“RITES OF PASSAGE” EXERCISE

Materials Needed: Masking tape
Sheets of paper (5 and ½ inches by 17 inches…split a piece of 11x17 in half long way) – about 5-10 sheets per person or per group
Markers for each group

Length of time: About 20-25 minutes, depending on size of group

Size of group: Any size

Before beginning, divide a wall into three sections...the section titles are listed below. Depending on size of group (may want to divide large group into three groups).

Assign each group to think about rites of passages that everyone or most everyone goes through in their life through these three stages in life: CHILDHOOD, ADOLESCENCE, ADULTHOOD.

Examples may include: CHILDHOOD = first step, first day of school, etc.
ADOLESCENCE = first kiss, graduation, senior prom, etc.
ADULTHOOD = marriage, paying taxes, etc.

When the groups are finished give them masking tape to tape their sheets on the wall under their section.

The facilitator should then go through the answers, explaining that these are rites of passage that EVERYONE goes through in their journey from childhood to adulthood. When the facilitator is finished going through the answers for each…go back to the beginning and go through the answers again.

Ask the group to identify how each answer may be different if a person associated themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. If a rite is identified that it would be different for a GLBT person, remove it from the wall and turn it upside down and place it back on the wall.

When complete, ask the group to look at the wall, and imagine how a GLBT persons life can be turned upside down.

This can be a powerful visual exercise to get people thinking…because it actually puts some things in black and white and “writes them on the wall” so to speak.