

כָּל בְּמִשְׁפַּחַת אֱלֹהִים

Kol B'mishpachat Elohim

All in God's Family:
A Jewish Guide to Creating Allies for Our LGBT Families

National Gay and Lesbian
Task Force



Keshet
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For LGBTQ
equality in
Jewish life

COLAGE

 **FAMILY
EQUALITY
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Kol B'mishpachat Elohim

**All in God's Family:
A Jewish Guide to Creating Allies for Our LGBT Families**

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Kol B'mishpachat Elohim

All in God's Family: A Jewish Guide to Creating Allies for Our LGBT Families

is intended to help make your congregation a welcoming place for LGBT families.

In addition to this publication, you will need:

Documentary

In My Shoes: Stories of Youth with LGBT Parents

A film by Jen Gilomen, produced by the COLAGE Youth Leadership and Action Program

Phototext Exhibit

That's So Gay: Portraits of Youth with LGBT Parents

A do-it-yourself exhibit of phototext portraits of children of LGBT parents from the COLAGE Youth Leadership and Action Program

The companion resources above are available as free downloads at:

www.WelcomingResources.org/resources

In addition, we also recommend that participants purchase the book *Families Like Mine* by Abigail Garner, available at Amazon and other booksellers.

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PART 1: PREPARATION

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Kol B'michpachat Elohim / All in God's Family: A Jewish Guide to Creating Allies for our LGBT Families*. During the course of this curriculum, you will have opportunities to gather with other members of your synagogue or havurah to learn, worship, share and work together to transform your lives, your congregation, and your world into a loving place in which God's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) families can thrive.

Creating a nurturing environment for LGBT families is the primary goal of this curriculum. LGBT families may have an LGBT parent or parents, or an LGBT child or children. Many Jewish congregations and institutions have done an excellent job in welcoming LGBT persons, engaging them in the life of the organization or synagogue and advocating for their rights and well-being. The logical next step is reaching out to the LGBT families in the community and working together to secure their legal and social recognition. This packet of resources will provide you with the tools you need in this important endeavor. Although we strongly recommend you use the resources included, we also recognize that each Jewish community is unique. Therefore, we hope you will customize these resources to fit the special culture and perspective of your synagogue or havurah.

Many faith groups, individual synagogues and churches, and even whole denominations, are the spiritual home for millions of LGBT persons. Each summer, many congregations line up to participate in Pride events and receive thunderous applause as they march along the routes of Pride Parades throughout the world.

However, this was not always the case. In the past, it was almost impossible for a Jewish person to find a congregation in which to be supported, challenged and loved as an openly LGBT member. In the forty years since the founding of the first LGBT welcoming synagogue, much has changed. Now the participation and leadership of LGBT people is celebrated in many synagogues across North America, Europe and even Israel. People who once kept the deepest desires of their hearts silent, or who stayed away on Shabbat, are now publicly serving on boards, teaching and reading from Torah.

There is much for which to be grateful and much more to yet accomplish. LGBT persons are still not embraced in many synagogues. Instead of words of welcome, they hear confusion and distaste from the lips of the very people from whom they expect and deserve love, support and moral leadership. Their marriages are not recognized, their ability to create families is scorned and subjected to antagonistic scrutiny, and their religious status is subjected to attack.

For a long time now, when we have thought about LGBT persons, we have perhaps most often imagined individual adults. Debates have raged over what rights should and should not be afforded these individuals based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Various religious communities have deliberated whether or not such individuals should be ordained as rabbis and cantors, allowed to serve in leadership positions, lead youth groups, teach religious school, conduct Torah study, etc. However, now we know that LGBT identification is broader than our previous images of individual adults. There are LGBT children and youth in our midst, LGBT families in our synagogues and havurot, and all around us, young people are being raised in LGBT families. While the complexity of individual sexual orientation or gender identification may seem confusing or alien to the larger society, the joys and struggles of nurturing a family, raising children, and creating the bonds of love and tradition are universal experiences that unite the Jewish people, and all people, with one another.

Through this curriculum, when we refer to LGBT families, we mean many things. We mean families that are led by an LGBT parent or parents, LGBT couples without children, and families that are raising LGBT and also heterosexual children. These families are formed in a variety of ways – sometimes biologically or by adoption or through “blending” of families or by social service placements.

The reality of the presence of these LGBT families is changing our world and transforming Jewish communities. In many synagogues and havurot, LGBT families feel fully included in the community. They participate in the cal-

endar and life-cycle rituals that hold and strengthen families. Children of LGBT families are respectfully involved in the religious education program of the congregation. Their family make-up is reflected in the multiplicity of stories and images that teach about Jewish values and heritage. They know their full participation in congregational life is welcome.

However, there has been a backlash against the existence, the visibility, and the success of many LGBT families. Marriage and adoption – two institutions which are fundamental to familial relationships – have been the focus of aggressive campaigns which seek to change the laws and even the constitution of our states and our country. These campaigns are often both religious and political in nature and are highly divisive. Since, for now, sexual activity between consenting adults of whatever genders is no longer a crime, the societal debate around LGBT people has shifted from sexual acts to familial relationships. LGBT families are subjected to public scrutiny as to whether they have the right to government support, legal equality, or even the right to exist at all.

This curriculum is all about strengthening these LGBT families of ours. We are so grateful for the opportunity to involve you, members of the Jewish community, in the ongoing work of what we see as *Tikkun Olam*, the repair of the world. As our tradition teaches, “*Lo aleicha hamlacha ligmor*, you are not obligated to complete the work, *ve lo ata ben chorin lehibatel mimena*, but neither are you free to turn away from it.” (Pirkei Avot 2:21)

The first session of this curriculum focuses on the perspective of some young people who are being raised in LGBT families. Their voices come to us through the phototext exhibition, *That's So Gay*, through Abigail Garner's book, *Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is*, and through the video, *In My Shoes: Stories of Youth With LGBT Parents*. The second session is a reflective study of Jewish texts. The third session prepares your group to work for changes in your synagogue or havurah and in the wider world – changes that will support and strengthen LGBT families. The final component of the curriculum is a follow-up section designed to help your congregation take concrete action steps.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Best practices for new educational programs include a preparation phase in which to lay the groundwork for the community. Listed below are three resources we recommend as preparation for implementing *Kol B'mishpachat Elohim*. Additionally, it will be helpful to take some time to read through this curriculum in its entirety prior to beginning the sessions. Please feel free to adapt these suggestions to meet the culture and needs of your particular congregation.

Guest Speaker

In the weeks leading up to this program, invite an LGBT family member to give a *drash* or sermon based on his/her experiences. Write a blessing or prayer for the occasion. Examples are available at <http://www.keshetonline.org/resources/>.

Phototext Exhibit: *That's So Gay*

Display the phototext portraits of children of LGBT families in your sanctuary, social hall, or other highly visible area. Invite your youth group, *b'nai mitzvah*, or confirmation class to assist with the selection, printing, and placement of the portraits. You can print directly from your computer once you have download the exhibit, or use the services of a local copy center.

Book: *Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is*

Abigail Garner's insightful book is available online at Amazon or other booksellers. We encourage everyone planning to participate in the program to read the book, if possible. In particular, we strongly recommend that everyone read Chapter Five, “Family Defining Moments,” prior to Session One.

CREATING SACRED SPACE

Every Jewish community finds sacred space in their own way. Some communities find holiness through singing together, others prefer reciting brachot (blessings) or even creating their own. Some find meaning by connecting their experience to verses in the Torah. As you begin this important endeavor, it is important to open the program with a ritual, blessing, text or other modality that is comfortable and meaningful to your community members. Below are a few suggestions, or feel free to use a mode that works best for your community.

Option One – Opening with a Moment of Torah

As this program is steeped in stories and lessons from our Torah, it is only fitting to begin with the traditional blessing for Torah study:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסּוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav,
v'tzivanu l'a'sok b'divrei Torah*

Blessed are you God, our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who sanctifies us with God's mitzvot and commands us to engage in the study of Torah.

After saying the blessing recite this verse from Isaiah 1:17

Learn to do good. Devote yourselves to justice; aid the wronged. Uphold the rights of the orphan; defend the cause of the widow. *[The New JPS translation]*

Ask one or more of the following questions:

- From where do you “learn to do good?” From whom?
- What does it mean to devote yourself to justice?
How are we devoting ourselves to justice today?
- What do you want to gain from today's session?
What do you need to learn in order to do good in the world?

Option Two – A Ritual Moment

Place a small table in the center of the circle of chairs. Cover it with a cloth. Place upon it an appropriate ritual object (such as a shofar, to call us to justice; or a spice box, because learning is sweet; or a piece of matzah because we run from oppression), and candles. Explain your ritual object to the group. Invite them to share what other symbols and objects could be on that table today.

Invite each participant to share a word or a phrase in response to the question: “What is in your heart as we begin?” Let people know that it is fine to pass rather than speak.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהֵחִיָּנוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגַּעְנוּ
לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, Shehechianu, v'ki-imanu, v'higianu,
lazman hazeh.*

Blessed are you Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe who has granted us life, sustained us and has enabled us to reach this occasion.

Option Three – Singing

Sometimes the best way to open a sacred space is with song. Lead your group in singing *Hinei Ma Tov*:

הִנֵּה מַה טוֹב וַיְמָה נְעִים שֶׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם יַחַד

Hinei mah tov u'mah na'im, shevet achim gam yachad

Behold how good and pleasant it is when siblings dwell together in harmony.

After reading the translation, ask your group: How could today's session help us "dwell together in harmony?"

Setting and Maintaining a Supportive Space for Learning and Sharing

After opening up the space in a way that is meaningful to your group, ask your participants to make any suggestions for conversation guidelines that would make them feel comfortable to fully participate in today's session. Here are a few suggestions that you may want to introduce if they do not come up organically:

- Listen carefully to others.
- Keep an open and curious mind.
- Strive to understand those with whom you disagree. The purpose is to understand, rather than to convince one another.
- Support everyone's voice by stepping back or stepping up. If you are someone who likes to speak up, sometimes try to take a step back; if you are someone who is likely to hang back, challenge yourself to step up.
- Address remarks to the group, not to an individual.
- Speak from your own point of view – don't speak for other individuals or groups.
- Try not to make assumptions about your neighbor's thoughts and feelings.

PART 2: IMPLEMENTATION

SESSION 1: HEARING THE STORIES

Goals: To have participants hear stories of children of LGBT parents and then engage in conversation and reflection.

Materials: *Families Like Mine* excerpt (below)
In My Shoes Documentary (www.WelcomingResources.org/resources)

Time: 1.5 hours

ACTIVITY

Reading: *Families Like Mine*

Have someone from your group read this excerpt aloud:

“Sorry to put you on hold for so long,” the airline ticket agent told me. I was scheduling a flight for Dad, Russ, and me to attend my uncle’s funeral. The agent did not know if same-gender partners were included in the company’s definition of family. If they were, Russ would qualify for the reduced bereavement fare. If not, his ticket would cost over a thousand dollars more.

“I had to find a supervisor who knew the policy on this,” the agent explained. “We do consider your father’s, um, partner to be a family member.” Dad and Russ have been together for more than a quarter century, yet it is a stranger at an airline company who gets to decide if that relationship constitutes family.

“I had dreaded making the call for fear of feeling the sting of homophobia that put yet another barrier in the way of my family getting treated like one. Even when an airline does have an inclusive bereavement policy, individual agents are not always familiar with it, so it takes some calling around. Justifying our relationship should be last thing I have to do when a family member has just died. Hearing on my first attempt that yes, Russ is family, made me feel lucky...

“It was one of countless ‘family-defining moments’ – times when kinship is publicly named and acknowledged – that people without LGBT family members don’t even have to think about. Family-defining moments may have insulting or affirming outcomes for a family with LGBT parents. These moments occur in public contexts, when laws or company policies are at issue. They also occur in more personal contexts, when, for example, neighbors or extended family acknowledge, or fail to acknowledge, same-gender relationships. The institutionalized homophobia of the legal system reinforces the culturally conditioned homophobia of social institutions, and vice versa.

“Despite parents’ efforts to raise children in strong and safe homes, the validity of LGBT families is questioned every day by broader society. When families are slighted, children frequently take it more personally than do their parents.”

Take a moment to invite participants to share any pressing reactions to or questions about the reading, noting that there will be more time for discussion after the film.

Documentary: *In My Shoes*

Show the documentary (31 minutes) and set aside some time for your group to reflect and share afterwards. It may help your participants to remind them of the names and situations of the five youth featured in the film:

- Sarah, the adopted daughter of two gay dads.
- Alex, the son of lesbian moms and a gay dad.
- Jessica, who lives with her transgender and lesbian guardians.
- Xavier, who has two lesbian moms and a baby sister.
- Marina, who has two lesbian moms who are a bi-national couple.

Discussion Questions (adapted from the *In My Shoes* discussion guide)

1. How were the youth in the film or their families the same or different from you or your family?
2. What surprised you about the film?
3. Why did the youth who created the film want you to “walk in their shoes”?
4. In what ways do you think youth with LGBT parents/guardians experience isolation, discrimination or harassment in this congregation or in society?
5. How did the youth talk about the importance of marriage in the lives of their families?
6. How does the “gay marriage” debate affect the children of LGBT families?

Understanding Heterosexism

Introduce the definition of heterosexism (see Appendix 1) and discuss ways in which the congregation promotes heterosexism and how it works to stop it. This conversation may lead to a deeper conversation about the difference between homophobia and heterosexism. It is important to say that while a congregation might claim to not be homophobic, it may be very heterosexist. Part of becoming fully inclusive of LGBT families is being intentional against heterosexism.

SESSION 2: ENGAGEMENT WITH TEXT

Goals: To explore Jewish narratives and texts that:

- inform our understanding of what it means to treat all people with respect,
- help us value the diversity inherent in the Jewish community,
- and inspire us to become actors for positive change in our community and in the larger Jewish community.

Materials: Traditional Jewish Texts, below

Time: 1 to 3 hours (this section can be modified according to how much time is available by including or excluding the “one step farther” texts found in each text study).

INTRODUCTION

Jews do not have to look far to find inspiration for engaging in social justice. Our Torah is filled with narratives and texts that command us to love our fellow as ourself, take care of those most vulnerable and to pursue justice and righteousness daily and with great passion. In exploring how the Jewish community can be open and welcoming to LGBT families and individuals, we can look to our Torah for inspiration and guidance.

In this second session of *Kol B'mishpachat Elohim*, we will look at three significant Jewish narratives in the Torah that highlight important values regarding the full inclusion of LGBT Jews in our community. These texts are meant to inspire and challenge us to rethink what it means to be inclusive, welcome diversity and pursue justice in the world.

There are undoubtedly texts in the Jewish tradition that do not encourage us to warmly welcome LGBT Jews, instead they are used by those who wish to isolate and keep LGBT individuals and families from participating in the Jewish community. Our Torah is one that holds many differing voices. Jewish tradition does not speak in dogmatic or absolute terms, but rather through conversation, disagreement and a plurality of voices, the Torah paints a complex picture of the range of human experiences and opinions. Let us in our study today not focus on the voice that excludes, but rather hold up the many, many voices that encourage us to open our doors wide to all Jews who wish to find community.

TEXT STUDY ONE

Created *B'tzelem Elohim* – In God's Image

Find a study partner (this is traditionally called a *chevrutah*, plural *chevrutot*) and read together Genesis 1:26–27:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ; וַיְרִדּוּ בַדָּגִת
הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם, וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ, וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ,
הָרֹמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ. וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ,
בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ: זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה, בָּרָא אֹתָם.

²⁶ And God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth.” ²⁷ And God created humankind in [God’s] image, in the image of God [God] created him; male and female [God] created them. [*The New JPS translation*]

Together with your *chevrutah*/study partner, answer the following questions:

- What is your first response to this text?
- Who is created?
- What does it mean to be created *b'tzelem Elohim*/in the image of God?
- Who is created *b'tzelem Elohim*/in the image of God?
- What consequence, if any, does this have for how we treat others?
What does this text mean for the inclusion of LGBT Jews?

Have the *chevrutot*/study partners come back together as a full group. Ask participants to share anything that came up that felt particularly interesting, important or resonant.

If there is time and interest, you can take this text one step further:

As the first narration of the creation of humanity in the Torah, this text is important in understanding Jewish perspectives on human diversity. Here is one possible interpretation of this text (read this quotation to the group):

This verse is a *merism*, a figure of speech in which a totality is expressed by two contrasting parts (e.g. “young and old,” “thick and thin,” “near and far.”). . . God created male and female and every combination in between.”

— Rabbi Margaret Moers Wenig

Further explanation of *merism*:

For example, if someone were to say “I study day and night,” they may not literally mean they study day and night, but rather, that they study all the time. When the text says “... in the image of God [God] created him; male and female [God] created them,” it means that God created every identification of human being in God’s image – not just men and women, but transgender and gender-nonconforming people as well; not just heterosexual people, but gay, lesbian, bisexual, and queer people as well.

When finished reading, respond to these questions in *chevrutah* (study partners):

- What is your first response to this quotation?
- What does this interpretation tell us about human diversity?
- What are the consequences of this interpretation?
- Do you agree with this interpretation of *b'tzelem Elohim*?

TEXT STUDY TWO

Diversity and Pluralism in the Jewish Community - Who is *B'nei Israel*?

Find a *chevrutah* (study partner) and read together Deuteronomy 29: 9-14:

אַתֶּם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם בְּלִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: רָאשֵׁיכֶם
שְׂבִיטֵיכֶם, זָקֵנֵיכֶם וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶם, כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל. טַפְכֶם
נְשֵׁיכֶם--וְגֵרְךָ, אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶרֶב מִחֲנִידְךָ: מִחֹטֵב עֵצִיד, עַד שֹׂאֵב
מִיַּמֶּיךָ. לְעִבְרְךָ, בְּבֵרִית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ--וּבְאֻלָּתוֹ: אֲשֶׁר
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, כָּרַת עִמָּךְ הַיּוֹם. לְמַעַן הָקִים אֶת־דֵּי הַיּוֹם לֹו
לְעַם, וְהוּא יְהִי לְךָ לְאֱלֹהִים--כְּאֲשֶׁר, דִּבֶּר-לְךָ; וְכַאֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם, לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב. וְלֹא אֶתְכֶם,
לְבַדְכֶם--אֲנֹכִי, כָּרַת אֶת-הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת, וְאֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים,
הַזֹּאת. כִּי אֶת-אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנֶנּוּ פֹה, עִמָּנוּ עִמָּד הַיּוֹם, לְפָנַי, יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ; וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר אֵינָנוּ פֹה, עִמָּנוּ הַיּוֹם.

⁹ You stand this day, all of you, before Adonai your God – your tribal heads, your elders and your officials, all the people of Israel,¹⁰ your children, your wives, even the stranger within your camp, from woodchopper to water drawer –¹¹ to enter into the covenant of Adonai your God, which Adonai your God is concluding with you this day, with its sanctions;¹² to the end that [God] may establish you this day as [God's] people and be your God, as [God] promised you and as [God] swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.¹³ I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone,¹⁴ but both with those who are standing here with us this day before Adonai our God and with those who are not with us here this day. [The New JPS translation]

When finished reading, respond to these questions in *chevrutah* (study partners):

- What is your first response to this text?
- Who is included in *b'nei yisrael*/the people of Israel?
- What is the message in terms of inclusivity?
- Why does the text explicitly mention the wood hewer and water drawer?
- Rabbinic tradition teaches that the last verse refers to all Jews in the future, including people who are not born Jewish and choose Judaism as adults. Do you understand this literally? Metaphorically? Mystically?
- Do these verses impact the inclusion of LGBT individuals and families in your community?

Move back into the full group and share reflections.

If there is time and interest, you can take these ideas one step further:

In *Midrash Tanhuma, Nitzavim Bet*, the rabbis respond to this Torah narrative – together with your *chevrutah* (study partner), read this text:

**ראשיכם שבטיכם אע"פ שמניתי לכם ראשים זקנים ושוטרים כולכם
שיון לפני שנאמר וכל איש ישראל, ד"א כלכם ערבים זה בזה**

"The leaders of your tribes" (Deuteronomy 29:9) Even though I appointed over you leaders, elders, and officers, all of you are equal before Me, for the verse reads, "All the people of Israel." Another explanation: You are all responsible for one another. [translation by Suzie Schwartz]

When finished reading, respond to these questions in *chevrutah* (study partners):

- What are the two ways this *midrash* (rabbinic interpretation) examines the Torah's statement that "all the people of Israel" were present at Mount Sinai?
- In these two options, the dual values of equality and responsibility are explored. How do these values come into play in your community?
- How does this text impact the inclusion and equality of LGBT families in congregations?
- Following the second interpretation, what does it mean to be responsible for LGBT individuals and families in your community?

TEXT STUDY THREE

The Mishkaan – The Offering of Your Heart

In the Torah, Moses and the Israelites are told by God to build a moveable structure that is to hold the ten commandments (which were recently received on Mount Sinai). This “*mishkaan*” or “tabernacle” is to be the location where God “rests,” and is meant to be God’s physical place in the community. The *mishkaan* or tabernacle allowed God to dwell more centrally and physically in the Israelite community.

Find a *chevrutah* (study partner) and read together Exodus 25:1–7, and Exodus 36:3–7.

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וַיִּקְחוּ-לִי תְרוּמָה: מֵאֵת כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לִבּוֹ, תִּקְחוּ
אֶת-תְּרוּמָתִי. וְזֹאת, הַתְּרוּמָה, אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ, מֵאֲתָם: זָהָב
וְכֶסֶף, וְנִחָשֶׁת. ד וּתְכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי, וְשֵׁשׁ וְעִזִּים.
ה וְעֹרֹת אֵילִם מְאֻדָּמִים וְעֹרֹת תְּחָשִׁים, וְעֵצֵי שִׁטִּים. שָׁמֹן,
לְמָאֹר; בִּשְׁמִים לְשֶׁמֶן הַמְּשֻׁחָה, וְלִקְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים.
אֲבָנֵי-שֹׁהַם, וְאַבְנֵי מַלְאִים, לְאַפֵּד, וְלַחֹשֶׁן. וַעֲשׂוּ לִי,
מִקְדָּשׁ; וְשֹׁכְנָתִי, בְּתוֹכָם.

¹ Adonai spoke to Moses, saying:²“Tell the Israelite people to bring Me gifts; you shall accept gifts for Me from every person whose heart so moves him.³ And these are the gifts that you shall accept from them: gold, silver, and copper;⁴ blue, purple, and crimson yarns, fine linen, goats’ hair;⁵ tanned ram skins, dolphin skins, and acacia wood;⁶ oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense;⁷ lapis lazuli and other stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breast piece.⁸ And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them...”

[The New JPS translation]

וַיִּקְחוּ מִלִּפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה, אֶת כָּל-הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר הֵבִיאוּ בְנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לַמִּלְאכָה עֲבֹדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ--לַעֲשׂוֹת אֹתָהּ; וְהֵם הֵבִיאוּ
 אֵלָיו עוֹד, נְדָבָה--בַּבֶּקֶר בַּבֶּקֶר. וַיָּבֹאוּ, כָּל-הַחֲכָמִים,
 הָעֹשִׂים, אֶת כָּל-מִלְאכַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ--אִישׁ-אִישׁ מִמִּלְאכָתוֹ,
 אֲשֶׁר-הֵמָּה עֹשִׂים. וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵּאמֹר, מְרֵבִים הָעָם
 לַהֲבִיא, מִדֵּי הָעֲבֹדָה לַמִּלְאכָה, אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת
 אֹתָהּ. וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה, וַיַּעֲבִירוּ קוֹל בַּמַּחֲנֶה לֵאמֹר, אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה
 אֶל-יַעֲשׂוּ-עוֹד מִלְאכָה, לַתְּרוּמַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ; וַיִּכְלֹא הָעָם,
 מִהֵבִיא. וְהַמִּלְאכָה, הִיתָּה דַּיִם לְכָל-הַמִּלְאכָה--לַעֲשׂוֹת
 אֹתָהּ; וְהוֹתֵר.

³They (the artisans and skilled workers) took over from Moses all the gifts that the Israelites had brought, to carry out the tasks connected with the service of the sanctuary. But when these continued to bring freewill offerings to him morning after morning,⁴ all the artisans who were engaged in the tasks of the sanctuary came, each from the task upon which he was engaged,⁵ and said to Moses, "The people are bringing more than is needed for the tasks entailed in the work that Adonai has commanded to be done."⁶ Moses thereupon had this proclamation made throughout the camp: "Let no man or woman make further effort toward gifts for the sanctuary!" So the people stopped bringing:⁷ their efforts had been more than enough for all the tasks to be done.

[The New JPS translation]

When finished reading, respond to these questions in *chevrutah* (study partners):

- What is your first response to these texts?
- Who brings contributions for the *mishkaan*? What do they bring? Why is this significant?
- Why is it significant that these are freewill offerings, and that no one is forced to give?
- Why do you think it is significant that individuals bring a diversity of offerings?
- What does it mean to you that the people bring too many gifts?
- Why does Moses have to stop their giving?
- In your Jewish community, what do individuals bring or give in order to contribute to your holy space and community?
- Are there any barriers that keep people from joining or contributing to this community, and if so what are they?
- How can the community become more open to those who wish to join? How can this community maximize an individual's ability to meaningfully contribute?

Move back into the full group and share reflections.

If there is time and interest, you can take these ideas one step further. While the *mishkaan* was the physical location where God dwelled in the Israelite community, today we do not have a *mishkaan* that we can point to and say – "that is where God lives." However, we can think together about where God dwells in our community today.

Find a *chevrutah* (study partner) and read together Exodus 25:8 and the quotation from Rabbi Moshe ben Chayim Alshekh:

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי, מִקְדָּשׁ; וְשָׁכַנְתִּי, בְּתוֹכָם

“And let them build Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.” (Exodus 25:8)

“That I may dwell among them.’ Or, ‘that I may dwell within them,’ in reference to the Jewish People, implying that it is a duty for each and every one of the Children of Israel to make a sanctuary within their own heart, a place in which the *Holy Presence may dwell. If all Jews build such a tabernacle within their hearts, *God will dwell within the heart of each and every one of them.”

— *Moshe ben Chayim Alshekh, 16th century Safed*

*Note – depending upon your personal beliefs, you may want to insert theological language that feels comfortable for you. For example, here you can swap God language for “holiness” or “goodness.”

When finished reading, respond to these questions in *chevrutah* (study partners):

- What is your first response to this text?
- How do we “make a sanctuary” within our own hearts? What does this look like?
How might this impact our actions and involvement in community?
- If we all follow Rabbi Moshe ben Chayim Alshekh’s advice to build a sanctuary in our hearts, how could this transform our community?

SESSION 3: TRANSFORMING THE STATUS QUO

Goals: To facilitate individual and group reflection with the expectation that participants will commit to concrete actions in the personal, congregational, and political arenas to create a loving place in which our LGBT families can thrive.

Materials: Paper and pens for participants, reflections questions (below), a flip chart and marker.

Time: 1.5 hours

INTRODUCTION

Depending on the number of participants in your program, you may decide to divide into smaller groups for the following exercises. We suggest allowing participants to reflect individually on these questions and encourage them to write down their responses before returning to the large group or small groups to share their reflections. Make sure that everyone knows that they need only share as they are comfortable and that their sharing with the large group will be held in confidence if they so ask.

ACTIVITY

Part I: Reflection

Read aloud to participants one of the following quotations of queer and transgender youth from Keshet's curriculum. Then invite participants to spend a few minutes reflecting on these quotations and/or thinking about their own personal experience as an adolescent.

"It's really hard to transmit to people how isolating it can be. To them they can't imagine what's it's like to be gay in a straight setting. Someone told me once that they didn't want to come to a party, a sleepover party that I was going to be at, because they didn't want to change in the same room as me. And that really hurt. I would watch friends hugging and being close, and being very touchy, and I wished I could be a part of it, but I didn't want them to think that I love them. Which means that for ninth and tenth grade I didn't hug my friends."

— Shulamit, *Hineini: Coming Out in a Jewish High School*

"I hated going to Day School after I realized that I was trans. The teachers would always separate us into boys and girls, or make funny comments about what girls or boys are like when they talked about the Torah. I felt left out and misunderstood. I wanted to be seen as a boy, but gender was imposed on me everywhere. I couldn't go to the bathroom, stand in the lunch line, or join the reading group without picking a gender that wasn't mine. I started to associate Hebrew with oppression. Can you imagine that?"

— Natan

Part II: Making Connections

After participants have time for reflection, have them turn to a neighbor and discuss the following questions: As you were growing up and exploring your identity, what role did Jewish institutions play in your development? What were ways that Jewish community helped support your journey towards adulthood? In ways could Jewish community have been more supportive?

Part III: Exploring Possibilities for Change

As the Jewish theologian Mordecai Kaplan taught in *Not So Random Thoughts*, "A theology which is not a plan of social action is merely a way of preaching and praying. It is a menu without the dinner." Now we wish to transform our lives, our congregation, our world, to create a loving place in which our LGBT families can thrive. You will be asked to reflect silently on several questions, to write down your responses, and to share (as you feel comfortable so doing) with a small group or with everyone present. Then we will challenge one another to commit to working for change – change in our own lives, change in the life of our synagogue or *havurah*, and change in our world.

My Personal Journey

1. Where am I in my own journey with my sexuality and gender identification?
2. Are there aspects of my personality that are ready for growth?
3. If I am a parent, what have I taught, directly or indirectly, to my own children about LGBT families?
4. Do I have the support I need for my journey – friends, spiritual community, professional assistance?
5. How do I accept the sexual orientation and gender identities of other people?
6. Do I integrate respect for LGBT families into my speech?
7. Do I count LGBT people and their loved ones among my family's acquaintances and friends?
8. What are some ways I can participate and demonstrate my solidarity with LGBT families?

Our Journey as a Community

1. Has our synagogue or *havurah* adopted any official stance with regard to LGBT people and their families?
2. How do LGBT families know they are welcome in our community and at Shabbat services?
3. Have we had opportunities recently for education, discussion and Torah study around the issues of sexual orientation and gender identity?
4. How would we assess the attitudes of our congregational leadership towards LGBT people and their families?
5. Are LGBT people and family members in positions of leadership in our congregation?
6. Do our services and life-cycle rituals celebrate the lives of LGBT people and their families?
Do our educational materials, photos, etc., present images of LGBT families?
7. Are the children of LGBT families respected and included in our educational programs?
Are the realities of their lives reflected in curricular materials?
8. Does our congregation support LGBT-friendly organizations? Do we give financial, moral and in-kind support? Are our congregational facilities available to LGBT-supportive projects and groups?
9. Are our membership processes, forms, etc. welcoming and reflective of the realities of LGBT families?
10. What can we do to enhance the incorporation of LGBT families in our congregation?

Our Journey in the Wider Community

1. Is there an area or issue of concern for LGBT families at the local, state, or national level that we could work on as a congregation?
2. How will we go about choosing to work on this area or issue of concern?
3. How will we create support and accountability from our congregation in this matter?

Part IV: What is Next?

Ask participants to brainstorm different ideas of what you could do together to make your community more accessible for LGBT individuals and families. Try to be as concrete and specific as possible. Write the ideas on a flip chart and attach the paper to the walls so that people can continue to see what's been written.

After reflecting on the questions above, what might be next for your synagogue or *havurah* as it fulfills the covenant of being inclusive to all LGBT people and families? What resources and tools does the community already have that will help you accomplish this goal? What resources and tools does the community need?

PART 3: FOLLOW-UP

Striving for Inclusivity Within, Among and Beyond

Many people in congregations want to be supportive of LGBT families but aren't sure how. This section builds on your work from Session 3: Transforming the Status Quo – your journey of transforming your personal self, your congregation, and your world. This section includes concrete steps that individuals and congregations can take to become genuine allies of LGBT families. The suggestions below likely include a number of ways to work for change that your group already identified, and perhaps also included some that didn't come up.

Deepening One's Own Understanding of LGBT Families and the Issues that Affect Them

Many of us did not talk about LGBT families or issues when we were growing up. For some of us, even the words "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual" and "transgender" might have negative connotations. The first step in becoming an ally to LGBT people and families is to unpack what we've learned and to examine our own feelings and beliefs. Self-reflection is the foundation to opening hearts and minds.

Examine your own concept of what makes a Jewish family. Who is included and who is not. Think about what you have learned – and what you haven't learned – about LGBT families.

Ask respectful questions; don't make assumptions. For example, it's fine to ask parents or children what words they use to talk about their relationships. Two fathers might be "daddy" and "abba."

Educate yourself. Read books about LGBT families. Abigail Garner's *Families Like Mine* is a great start. For more options, visit Keshet, COLAGE, Family Equality Council, and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Institute for Welcoming Resources websites for LGBT family-friendly book lists. Explore the websites of LGBT family organizations and sign up to receive their newsletters.

Learn to recognize and respectfully challenge heterosexual privilege and homophobia. Learn to ask why LGBT families aren't included in photos, stories, sermons and curricular materials. Be prepared to offer concrete resources to those in leadership.

Remember that you don't need to be an expert about LGBT families and issues to be an effective ally. Jump in and get started while continuing your personal efforts.

Strengthening Your Synagogue's or Havurah's Commitment to LGBT Inclusivity

The next step in fulfilling the covenant of inclusivity is to explicitly express your congregation's commitment to LGBT people and help members of LGBT families feel fully welcome in every aspect of the synagogue or *havurah*.

Visually display your support. Display a Keshet Safe Zone sticker (available at www.keshetonline.org) in the entry hallway or other visible venue.

Include outreach literature from local LGBT and Jewish LGBT organizations on your literature table..

Understand that some LGBT families will have different familial constellations, members and structures than the common image of a nuclear family. For example, a family with two moms might also include a non-custodial "donor dad" in an uncle-like role. Invite full participation of LGBT family members – in worship, education, committee work, etc.

Use language that is inclusive of diverse family structures in forms and communications. Language has the power to include or exclude. Use "parent one" and "parent two" on school forms rather than "father" and "mother." Use terms such as "partners" and "spouses" interspersed with "husbands" and "wives." Gender segregation is difficult for transgender and intersex people. It should be avoided when possible in prayer, liturgy and other situations.

Include events and issues relevant to LGBT families in worship. An example might include Pride Shabbat or a religious school service celebrating diversity.

Provide adult education on LGBT topics. Offer an “LGBT 101” workshop and also more advanced classes on Jewish ethics and human sexuality and gender identity. Invite a guest speaker, read and discuss a book, host a film (even a mainstream film such as *Yentl*, brings up a number of LGBT issues). See the Appendix 2 for suggestions.

Work to make your community’s religious education program inclusive of LGBT families. Educate the religious school teachers to be mindful of a variety of family structures and to use inclusive language and materials. Keshet offers trainings for Jewish educators in LGBT inclusion. Join the religious school committee or ask to present to the committee about curriculum. Help teachers understand that a “family tree” comes in many different shapes and configurations.

Include LGBT family inclusive books in the congregation’s library. See Appendix 2 for suggestions.

Discuss with your Rabbi whether they perform same-gender weddings, and whether these ceremonies differ in content from mixed-gender weddings. Ask your Rabbi whether they are active in lobbying to support same-gender marriage in your state.

Don’t remain silent on LGBT topics. Jews well know that silence by the majority serves as a cover for oppression by the few. Avoiding discussion of LGBT issues sends the message that LGBT people and families are not acceptable. Silence helps perpetuate homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and heterosexism.

Taking Action Beyond the Doors of Your Synagogue or Havurah

Put your congregation’s faith into action by working for social justice in your community with and on behalf of LGBT people and families. As Abraham Joshua Heschel remarked when asked why he came to support the Civil Rights Movement, “When I march in Selma, my feet are praying.”

Designate a special *tzedakah* (charity) fund to donate to a local organization working for LGBT equality or provide volunteers to support the work.

Reach out to local LGBT organizations and offer your facilities for their meetings or events.

Demonstrate your congregation’s support of the LGBT community by taking part in local LGBT events. It is incredibly powerful for LGBT families to see their Jewish community participate in Pride parades festivals, rallies, conferences and lobby days.

Publicly show support for local and state initiatives that advance equality for LGBT families, such as non-discrimination laws that include sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, or relationship recognition and marriage equality bills. Pass a resolution declaring your endorsement and designate a member of your congregation to testify at public hearings, create and sign petitions, write editorials, attend rallies and lobby days, and encourage members to get involved.

Learn your denomination’s stand on LGBT issues. Even if your denomination is very progressive, there is further action possible. Lobby your denomination to take stands and provide liturgical and curricular materials in support of LGBT families.

Publicly oppose any anti-LGBT initiative in your state or local community, such as propositions prohibiting LGBT people from adopting, amendments banning same-gender marriage, excluding LGBT people from teaching or other professions, or any anti-LGBT policy in schools or government. Pass a resolution declaring your opposition, testify at public hearings, sign petitions, write editorials, attends rallies, go door-to-door to explain to your neighbors why discrimination is wrong.

APPENDIX 1

Terms Associated with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community

Ally

Any heterosexual person who opposes heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and who actively supports LGBT individuals and causes.

Bisexual

A person who is physically, romantically, emotionally and/or sexually attracted to persons of either gender. The frequency, intensity, or quality of attraction is not necessarily directed toward both sexes equally.

Coming Out

The process by which one accepts one's own sexual orientation or gender identity. May also refer to the process by which one shares one's sexual orientation or gender identity with others. This can be a continual, lifelong process.

Domestic Partners

Adults who are not legally married, who share resources and responsibility for decisions, share values and goals, and have commitments to one another over a period of time. Legal definitions may vary among state or city ordinances, corporate policies and by individuals and families. In some areas, domestic partnerships extend limited protections to the couple, but this varies widely from place to place.

Family

"Two or more persons who share resources, share responsibility for decisions, share values and goals, and have commitments to one another over a period of time. The family is that climate that one comes home to; and it is that network of sharing and commitments that most accurately describes the family unit, regardless of blood, or adoption or marriage." (Source: *American Home Economics Association*)

Gay

A man whose primary romantic, emotional, physical and sexual attractions are to other men. This term can also be used to apply to lesbians and bisexuals, and on some occasions, is used as an umbrella term for all LGBT people.

Gender Binary

The belief that there are only two genders, male and female, and that they are fixed at birth according to physical characteristics.

Gender Identity

An individual's own sense of being male or female, both or neither. One's gender identity is not always congruent with one's biological gender. Research indicates that gender identity develops sometime between birth and three years of age. One's gender identity is separate from one's sexual orientation.

Heteronormativity

The practices, systems and institutionalization of heterosexuality as the norm. See heterosexism.

Heterosexual

A person whose primary romantic, emotional, physical and sexual attractions are to persons of the opposite sex. Also called *straight*.

Heterosexual Privilege

The basic civil rights and social privileges that a heterosexual person automatically receives that are systematically denied to lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons simply because of their sexual orientation. This privilege is often unrecognized.

Heterosexism

The societal assumption that all people are heterosexual. Systems and ways of thinking that reinforce a belief in the inherent superiority of heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships, thereby negating the lives and relationships of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people. Heteronormativity means the practices, systems and institutionalization of heterosexuality as the norm.

Homophobia

Negative feelings, attitudes, actions, or behaviors against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, or people perceived to be any of the above. Consists of three separate components: sexism, xenophobia and erotophobia. Currently, the word is often used in relation to issues of discrimination in regards to sexual orientation and gender identity. Other related terms that may be appropriate in specific cases are biphobia and transphobia.

Homosexual

A term to avoid. A term coined in 1869 by an early psychiatrist, who used it to describe a person who has 'an other than normal sexual urge which renders them physically and psychically incapable.' Since the word was originally used to describe a pathology, most gays and lesbians do not like this term used to define them.

Intersex

Generally applied to people born with ambiguous genitalia (an outdated term would be *hermaphrodite*). This, however, is an incomplete definition; the subject is much broader than that. Many, including intersex persons, believe that intersex is a medical rather than gender identity issue and should not be included under the transgender umbrella. In the past, most intersex individuals have had surgery soon after birth in an attempt to give them an "identifiable" gender. Such "normalization" surgeries are imposed on these children with little understanding of the future impacts.

LGBT (also GLBT)

The acronym for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender," used to describe an entire community or an individual. Sometimes the acronym is expanded to a variation of LGBTQIA to include queer, questioning, intersex, and ally people.

Lesbian

A woman whose primary romantic, emotional, physical and sexual attractions are to other women.

Lifestyle

A term to avoid. An inaccurate term used to describe the lives of LGBT people with a negative implication. Just as there is no one heterosexual lifestyle, there is no one LGBT lifestyle. The lives of LGBT people are as varied and diverse as the lives of heterosexuals.

National Coming Out Day

An internationally observed civil awareness day for coming out and discussion about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. It is observed on October 11th every year to commemorate the 1987 March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights (the 1987 March was not inclusive of the bisexual and transgender communities). Many studies show that people who personally know LGBT individuals are more likely to accept and support equal civil rights for LGBT people. National Coming Out Day encourages all people to be honest about their own sexual orientation and gender identity in order to have the positive dialogue needed to erase bigotry, misunderstandings, and stereotypes.

Out of the Closet/Being Out

Means that one states openly that one is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, in contrast to 'staying in the closet' by hiding or denying one's sexual orientation or gender identity either from oneself or from others.

Pink Triangle

The pink triangle was used by the Nazis to identify male prisoners in concentration camps who were sent there because of their homosexuality. Just as Jews were forced to wear a yellow Star of David, gay men were forced to wear pink triangles, while lesbian women were forced to wear black triangles. In the 1970s, the inverted pink triangle was reclaimed and has become an international symbol of gay pride and the gay rights movement.

Pride Celebrations

Often held in late June every year to celebrate the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. The Stonewall Riots were a series of riots and demonstrations in New York City that began on June 27, 1969, to protest the frequent police raids on gay bars. The Stonewall Riots were the defining event that propelled the LGBT rights movement into the public consciousness. Pride celebrations often include a parade and/or festival. The purposes of these events include: 1) To educate about the diversity, issues and goals of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens and neighbors. 2) To provide a forum for celebration of the history and accomplishments of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. 3) To provide an opportunity for networking and outreach by the many businesses, services, religious communities and community organizations that welcome and serve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, their families and friends.

Queer

Traditionally a pejorative term that has been reclaimed by some LGBT people to describe themselves or the LGBT community. Some people prefer *queer* because they feel it is an all-encompassing term that includes everyone, including those who may not neatly fit into the L, G, B, or T categories. Some LGBT individuals dislike this word and view it as pejorative.

Rainbow Flag

A symbol of LGBT pride and community. The colors represent the diversity within the LGBT community. Many allies use the rainbow flag as an outward symbol of support.

Sexual Preference

A term to avoid as it implies that being gay, lesbian or bisexual is a choice and therefore “curable.” The preferred term is *sexual orientation*.

Sexual Orientation

The orientation within human beings, which leads them to be romantically, emotionally, physically and sexually attracted to persons of the opposite sex, same-gender, or both. One’s sexual orientation may be heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual or asexual. This term is preferred over *sexual preference* which implies that being gay, lesbian or bisexual is a choice and therefore “curable.”

Transgender

A broad umbrella term for persons who have a self-image or gender identity not traditionally associated with their biological gender. Some transgender persons change their anatomy to be more congruent with their self-perception, while others do not. There is no absolute correlation between sexual orientation and gender identity. A transgender person may identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

APPENDIX 2

KEY RESOURCES

Suggested Resources for Jewish Educators, Parents, and Youth Program Leaders: a focused list of key resources that we think may be most helpful to Jewish educators.

Excerpted from Keshet's Hineini Curriculum Resource Guide

JEWISH AND LGBT BOOKS

Alpert, Rebecca. *Like Bread on the Seder Plate: Jewish Lesbians and the Transformation of Tradition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Alpert, Rebecca, Elwell, Sue Levi, and Idelson, Shirley, eds. *Lesbian Rabbis: The First Generation*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001.

Aviv, Caryn and Shneer, David. eds. *Queer Jews*. NY: Routledge, 2002.

Balka, Christie, and Rose, Andy. *Twice Blessed: On Being Lesbian, Gay, and Jewish*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

Beck, Evelyn Torton, ed. *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology*. Revised edition. Boston: Beacon Press, 1990.

Brown, Angela, ed. *Mentsch: On Being Jewish and Queer*. LA: Alyson Books, 2004.

Drinkwater, Gregg, Shneer, David, and Lesser, Joshua, eds. *Torah Queeries: Weekly Commentaries on the Hebrew Bible*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

Dzmura, Noach, ed. *Balancing on the Mechitza: Transgender in Jewish Community*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2010.

Elwell, Sue Levi, Alpert, Rebecca T., and Idelson, Shirley, eds. *Lesbian Rabbis: The First Generation*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001.

Greenberg, Steven. *Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004.

Kabakov, Miryam, ed. *Keep Your Wives Away from Them: Orthodox Women, Unorthodox Desires*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2010.

Lieberman, Leanne. *Gravity*. Victoria, B.C.: Orca Book Publishers, 2008.

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The Bubble

By Eytan Fox, Ronen Ben Tal, and Gal Uchovsky, Israel, 2006

www.strandreleasing.com

And Thou Shalt Love (V'ahavta)

Directed by Chaim Elbaum, Israel, 2008

<http://www.shaltlove.com/>

City of Borders

Directed by Yun Suh, 2009

<http://www.cityofborders.com/>

Hineini: Coming Out in a Jewish High School

Directed by Irena Fayngold, produced by Keshet, 2005

www.hineinithefilm.org

Jerusalem Is Proud to Present

Directed by Nitzan Gilady, Israel, 2008

<http://www.nitzangiladyfilms.com>

Trembling Before G-d

Directed by Sandi Dubowski, 2001

www.tremblingbeforeg-d.com

Yossi and Jagger

By Eytan Fox, Amir Harel, and Gal Uchovsky, Israel, 2002

JEWISH LGBT ORGANIZATIONS

Keshet

www.keshetonline.org

Resources, information, events, links, guide to Jewish GSAs, Hineini film resources.

World Congress of GLBT Jews – Keshet Ga'avah

www.glbtjews.org

Comprehensive list of Jewish GLBT organizations, synagogues, resources, books, and films.

Jeff Herman Virtual Resource Center on Sexual Orientation Issues in the Jewish Community

www.huc.edu/ijso/jhvrc

A resource of the Institute for Judaism and Sexual Orientation of Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion.

Nehirim

www.nehirim.org

A nonprofit organization devoted to building community for GLBT Jews, partners, and allies through retreats and other programs which celebrate GLBT culture and spirituality, and empower GLBT Jews to become active voices in their home communities.

The National Union of Jewish Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, and Intersex Students (NUJLS)

www.nujls.org

An organization that seeks to empower Jewish LGBTQI students to feel proud of and affirmed in all their identities. NUJLS hosts an annual Spring conference for queer Jews from across the United States and Canada.

Eshel

<http://www.eshelonline.org>

An organization working to build understanding and support for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people in traditional Jewish communities.

LGBT ORGANIZATIONS**Camp Aranū'tiq**

<http://camparanutiq.org>

A week long, tuition-free, overnight summer camp for transgender and gender-variant youth ages 8 through 15. It's a place where life experiences are shared and lifelong friendships are made.

COLAGE

www.colage.org

A national organization by and for children of GLB/Trans parents and their families with chapters in several states.

Family Equality Council

www.familyequality.org

Family Equality Council connects, supports, and represents the three million parents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender in the US and their six million children.

Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

www.glsen.org

A national organization with chapters in most states, with resources for students and teachers on GLB/Trans issues and school safety.

Gender Spectrum Family

<http://www.genderspectrumfamily.org>

An organization dedicated to the education and support of families raising gender variant, gender non-conforming, gender-fluid, cross-gender, and transgender children and adolescents.

Human Rights Campaign

www.hrc.org

HRC is the largest GLB/Trans education and advocacy organization in the United States. Provides resources on topics including youth/education, coming out, legal issues, finding support, and various other projects of the organization, including an initiative around faith and identity.

International Foundation for Gender Equality (IFGE)

www.ifge.org

A leading advocacy and educational organization for promoting the self-definition and free expression of individual gender identity. IFGE is not a support group; it is an information provider and clearinghouse for referrals about all things which are transgressive of established social gender norms.

Intersex Society of North America (ISNA)

www.isna.org

ISNA is devoted to systemic change to end shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital surgeries for people born with anatomy that someone decided is not standard for male or female.

National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)

www.transequality.org

A national social justice organization devoted to ending discrimination and violence against transgender people through education and advocacy on national issues of importance to transgender people.

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National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

www.thetaskforce.org

The Task Force promotes civil rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people. Includes federal and state organizing news, issue backgrounders, and analysis.

Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

www.pflag.org

Contains FAQs, advocacy issues, information about local chapters, and support for GLB/Trans people and families around coming out.

Trans Youth and Family Allies (TYFA)

www.imtyfa.org

TYFA empowers children and families by partnering with educators, service providers and communities, to develop supportive environments in which gender may be expressed and respected. We envision a society free of suicide and violence in which ALL children are respected and celebrated.

Transgender Law and Policy Institute (TLPI)

www.transgenderlaw.org

A non-profit organization dedicated to engaging in effective advocacy for transgender people in our society. The TLPI brings experts together to work on law and policy initiatives designed to advance transgender equality.

OTHER RESOURCES ON LGBT ISSUES**Books**

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www.convictionbooks.com.

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Films

Gay Youth: An Educational Video for the Nineties. Producer/director Pam Walton, www.wolfevideo.com. A film sharing the stories of gay and lesbian youth in their own voices.

Just Call Me Kade. Frameline Video, 2001, www.frameline.org. A film about an FTM (female-to-male) transgender youth.

No Dumb Questions. Documentary film by Melissa Regan, New Day Films, 2001. Documentary about a family welcoming their male-to-female transgender uncle, told from the perspective of the three young nieces.

For Further Reading

GLBT JEWS: AN EXTENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Compiled by Ann Abrams, Librarian, Temple Israel, Boston

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Books, Audio, or Films by and about GLB/Trans Jews

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