

RECONCILING IMAGES VIDEO STUDY - SESSION 2, "Queer Eye: God Bless Gay"

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GOALS: To consider how LGBTQ people have been presented in television and movies, how this has impacted American popular culture, and how Christians act or react.

EXPECTATIONS: Respectful, thoughtful conversation. You can attend one or all sessions, as these are independent. Kids are welcome but parents should use discretion as some of the movies/TV shows deal with adult themes. Bring a snack to share - each week we'll ask one person to bring a more substantial main dish.

SESSIONS	MOVIE/EPISODES (rating, hh:mm)	MAIN DISH
Sunday, July 28, noon	Philadelphia (PG-13, 2:05)	_____
Sunday, August 4, noon	Queer Eye: God Bless Gay (TV-14, 0:51)	_____
Sunday, August 11, noon	The Matthew Shephard Story (TV-14, 1:34)	_____
Sunday, August 18, noon	One Day at a Time (TV-PG, 1:30)	_____
Sunday, August 25, noon	Hannah Gadsby: Nanette (unrated, 1:09)	_____

QUEER EYE: GOD BLESS GAY (TV-14)

A team of gay men makeover a Christian woman and her church's community center in this reality TV episode. Frank talk of how Christians have both accepted and hurt LGBTQ people..

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (before show)

- Introductions - who we are, main dish volunteers
- Language - How are we feeling about using the word "queer" positively? How do we feel with words like "gay" or "LGBT?" How does the LGBTQ+ community feel about terms like "homosexual?"
- Changes - What impressions might have been left by the old series, "Queer Eye For The Straight Guy?" What might have been great about the show? What might have been in need of updating?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (after show)

- Members of the Fab 5 team express different reactions to church early in the episode. Who has been hurt by the church, and why? Who sees church as a source of strength? Who sees church as irrelevant?
- Talk about the journey of Tammye and her son Myles in their faith, family, and church relationships.
- How are the concepts of family, church, and home tied together? What are the multiple layers of "homecoming" in this episode? Why do families and churches have unique power to hurt and to heal?
- How do perceived, assigned, or adopted identities - gay or straight, black or white, urban or rural, believer or non-believer - shape us? Give us strength? Limit us?
- Talk about the sense of humor, culture, and familiarity expressed by the Fab 5. Does it make you uncomfortable or comfortable? Is it different from what you expect? How do others in the episode react?
- One of the themes of this show is that sometimes when you work on the outside, it makes you feel better on the inside. This is a two-way street. How is this concept tied to Christian spirituality? (see Luke 6:45)
- How important is it to ask forgiveness, and not just "let bygones be bygones?" (see Matthew 5:23-24)
- What is Tammye's basic theology, or understanding of God? (see 1 John 4:7-12)
- How do the members of the Fab 5, Tammy, and others in this episode share a Christian witness with each other? Do you think anyone changes their opinion or their heart? Is there healing that takes place?

BETH'S NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

Queer Questions on *Queer Eye*: Specifically and Overall

[Just as reference material that can be perused at any time. Nobody can actually cover all of these questions in one sitting! :)]

How do you feel hearing the word “queer?” Do you know which other terms LGBTQ+ culture have reclaimed? Why does any community “reclaim” words that have been used to hurt them in the past/currently?

In Season 1, Episode 1 “You Can’t Fix Ugly”

What impressions might have been left by those who had seen any of the old series, “Queer Eye For The Straight Guy?” What might have been great about any/the old show? What might have been in need of updating from any/the old series? (If one has not seen the old series, it can be read about online, or what can be intuited even from the name of the series?)

Why do the editors, directors, and producers let us see the new team of the “Fab 5” as nervous and vulnerable?

What is the difference between “tolerance” and “acceptance,” as implied by the series update?

“My goal is to find out how similar we are, as opposed to how different we are,” Antoni Porowski

“We all got to come together in a way that we can understand each other,” Karamo Brown

What is the meaning of dancing in LGBTQ+ culture? What kind of music is playing? Why are there some rainbows but not tons? There is a gayfamous show, “Queer As Folk,” that had similar credits in the early 2000s!

How do their category titles of Design, Grooming, Fashion, Culture, and Food & Wine expand or narrow stereotypes of gay men?

What is the significance of starting the series with a character who says of himself, “I’m just a dumb old country boy from Kentucky?” (Tom Jackson) Who do LGBTQ+ communities fear? Why? How do stereotypes of “country” communities, or other communities besides LGBTQ+, get busted in this series?

How does the show portray straight men and others as breaking down their barriers to self-actualization?

Is it surprising in any way that the Fab 5 approach vulnerable, nervous participants with both kindness and sass?

Why does the show involve so much diversity within the Fab 5? Why two men of color? Why different body types? Why different gender ideas (butch, femme, etc.) and LGBTQ+ identities? Different relationship statuses?

Are the ways that the Fab five greet new participants in line with straight culture? (Immediate hugs, touching, celebrating, etc.)

What are some of the examples that we can witness of straight men or others participating in design, grooming, fashion, culture, food, emotions, and social connection that we often do not notice in our own lives?

How do the Fab 5 use gendered terms in ways that don't usually happen in straight culture? (ex: Jonathan claps his hands over Tom's ears and says, "Don't scare her [Tom]!")

How many pieces of vocabulary were unfamiliar or used differently? "Werk!" "Yaaasss, queen!" "Fierce!" "Love." "Amazing." "Fabulous." "Cuuuute." Etc..

How do the Fab 5 reinforce straight men and others that it is okay to care for themselves and each other?

Season 2, Episode 1 "God Bless Gay"

Opening music is "Amazing Grace" with lyrics.

How is season 2 already different from the first?

Is the joke about sexuality and ladies comfortable or uncomfortable? Why might it be common in to light-heartedly joke this way in LGBTQ+ culture?

Why is it all celebratory for Karamo to say "homos?" Why does it send most LGBTQ+ community members for a loop when they hear "homosexuals?" When might we still want to be careful tossing around terms besides "LGBTQ+" and "gay?"

How is it again significant that the Fab 5 are in a small town setting, empowering a black woman, requested by a white man wearing a cowboy hat?

"Homecoming" is important to which cultures? Which of the Fab 5 knew about church "Homecoming?" Who later had the strongest reactions to entering a church?

Why does it matter that many LGBTQ+ people echo Jonathan's thoughts, and feel accepted by God, and Jesus, but not by many churches? ("I feel alienated by churches ... people saying, 'I love you; I just don't accept your life choices.'")

Myles does not feel "comfortable" or "welcome" after coming out. What did Myles feel before he came out? Why is he so comfortable with his mother, but still not with the church?

Is it interesting to hear someone in a lefty community remind each other to remain "open-minded?"

How is Bobby feeling when he pauses at the door of the church? Why at the door?

Why is “hate” and “fights against our basic rights” such a big part of how many LGBTQ+ people feel at churches? Why is it hard for many LGBTQ+ people to move into gentler terms and be more patient? Why don’t those who oppose LGBTQ+ equality experience their views as this hurtful?

Tammye says of her church community center, “... everyone that walks in the door can feel love.” If that is a sentiment with which we agree, what are the many ways that humans need to express love fully within a church? How often do the Fab 5 talk about “love?” Is the love of the Fab 5 reserved only for other queers?

Are the Fab 5 easier on Myles’ mess because he’s gay with a “creative mess?”

How do the Fab 5 encourage inner feelings while dealing with external factors, like hats or outfits, etc.?

Is it surprising to hear that someone was bullied and teased for being different? Is it surprising that families, mothers or otherwise, reject children for being gay? Is it surprising that someone in the current moment would have the F_ _, N, or other extreme expletives openly shouted at them? What role does the church play in this? How often does someone doing the rejecting and harassing have full rights within the church, while the target feels excluded?

What must it feel like to cry and beg God at the alter to not “make me gay?” To lose music from a praise team that one started? To lose group connections? Have backs turned? Losing oneself when church “family” projects “disgusting” and “abomination?”

What would Jesus do?

Was it really ever that Myles wasn’t comfortable with himself? Does belonging only require that we are comfortable with ourselves? Or does it, in fact, require that others, somewhere, accept us? (Karamo is beauuuuuutiful, but not a psychologist.)

“In my Bible, that I read, if I have wronged somebody, if I have mistreated someone, I need to ask their forgiveness first, and then I am free to go to the Father.” When Tammye says this, why does Antoni cry and say that, “Not all parents do that?”

What examples do we have that not just Tammye, not just the new community center, but the church itself accepted Myles? How openly did Tammye speak about LGBTQ+ issues from the front of the church?

How would churches be different if they encouraged more cultures and communities to use their unique gifts for the good of humanity in their own ways?

Is it reasonable to ask marginalized communities to support those in favor of keeping them marginalized?

PARK'S NOTES ON QUEER EYE: GOD BLESS GAY

GOD BLESS GAY NOTES

- son not feel welcome at church
- Jonathan "church is what I feel alienated by, not God. I feel completely loved and accepted by God and Jesus. It's a lot of the politics of the church, that's what made me feel not welcome. It's a choir of people saying 'well I love you I just don't accept your lifestyle choices.'"
- Karamo "not everyone in the church is that way, and not all churches are that way. I love the church, and I love every experience I've had in the church. I use my strength to encourage them to see it in a different light."
- "Let's be open minded" - Fab 5 about church & Christians

DAY 1 Mark 12:31 "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"

- Bobby stays outside the church. "in my experience with religion and religious people, I've just been judged." You look like the gay that's scared they're going to burn when they cross the door.
- "I don't like being involved with the church because there's so much hate against gays and fights against our basic rights. I have a hard time making peace with it."
- Tammye's vision "everyone that walks in the door can feel love"
discussion w Antoni about HOMEcoming
- Myles blessed by accepting mom - black & gay
- difference between neighbor who sees no gays in community and Myles who knows a few
Bobby grew up religious, begged god to make him not gay, people turned back on him, refused to go back. So hurt.
- Myles says mom has a hard time when he first came out. Reflected when she got cancer. Iffy about homecoming, not sure how people will receive him.
- Tammye WWJD - take it seriously. can't antagonize and evangelize at same time. Greatest commandment is love. Come home. You're God's son.
- Karamo "I'm really hoping to encourage Myles to feel comfortable with himself. Because when he feels comfortable with himself, he'll realize that he belongs wherever he is."

DAY 2 "kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever is not kind has no faith." Muhammad

- Myles started praise team at church
- why is Myles hesitant to come back? Worried he won't be accepted.
- Myles told man gay at age 14. She struggled. Apologized, "Mama hasn't loved you unconditionally."
- Tony "She thought that her religion told her to judge someone who is gay. But she saw past that. She saw the individual, she saw the person her son is, and she changed her mind. She says that it was a religious experience, but she made that choice. Not all parents do that."
- Tammye struggle when Myles came out - broken dream, he won't have natural children. Really her dream.

DAY 3 "True love is born from understanding." The Buddha

- Bobby really apprehensive about renovation. Church was involved. Worried I'd be judged. But that's not what I've gotten with Tammye. Excited about community Ctr, "it's just the perfect harmony of people coming together to help each other."
- makeovers - Tammye's hair & Myles attitude

- Myles “ I did feel the love. I just need to get over the fact that I went there. There’s still that little voice that says they don’t love you, even if they do”
- Karamo homecoming is bigger than church, it’s about being around people we love, family
- when you work on the outside, sometimes it makes you feel better on the inside
- Myles stopped singing, got into funk. Sang for 10 yrs and then quit.

DAY 4 “ it’s easy to stand with the crowd, it takes courage to stand alone.” Mahatma Gandhi

- Karamo gift of bible w names and Phi 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
- church sign, “God is Love”
- photo montage efforts of so many people over the years
- Tammye “ before God gave the vision, he made the provision, because he knew you guys would end up together. Before you were in your mothers womb he knew you.”
- Tammye names gifts, “You’re using your gifts for the good of humanity, that’s why you’re here.”

GOD BLESS GAY “Let the beauty you love be what you do.” Rumi

- Karamo “ I understand that the church is not always been supportive of the LGBTQ community. But this is what I’ve always seen. The church is where we come together to support each other, to recharge, to rebuild... this is what I’ve always known Church to be: this love that Mama Tammye radiates.”
- Tammye’s testimony about building relationships. “ they shared with me how they’ve been torn down and rejected, and the church has turned their backs on them. How can I say that I love God, but I cannot love the ones were right there next to me. I would call myself a hypocrite! I say I was around five gay men, I was around six. My son walked away from the church, Edit is been my prayer that he comes here and feel the love, the love that surrounds me every Sunday. Do I love Jesus? Yes. Am I a believer? Yes. Do I love my son? Yes. Yes, yes, yes.”
- Tony “Before you judge someone, I get to know them. I guarantee you’ll have more similarities than differences.”
- Jonathan lgbtq Black white Christians, Muslims etc. “Just love them, because that is what Jesus would do.”