

Our Response to Drag Queen Story Hour

We're Marcus and Linsay married for 19 years but don't have children, so there's not an obvious connection with DQSH, but this isn't just for parents.

When Linsay told me that the local council was advertising a Drag Queen story hour in our local gallery as part of a 'family fun day', instead of saying 'what shall we do? what I actually did was hide behind a fearful response (thinking what horrible stuff might get posted through our letterbox if we objected).

I talked about looking to see who else in the community could we pair up with, at which point my beloved got angry.

(Then I knew I really needed to pay attention as Linsay rarely gets this angry) - she just wanted to make a response, write a letter!

I contacted Lisa at MSC (who was very encouraging), and I think by reaching out, this helped me to feel less alone in the process and that the burden was being shared. And sickened that inclusivity is being protected at all costs, but not protecting the children. Spurred me on beyond the paralysis to get something out.

Linsay:

I first became aware of dqsh watching a Christian Concern video of a dq showing little kids in a library how to twerk. What shocked me wasn't the dq, but that parents had knowingly taken their children to see something so blatantly unsuitable for under-fives.

In July I saw the advert for dqsh at our local Gallery, and having seen the Christian Concern video I couldn't just let it go past.

I talked to Marcus about writing to the Gallery, but he was very cautious. I got cross! I just wanted to do something!

However Marcus looked online and found letter templates from Women's Rights Network (unexpected allies). So we used those as a starting point and wrote to the Gallery, the local council, and our MP.

Surprisingly we got replies, but the ones from the Gallery and the council were word for word the same, so someone obviously realised there might be objections and prepped a very politically correct letter saying it was all 'safe and appropriate' for children. They didn't engage with any of the questions we had asked.

Our MP replied with an individual email to Marcus, and said she was going to the event herself, and would give us her feedback. But she didn't seem to have a problem with dqsh in principle, and saw it as encouraging diversity and inclusion.

Marcus:

This is part of the email that was sent to our MP, and the local council leaders. It did feel empowering.

“Drag is highly sexualised adult entertainment, and I am shocked to see it advertised as suitable for families and children.

How was the decision made for children to be in contact with drag queens, given how many are associated with explicit material? I would not expect to walk into a family event and see a burlesque dancer reading to children! Drag queens are in the same adult entertainment category. An inquisitive child looking for more information on the internet is likely to be exposed to highly inappropriate material.

I fail to see how this event can benefit children in any way and it has the potential to cause them great harm by introducing them to the world of adult entertainment before they are old enough to understand what they are watching. It blurs children's boundaries and leaves them at risk of exposure to sexual content. End of letter.

Finally.

In CS Lewis's 'The Silver Chair' the serpent transformed itself into a charming lady, and has conjured a spell by putting a sweet-smelling powder on the fire to lull everyone into a trance.

'There is no Aslan..' she says, 'it's all a dream.'

It's the solemn lanky Marsh Wiggle, the children's faithful guide, who desperately refuses to go to sleep and bravely starts stamping on the witch's fire, arresting the enchantment.

The acrid smell of burning Marsh wiggle feet is a sobering wake up for everyone and the spell begins to break.

We are asking: what's the similarity of the smell of Burning Marsh Wiggle feet' for us in the culture now, and how can we partner with Jesus to fight back. It's us, that makes the difference by making mal-odours, stamping on the fires that are hypnotising people in our community. It might not be pretty and may hurt a bit.

But be encouraged to push back, it does feel empowering and who knows, it might start an avalanche.