

# LGBTQ+ Pastoral Care: A Brief Summary

By Rev. Jim Lucas, September 2022

1. Prerequisite
  - You must hold an affirming approach.
  - If you don't, refer to someone who does—or you will likely do more harm than good.
2. Pastoral identity
  - Acknowledge and embrace the reality that you are reaching out on behalf of God and your faith community.
3. Purpose (To . . .)
  - Communicate—exude!—the unconditional love of God.
4. Method (By . . .)
  - Show up—don't assume that LGBTQ+ people will interpret silence as affirmation.
  - Create a safe, welcoming, affirming space.
  - Be aware that you might (or might not) hear . . .
    - accounts of rejection by family, friends, churches.
    - fear of rejection by God.
    - internalized homophobia.
    - stress responses, anxiety, depression.
    - resilience.
    - joy, love, beauty—and much more fruit of the Holy Spirit!
  - Listen deeply, compassionately, non-judgmentally.
    - Don't . . .
      - use the other's story as a launching pad for telling your own story.
      - minimize the person's pain and grief.
      - try to problem-solve too quickly.
      - give advice unless asked.
      - spend too much time on church politics (or other things that can be a distraction from a focus on listening to the person's "heart").
    - Do . . .
      - know that listening is one of the greatest gifts you can offer someone.
      - be genuinely interested in the other person's life stories.
      - learn and practice "active listening skills" (search online).
      - stay *present*.
      - "carry" or "hold" the person's experiences with them—celebrate the joys, lament the pain.
  - Stand in solidarity—demonstrate that you are an ally.
  - Offer sacraments, rituals, creative events, and participation in church groups/ministries that demonstrate the affirmation and solidarity of the larger faith community.
  - Advocate.
  - Follow up.
5. Goal (So that . . .)
  - That the LGBTQ+ person experiences the healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling, and advocating presence of God and the faith community.
  - That the LGBTQ+ person hears God say, "You are my beloved child. I treasure you, just as you are."