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Love Is an Orientation: Dialogue about Christianity and Sexuality

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Love Is an Orientation

Dialogue Workshops about Bridge Building between Christians and the LGBTQ Community

A Women's and Gender Studies Senior Project

by Katie Sauer

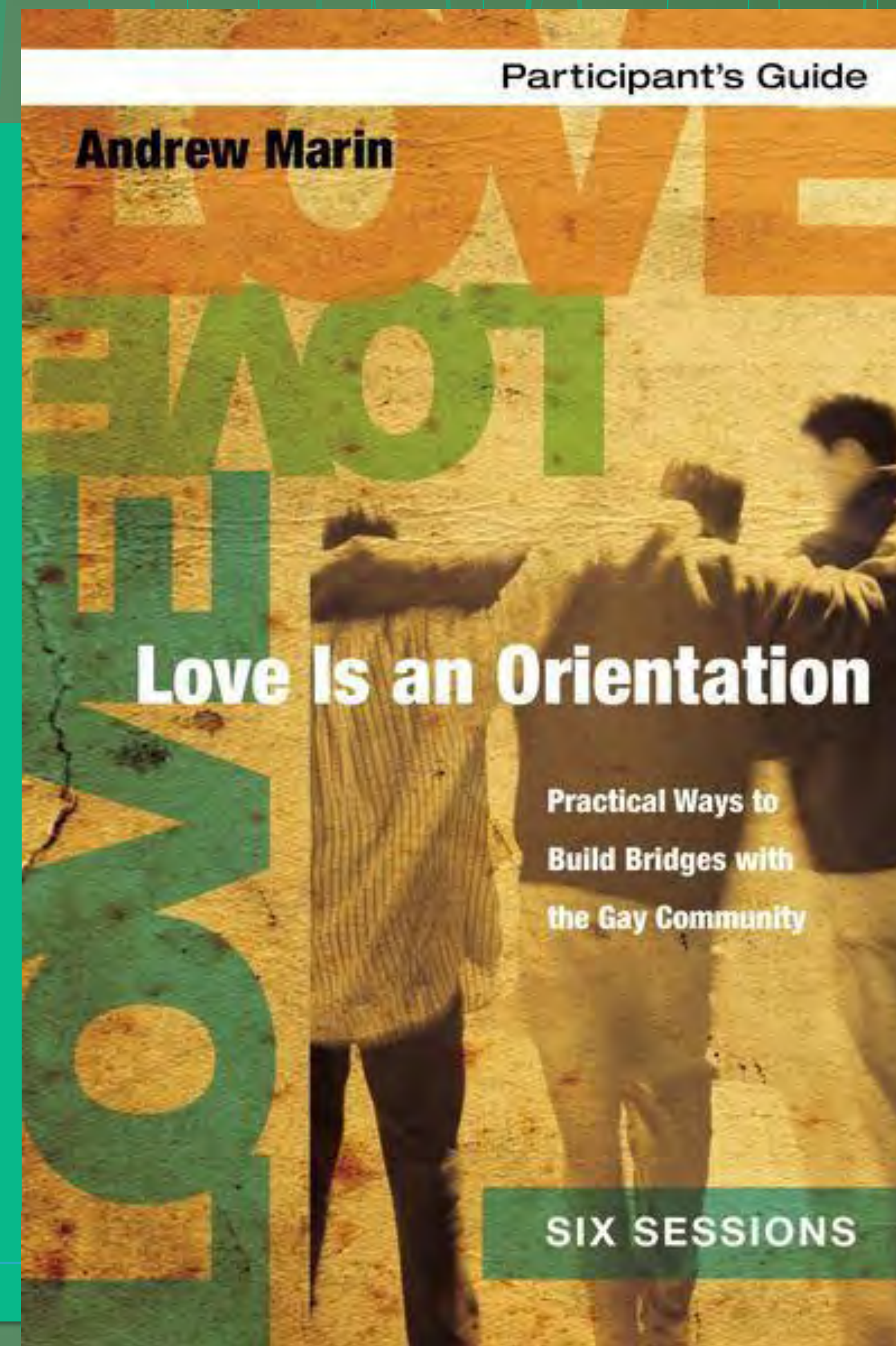
Mentor: Dr. Julie Kipp, Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies



Abstract

When it comes to culture war issues, everyone has an opinion. Groups or institutions whose constituents are of mixed opinions find themselves in the middle and struggle with the tension created by these divisive issues. Hope College is not immune from the struggle, particularly regarding sexuality. This project serves as an experimental attempt to address the need for bridge building and conversation about sexuality as it relates to Christianity. The Love Is an Orientation DVD curriculum produced by the Marin Foundation was used as the instructional foundation of a series of workshops for students, with the purpose of addressing issues of sexuality in a safe, structured way. The workshops emphasized dialogue as an effective format of communication because its purpose is to allow people of diverse views to achieve understanding through a process of listening, reflecting, and sharing. Through these dialogue-driven workshops, students can engage people from a variety of backgrounds in conversation in order to better understand the way that sexuality and Christianity come together.

Dialogue: a welcoming and structured way to Listen, Reflect, Understand, and Share.



Produced by The Marin Foundation
Published by Zondervan

What happens now?

For more information, contact katherine.sauer@hope.edu
Look at the Marin Foundation website: www.themarinfoundation.org
Read the *Love Is an Orientation* book
Get involved with other events like this on campus

Methods

- Series of 6 workshops
- Based on Marin Foundation DVD curriculum
- Topics:
 - Feb. 17: Love Is Our Orientation*
 - Feb. 24: Building Bridges*
 - Mar. 3: Theology of Bridge Builders*
 - Mar. 10: Answering Tough Questions*
 - Mar. 31: Adolescents and Sexuality*
 - Apr. 7: Living in the Tension*
- Each workshop session followed a similar format. I begin by introducing myself and the material. Then, we watch the videos. After that, I lead the group through dialogue to process the material covered in the videos as well as their own experiences. Finally, I close the meeting with a prayer.

Motivation/Reflections

- This project builds on previous projects that I conducted, which were supported by Mellon Scholars Program.
- I was inspired to incorporate dialogue from my experience with intergroup dialogue in the Phelps Scholars Program.
- My work thus far led me to see a need to address the religious aspect of controversial sexuality issues.
- My target audience was straight Christian students.
 - Some success
- My project received a generally positive reception on campus.

Attendance Chart

