

Choros Vision and Guidelines
(Adapted from the original Choros Affirmation)
Last updated: Fall 2021

Purpose:

The intent of the group is not to champion a particular agenda, perspective, or policy, but rather to extend the university's commitment to whole-person formation within a nurturing Christian community to issues of sexuality. With humility, gentleness, and patience, our hope is to serve the strengthening of faith in Christ and the fellowship of believers, by means of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:2-3)

Context:

We recognize that some members of the Taylor University community have questions regarding the nature of human sexuality and desire a safe environment in which to discuss these questions.

We perceive a lack of fruitful conversation regarding human sexuality, perhaps due to a lack of consistent or structured opportunities for transparent discussion.

The Taylor community has the opportunity to grow in facilitating a safe environment through structured conversation in order to honestly discuss issues that concern our identity as humans and followers of Christ.

We seek to advance the Taylor University mission to develop student leaders marked with a passion to minister Christ's redemptive love and truth to all people.

Within our community, the greatest expression of fellowship and the highest principle for relationships is love. Since God first loved us, we ought to demonstrate love toward one another as fellow divine image-bearers (1 John 3:11, 16, 18; 4:7-21).

We share a common commitment to the cultivation of *koinonia* and the development of relationships that seek to build one another up, respond graciously to one another, care for one another, respect one another, and speak truth to one another in love. We desire to participate in the healing of broken relationships to pursue reconciliation, restoration, and restitution within our community.

With that in mind, we recognize that LGBT+ students on campus are in a uniquely vulnerable position, as they may be more likely to have been affected by these broken relationships, and as such may carry hurt and fear in their hearts that they will be perceived negatively. Thus, they may feel apprehensive about Choros. In addition to building relationships with everyone involved in our group, we strive to contribute to the flourishing of these participants specifically via our commitment to making it a safe space as they work through tough questions about

gender and sexuality. Above pushing a certain agenda, it is most important to us that, through Choros, they recognize their Imago Dei and feel loved and seen by God.

We recognize that Scripture encourages an attitude of humility and faith seeking understanding. Towards this end, we seek to interact respectfully with one another regardless of any individual's perspective.

We wish to pursue peace with an attitude of love and humility in keeping with Colossians 3:12-17:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Values:

This group will seek to learn, listen, and act from a convicted posture of humility towards learning how to respect those who hold different perspectives and beliefs. In keeping with this commitment, the group wishes to pursue equal treatment for all who participate in the Taylor University community. Finally, the group seeks to establish an environment conducive to furthering reconciliation through mutual relationship building.

Goals:

- **Safe environment:** In response to the context outlined above, we aim to foster a safe place, open to people of all perspectives and experiences, for an earnest discussion of human sexuality, sexual attraction, and gender identity, within the context of Christian discipleship.
- **Reconciliation:** We seek thereby to grow in our understanding of the difficulties and realities attending issues of sexuality and participate in the Holy Spirit's work of healing wounds within the Taylor University community.

We hope to reach these goals through:

- **Regular meetings** of students in the Taylor community who represent a broad variety of perspectives regarding issues of sexuality and gender.

- Fostering a **model environment** for healthy discussion and reconciliation.
- Expanding **critical thinking** engagement with regards to the social, political, psychological, theological, and personal complexities of human sexuality and gender.
- Broadening **group participation** with the intent that the conversation and subsequent healing can reach a broader audience within the Taylor community.
- **Programming:** In conversation with Student Development, consider the potential value of more formal programming, campus-wide discussions, lectures, presentations, and other means of facilitating further growth and reconciliation in the Taylor community regarding issues of human sexuality and gender identity.

Ground Rules:

- Be open-minded, non-judgmental, and respectful, and exercise patience. As one form of respect, please do not speak of any group of people, including LGBT+ people, as if they are not in the room with us. In all likelihood, in and out of our spaces, they are with you and will take what you say to heart.
- Ask permission to ask questions or make comments when someone else is speaking.
- Disagreements will occur. What we are discussing is close to our hearts, so we must disagree in a manner that allows further discussion, not in a manner that inhibits discussion. We must be respectful in our disagreements, including our tone, body language, and words.
- Participants in disagreement should not leave the meeting with ill will or bad feelings. A statement should be agreed to that: "I hear what you are saying, and I respect you, but I disagree."
- No divisive behavior; participants should not take sides in disagreements.
- The purpose of the group and topics discussed at the meetings can be shared with those outside the group. However, the identities of the people coming to the group and their individual comments and stories are to remain confidential within the group.