfsp.org

Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG), 202/467-8180, pflag.org

Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN), 212/727-0135, glsen.org

Human Rights Campaign (HRC), 800/777-4723, hrc.org

National Hopeline Network, 800-SUICIDE (800/784-2433), hopeline.com

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 800-273-TALK (800/273-8255), suicidepreventionlifeline.org

American Association of Suicidology (AAS), 202/237-2280, suicidology.org

Answer Key to Part Two Quiz

1. True
2. False. Gay teens are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than their straight peers.
3. d. 300%
4. True
5. c. 18 minutes
6. a. 1 in every 13
7. True
8. True
9. True
10. True

**AFTER THE FACT:
REDUCING THE RISK OF SUICIDE AMONG SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH**

Lesson Plan for One 1-hour event

If you are using this study as a one-time, one hour-long Sunday School/Adult Christian Education event, then, based on time restraints we recommend the following format:

Naturally, we recommend that the leader(s) read through all of the material in order to be more fully equipped to lead the group through the lessons. It is also highly recommended that you provide the following handouts:

- An outline of the lesson
- A copy of all the Biblical references to the sacred worth of each individual and the five points
- A copy of the Part Two Quiz
- A plan of action worksheet.

Introduction:

The leader(s) welcome the class members and provide a brief summary introduction—a simple two or three short sentences, *in your own words*, about the subject and reasons for having this study here and now. (You will want to distribute the lesson's outline handout as class members come in, so that they have it to refer to when you begin.)

Part One:

A Biblical Foundation

The leader(s) or volunteers distribute the 2nd handout (biblical references). Then, the leader(s) or others from among the class read the first and third paragraphs (including the five bullet-points that follow paragraph 3). Explain that for brevity's sake, we will be discussing the sacred worth of each individual and breaking into smaller groups to work on one of the bullet points.

Core Faith Fact: The Sacred Worth of Each Individual

The leader(s) or volunteer reads aloud the first paragraph. Next, take a quick oral survey from the class: *Just how much would you say a human being is worth?* Write down the various answers on a chalkboard or large pad of paper. Then have someone read from Matthew 10: 29-31. Ask the class what they hear and understand Jesus to be saying in this passage. Then have someone read aloud the paragraph that begins, “The story of the Bible is our story...”

5 Points: A Biblical Context for our Conversations

1. *The Acknowledgement that God is both the origin & destiny of all of creation.*
2. *How can our beliefs and attitudes harm others? Can our words kill?*
3. *What is our calling as a community of faith to continue Jesus’ ministry of teaching and healing?*
4. *The standard of love.*
5. *Our special concern for those who are marginalized.*

Five Points: A Biblical Context for our Conversations

Again, because of time constraints, mention that we will not have time to go into these points in any detail—we can only name them, but that the scripture verses canvassed on your handout will be of great value when read and reflected upon by each individual at home and as a part of their personal Bible study and/or devotional time. Instead, what we will do is to break into small groups and, it is recommended that *Point 2 How our attitudes can poison and words can kill* be followed (including lesson with paper doll: see instructions for preparations ahead of class).

Part Two : Some Numbers & Names: Putting Faces to Statistics

Leader(s) to distribute Quiz handout. For time’s sake, it is best to run through the Quiz together, asking for answers, then giving the correct one.

Portrait Of A GLBT Teen In Danger

Ask one class member to read aloud *The Risk Factors* and another to read aloud *The Warning Signs*.

Fit In, Hide, or Be Gone**The Need For Genuine Community and GLBT Youth**

You might wish, at this point, to acknowledge how fast we seem to be going through the material, but that time constraints demand that we press on if we are going to get through the highlights of the study. The leader can then make a simple summary statement (based on the study material for this section) on the need for community. This will transition us to...

Part Three:**A Christian Response****The Church as Sanctuary: Creating A Safe Space for GLBT Youth**

Leader(s) or someone from among the class reads aloud each of the bullet-point questions under this section. Explain in advance that these questions are to be spoken aloud as questions. Please ask the gathered class to listen carefully and prayerfully to each one—not giving a verbal answer at this time, but just letting them “soak in.” Next, distribute the plan of action sheets. Break into small groups and ask each group to come up with some preliminary action plans. Be open to all suggestions and write each down. When you re-assemble into the larger group, have one member from each group share some of their ideas.

At this point, you may want to ask for volunteers to become an action committee to study how best to put the best ideas into action.

Conclude by reading aloud the final paragraph of the study beginning with, “When our GLBT youth learn from us...”

Thank everyone for participating in this difficult subject

and

Close with prayer.

AFTER THE FACT: REDUCING THE RISK OF SUICIDE AMONG SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH

Lesson Plan for Three consecutive one-hour events

- Week One: Introduction and Part One
- Week Two: Part Two (with Trevor film)
- Week Three: Part Three

AFTER THE FACT: REDUCING THE RISK OF SUICIDE AMONG SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH

Lesson Plan for an all-day retreat:

- Morning session: Introduction and Part One
- Break for Lunch
- Afternoon Session: Part Two (with Trevor film)
- Short break
- Part Three

Thank you for your interest in our curriculum. We would like to get your feedback on this study and hope you'll take a moment to fill out the very short evaluation below. This is an evolving project and any feedback you can provide would be appreciated.

Please send your comments via email to office@wallingfordumc.org, or by regular mail to:

Wallingford UMC
2115 North 42nc Street
Seattle, WA 98103

Please Evaluate this Resource:

Please rank on a scale from 1 (Poor) – 5 (Excellent) the following areas. Feel free to give comments.

___ **CONTENT**
Your Comments:

___ **PRESENTATION**
Your Comments:

___ **USEFULNESS**
Your Comments:

___ **SENSITIVITY**
Your Comments:

Any other comments you'd like to share:

Thank You!