



LEARNING ABOUT GENDER

1. Why a book on gender?	2
2. What will this book do?.....	2
3. Guidelines for use and helpful resources.....	2
4. Teaching Moments in this book.....	3
Pages 4–9 Creation of man and woman as equal but complementary, with different roles and different bodies	3
Pages 10–11 Sexual activity and intercourse in marriage	3
Pages 12–13 Puberty changes	3
Pages 14–17 Talking about love	3
Pages 19–20 Gender roles	4
Pages 22–23 Bullying and loving.....	4
Page 24 Disorders of Sex Development (DSD) also called intersex.....	4
Pages 26–27 Transgender.....	5
Pages 28–31 Conclusion	5

1. WHY A BOOK ON GENDER?

Our children are faced with a morality of self-fulfilment, which says: you have one life—and this is really all there is. So, live it to the full, do whatever you want and desire. And, be whoever you wish to be. The highest good, according to our society, is ‘finding yourself’ and then living by ‘what’s right for you’. This is a culture of ultimate expressive individualism.

One of the outcomes is gender confusion at an increasingly younger age.

In this individualistic, rights-based culture, where Facebook lists over 60 ‘gender identities’, all categories of gender diversity will not just be accepted—they will be celebrated.

At an individual level, your children will hear that the decision about what gender you choose could ebb and flow, and be as fluid as you wish from day to day. Each person has a totally unique interpretation and relationship with any gender they inhabit. Further, you can choose the pronoun you wish to be called. Him. Her, Ze, Zir or Them...

You, as parent or carer, need to be informed and empowered to speak to your child on this very important issue.

2. WHAT WILL THIS BOOK DO?

This book will help you to discuss:

- the creation of man and woman as equal and complementary, with different roles and different bodies (pp. 4–9)
- sexual activity and intercourse in marriage (pp. 10–11)
- puberty changes in brain and body (pp. 12–13)
- ‘love’ between friends and family members and how this is different to sexual love (pp. 14–17)
- gendered behaviour and bullying (pp. 18–23)
- disorders of sex development (intersex), gender identity concerns (transgender) and sexual orientation in an age-appropriate manner (pp. 24–29)
- God’s love and Jesus’ act of redemption for all people (pp. 30–31).

3. GUIDELINES FOR USE AND HELPFUL RESOURCES

As a parent or carer, it is important that you take the time to learn about the complexity of gender. The document ‘Understanding sex and gender’ gives you an overview of the science. The linked videos provide a background to the cultural confusion and discuss a biblical view of gender and sex.



4. TEACHING MOMENTS IN THIS BOOK

PAGES 4–9 CREATION OF MAN AND WOMAN AS EQUAL AND COMPLEMENTARY, WITH DIFFERENT ROLES AND DIFFERENT BODIES

If you haven't discussed the creation story, this is a good time to read it. Or review it.

Read the creation story in Genesis 1 and 2.

Talk about God's design for marriage and the family. This is a great time to introduce children to the concept of married couples being 'one flesh'—a whole-life oneness between husband and wife. Emphasise to children the beauty of marriage, the promises that are made, the love these promises are meant to communicate, and how this love overflows in physical affection and tenderness.

Share photographs and videos of yourself, your spouse and family and discuss what it means to be a boy, girl, man or woman.

Discuss your own family and that of your spouse. (Who is in each family? Where did you live? What did you do together?)

Refer to the PDF diagrams of [male](#) and [female](#) genitals.

Activity: Page 3 has the phrase 'you will learn what it means to be a boy and what it means to be a girl'. Ask the child what they think the differences are and write them down. You can return to this list later in the book.

Phrases you may have to explain

Page 4: 'everything worked just the way it should' Discuss with the child that this included plants, animals, the weather and, yes, Adam and Eve. Everything was as God meant it to be.

Page 6: 'Ovaries to make eggs' You might remind the child that the egg is also called an ovum.

Pages 6–7: For an older child you could explain that this is called 'biological sex'.

Page 9: 'God gave them different jobs to do' For an older child you could explain that there are some jobs that men and women do that are different but equally important to God—these are called gender roles (sometimes gender expression). You will return to this later in the book, but if you think it is appropriate, you could discuss the different 'jobs' mum and dad do in your family, both in the house and outside.

PAGES 10–11 SEXUAL ACTIVITY AND INTERCOURSE IN MARRIAGE

Based on the reading of Genesis 1 and 2, discuss how marriage between a man and a woman was God's idea.

This is an opportunity to discuss the purposes of marriage:

- God gave Adam and Eve a command to have babies and fill the earth. Marriage would be the place where this happened. Marriage provides children with a place where they can be cared for.
- Marriage also binds the two people together. Remind the child of the 'glue pot' example.
- In marriage, a man (husband) and woman (wife) care for each other. You can share the vows of marriage at this point.
- Making love (sexual activity) is an intimate and close way husband and wife show each other that they care for each other.

Share pictures of couples in your family (parents, grandparents).

You might like to refer to the books 'Learning about sex' and 'Me and my family'.

PAGES 12–13 PUBERTY CHANGES

If you have not done so already, this is a good time to discuss puberty.

This section is covered in more depth in the book by Patricia Weerakoon, *Growing Up by the Book* chapter 2 (and elsewhere in that same book). The book can be ordered from the publisher, Fervr: <https://www.cepstore.com.au/growing-up-by-the-book>

It is also available on Kindle at Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/B071S3FNNX>

PAGES 14–17 TALKING ABOUT LOVE

Activity: Ask your child to list things and people that he/she 'loves'.

Talk about how the love you feel for your toy is different to what you feel for your pet, and that this, in turn, is different to what you feel for your friends, siblings, parents and others.

Talk about God's love and how it meant Jesus came and died for him/her.

Focus on friendship love in this conversation.



Before you have this conversation, you need to assess the maturity of your child.

If you think your child is mature enough, you can discuss the following:

- God loves every child. This does not depend on whether they are sexually attracted to boys or girls.
- Just because a person is sexually attracted to another person, does not mean that they have to be sexually active with that person and have sex with them.
- All Christians have an identity in Christ. We all belong to God. This doesn't depend on what we look like or what we feel like sexually.

HELPFUL PROMPTS

Name 2–3 of your child's friends: What makes them good friends? Can girls and boys be friends?

If the child is mature enough, read with them a couple of passages about love (Matthew 5:43–47; 1 Corinthians 13).

PAGES 19–20 GENDER ROLES

Draw two columns and ask the child to write down what boys do and are like in one, and what girls do and are like in the other.

Ask:

'Which of the boy column things can girls do? Be like?'

'Which of the girl column things can boys do? Be like?'

Discuss how in different places and cultures this boy/girl differentiation of activities and characteristics could be different.

Go back to page 9 and discuss how although there are many things that boys do that girls can do and vice versa, for the world to work the way God intended, man and woman must work as a team, together.

Discuss some examples from your home life of the roles of male and female.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood, Desiring God*, <https://document.desiringgod.org/50-crucial-questions-about-manhood-and-womanhood-en.pdf>

PAGES 22–23 BULLYING AND LOVING

There are stories in the Bible that show Jesus protecting the vulnerable, whom others would bully. Some examples are:

- John 8:1–11
- Luke 7:36–50

Ask them if they have seen any instances of bullying face to face in school or in the playground?

Ask them if they have seen any instances of bullying on social media?

How did they react?

How do they think Jesus would have them react?

PAGE 24 DISORDERS OF SEX DEVELOPMENT (DSD) ALSO CALLED INTERSEX

It is important to keep this simple for the child. DSD or intersex is not a third sex; it is a condition where normal development has been disrupted.

Information for you

Biological sex is formed through a complex, multi-stage development in the mother's womb [chromosomes – gonads – hormones – genitals – brain sexing]. Aberrations at any stage in the development potentially lead to a person's biological sex not aligning to the traditional neat binary categories. Exact numbers are not available, but this possibly occurs in 1–2 per 10,000 live births¹.

Many will present with ambiguous genitalia (genital structure that is neither clearly male nor female at birth). But some instances, such as Turner's syndrome, Klinefelter's syndrome, and complete androgen resistance, do not.

Important points to note about intersex (Disorder of Sex Development):

- It is not a third sex. It is a condition where normal development has been disrupted.
- It is not possible to have fully functional ovaries and testes.
- It is not possible to have fully functional internal and especially external genitals of both male and female together.

1. Woodward, M & Neilson, A 2013, 'Disorders of sex development', *Surgery (Oxford)*, 31(12), 646–651.



PAGES 26-27 TRANSGENDER

Take the child back to the Genesis story of Adam and Eve.

Talk to them about God's plan for man and woman. And discuss how when we rejected God, our world, nature and bodies were no longer perfect.

One way this happens is when the brain tells a person that they are not what their biological sex *is*.

Tell them: Biological sex *is* what is in a person's body; gender is what a person feels or thinks they are.

Reassure your child that instances of transgender are very rare.

Reassure your child that the way they are is how God has made them and wants them to be.

PAGES 28-31 CONCLUSION

Talking about gender issues can be intense, both for you and your child.

You may like to finish with a song such as:

'Jesus loves the little children'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cg6W76q6a2E>

'He's got the whole world in his hands' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEkXzi19Crk>

