

# A Community Text Study on the 2017 Reconstructionist Movement Resolution in Solidarity with and Affirming the Rights of Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender Non-Conforming People



## Introduction: Why is this learning important?

In 2017, the three governing bodies of the Reconstructionist Movement approved a resolution in solidarity with and affirming the rights of transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people.

This resolution is more than just words on a page or a screen. It's a blueprint for action across the Reconstructionist movement and a sacred text that articulates the Torah's call to justice and human dignity in our present day.

As anti-trans rhetoric and policies escalate across the country, continuing to live into the commitments of our resolution is more important than ever before.

## Directions for Facilitator:

### 1. Reading:

Read through the entire resolution out-loud, as a group. Invite the person to the facilitator's right begin reading, and "pass" the reading around the circle, reading one "whereas" or "therefore," each.

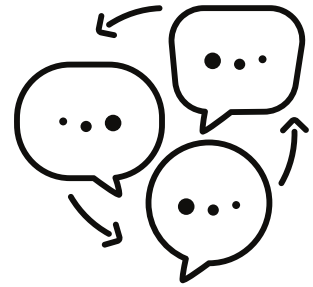


### 2. Initial Impressions:

- Invite three people to share a part of the resolution they found to be particularly moving or helpful and why.
- Invite three people to share a part of the resolution they are curious to learn more about.

### 3. Reflection:

- Return to the beginning of the "resolved" section. Ask for a volunteer to pick one of the resolved clauses to read out loud again. Ask the group to offer reflections on these two prompts, after each "resolved" section:



- How are we, as individuals, and as a community, already living into this commitment?
- Where can we grow and deepen how we live out this commitment?
- What feels different about living out this commitment today than in 2017?
- How might we need to adapt our strategies to best fulfill this moral obligation in this moment?



### 4. Action

- Close with a go-around, asking each person to share one new concrete action they will take in their personal lives to strengthen their solidarity with transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people.
- Identify three new, concrete actions the congregation can take, and designate one person to record these and send the recommendations to leadership of the community.

## **2017 Reconstructionist Movement Resolution in Solidarity with and Affirming the Rights of Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender Non-Conforming People**

Whereas one of the core principles of Torah asserts that all humanity is created b'tzelem Elohim, in the image of God; and

Whereas throughout human history several cultures have recognized a diversity of genders; and


Whereas the Jewish people, in the literature of halakhah, from early midrash, the Mishnah and onward, bears witness to and acknowledges a variety of non-binary genders, concluding that people of transgender experience have the obligations and privileges of all Jews; and


Whereas people of non-binary gender expression, transgender, and gender non-conforming people individually and collectively contribute positively to the quality of life, faith, Jewish study and tikkun olam work within various institutions affiliated with the Reconstructionist movement and throughout the Jewish world; and


Whereas transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people provide valuable rabbinic, educational, pastoral, and lay leadership within the Reconstructionist movement and in other arenas of Jewish life; and


Whereas a growing number of Jewish secular and religious organizations have recognized the Jewish moral imperative of affirming, supporting, and fully welcoming transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people;


**Therefore, be it resolved that we commit to the full inclusion, acceptance, appreciation, celebration and welcome of people of all gender identities in Jewish life and in society at large; and**


 Be it further resolved that we condemn and grieve all instances of bias, discrimination, violence, hatred, and intimidation against transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming individuals; and

 Be it further resolved that the Reconstructionist movement strongly advocates for the full equality of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people and for equal protections for people of all gender identities and expressions under the law, at all levels of government, in North America and in Israel; and


 Be it further resolved that we encourage all programs affiliated with the Reconstructionist movement, including the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, all Reconstructionist affiliates and Camp JRF, to continue to educate themselves, their employees and their constituencies about the needs and rights of transgender and gender non-conforming people, so as to create fully inclusive settings; and

 Be it further resolved that we encourage all Reconstructionist movement bodies and affiliated groups to learn about people of all gender identities and expressions, including learning about the gifts, aspirations, realities and needs of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people; and


 Be it further resolved that we encourage all those involved in the Reconstructionist movement to work towards the goal of creating gatherings that are fully welcoming, safe spaces for transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people, and towards those ends, to evaluate and, where necessary, to modify physical sites and workplaces in an effort to ensure dignity and safety for people of all gender identities and expressions. We urge Reconstructionist-affiliated groups to ensure, as soon as is feasible, the availability of all-gender restrooms in all facilities and at all events as one example of this commitment; and




Be it further resolved that we encourage Reconstructionist communities and organizations to learn about emerging practices in the Jewish community that seek to integrate the presence and experiences of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people into our liturgy and expressions of worship. We also encourage Reconstructionist rabbis, educators, and lay leaders to contribute to and continue their development of these kinds of new liturgical and ritual expressions; and




Be it further resolved that we encourage Reconstructionist organizations to educate themselves and their constituencies about the need of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people to be known by the identity, name, and pronoun of their choice, and to learn about ways that everyday language choices can be modified so that they are fully inclusive of gender non-conforming and transgender people; and



Be it further resolved that we encourage, and will endeavor to support, all Reconstructionist-affiliated institutions to begin or to continue to work with secular and/or Jewish transgender, lesbian, gay and bisexual organizations to create inclusive and welcoming communities for people of all gender identities and expressions and to spread awareness and increase knowledge of issues related to gender identity and expression. This work may include trainings for religious school and administrative staff, community education programs on gender identity and expression, divrei torah on these topics, development of non-discrimination policies which include gender identity and gender expression, and the creation of membership and other forms that eliminate the need to select a gender and/or offers more than two gender options, and more; and



Be it further resolved that the Department of Affiliate Support at RRC/Jewish Reconstructionist Communities will endeavor to provide Reconstructionist affiliates with resources and opportunities for education and training about welcoming and supporting transgender and gender non-conforming people; and



Be it further resolved that we commend the courageous and helpful work of Jewish and non-Jewish organizations that advocate and educate for the full inclusion of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people, including but not limited to such organizations as the National Center for Transgender Equality, TransTorah, Keshet, The Youth & Gender Media Project, Ritualwell, the tGq at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and other organizational bodies within other movements of Judaism.