

**Prompt:** *Have explicit or implicit ideals of femininity and masculinity been instilled in you through your home, school, or society? How does your current self-image align with or differ from these ideals? Reflect on what you have learned from these experiences and develop an argument based on your reflections.*

### **Christ to Cunty**

I believe being born into a highly religious society has installed a pre-set definition of what it means to be feminine. Growing up going to church I was told women always had to wear dresses and men pants. Also, within church, boys and girls were always separated and taught different bible lessons depending on our gender. Even during church sporting events, it was typical that the boys were expected to participate but it was weird to see women participate since it wasn't lady like. The church was involved inside the house where the bible was used against girls, women, and wives to obey their husband and set misogynistic roles inside the house.

Growing up like this, I used to believe what I was taught, that there was a reason why women and men had their own set of rules to follow. Both inside the church and at home, I was told to always be presentable for a man. Meaning, when I was out in public, my hair should be done, my makeup perfect, fully shaven, and dressed in feminine clothing that doesn't show my "assets." And inside the house, we should always cater to males and do housework. Growing up I accepted this as a fact, and if I disobeyed my parents or didn't cater to my dad or male guests, I was sent to my room to pray and ask for forgiveness.

Now that I'm older and looking back on my childhood experience, I conclude that it is bizarre to tell kids how to act based on their gender. Still today, I have to internally fight some lessons that were taught to me as a child. Like not wearing a bra makes you a 'whore,' or opening a door for myself makes me a 'liberal feminist.' But having more awareness of the negative environment I grew up in, I tend to push back on these pre-defined standards of femininity and masculinity. Also, I enjoy being the odd one out in South Carolina because I hope I can give other little girls the confidence to question the environment that they are growing up in.