

Let's Talk About...Trans* Rights

Let's talk about trans* rights. Okay first, let's just introduce this word. **Transgender** is an adjective to describe a person who does not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. My cousin was told he was a girl, but he's let us know that he is actually very much a guy. Taylor's story goes the other way; she was raised as a boy but has now realized she is actually a woman. And one of her siblings was given a gender at birth, but they are actually nonbinary and do not fit into the boy-girl gender boxes we try to use to understand one another. All of these people are transgender (or at least not cisgender, but that's a topic for its own article).

If you feel at home in the gender others called you at birth, then you are **cisgender**. The prefix "cis-" is simply the opposite of the prefix "trans-" and means 'on this side' as opposed to 'across from.'

So now, let's talk about human rights for transgender people. Maybe you've heard us mention transgender children and parents in Texas during our Sunday prayers. Maybe you've read about the bills several states have passed that prohibit transgender athletes from playing sports with people of their own gender. Maybe you remember a few years ago when a similar round of bills hit several states to keep transgender people out of public restrooms. The short version is, transgender people (and actually, lots of cisgender people who don't quite fit society's gendered expectations) face a lot of discrimination when it comes to anything where we typically divide people up by gender.

If you are cisgender, here are some ways you can be a good ally to trans* people:

1. Pay attention to pronouns! These will get their own article sometime in the future, but for now, just practice telling people what pronouns you'd like them to use for you and ask people how they'd like you to refer to them. If you pay attention, you'll find more and if you mess up, that's okay, but know that it can really make somebody's day if you work hard to get their pronouns right every time!
2. Pay attention to bills regarding trans* rights. Sign petitions, write to your legislators, and make sure those in power know that lots of people believe trans* people are human beings like the rest of us who deserve the freedom to have families and play sports and use public restrooms.
3. Keep remembering trans* people exist. Think about them before you equate genitals to gender identity or divide people into two groups based on gender. I can't say what you should do differently because that'll depend on your specific context, but if you consider trans* people and their needs and their validity before you speak or act, I guarantee it will make a difference for any trans* people around you.