

Amplifying LGBTQ+ Joy in Your School

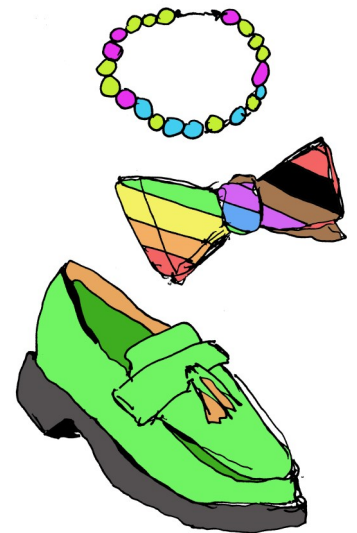
In today's political climate when we are constantly having to sift through homophobic and transphobic rhetoric, it is crucial we share and celebrate the joy of LGBTQ+ people. Jewish tradition also makes a point of noting over and over again that we should honor joy even amidst times of turmoil and unrest. On Sukkot, a holiday that coincides with back to school, we build physical spaces where we welcome members of our community. The intention is that no one is excluded from this celebration and that being together in the sukkah is in and of itself a source of joy.

Amplifying the joy of LGBTQ+ people is necessary for everyone. It can foster a sense of community for LGBTQ+ youth and youth who might have LGBTQ+ family members. It shows LGBTQ+ youth as well as their loved ones that a future of joy and community is possible. Displaying the joy of LGBTQ+ people also celebrates diversity within our communities which benefits everyone.

Here are some ways you can amplify and uplift LGBTQ+ joy in your community:

1 Share the accomplishments of LGBTQ+ changemakers
There are many LGBTQ+ heroes and changemakers who have contributed to furthering LGBTQ+ equality as well as work in all aspects of life. Scientists and artists, politicians and authors, musicians and activists, and so much more. Uplifting the accomplishments of LGBTQ+ people honors their work and provides representation for young people today. Learn more about specific LGBTQ+ changemakers from Keshet's LGBTQ+ Jewish hero series.

2 Affirm self expression
From clothes to hair to makeup, celebrate the ways people in your community choose to express themselves and their identity. Make sure not to attribute different forms of expression to specific genders and leave room for creativity and expansiveness. Having a positive self image can be life saving!

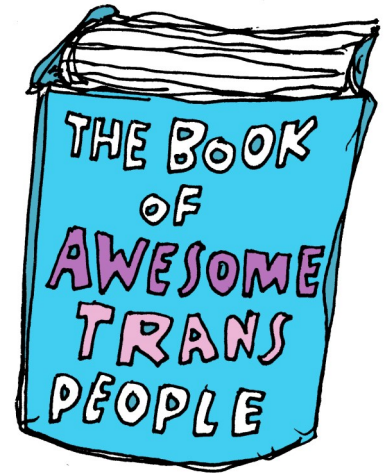


3 Decorate your space with LGBTQ+ art

Display artwork that features LGBTQ+ people and messages of inclusion and belonging. Visual representation of joy and resilience is a powerful tool for celebrating the LGBTQ+ community and creating a space for everyone to feel welcome.

4 Have books available that celebrate LGBTQ+ experiences

Whether in your classroom, library, or office, sharing stories that center LGBTQ+ experiences enhances learning for everyone. Some will see themselves or their loved ones in these books and some might learn about those who have a different lived experience than their own. If you read aloud in your classroom, make sure to include these stories in your reading rotation.



5 Host a drag story hour

The world of drag is one where imagination can soar! Drag is a fully-developed art form with history, meaning, and complexity. It developed as a form of resistance and celebration by a historically-marginalized community. Hosting a drag story hour gives young people a chance to discover the vibrancy of drag and the drag community. For some it might affirm parts of their own identity or they may find resonance with the artistry and expression. The impact will be great and all while spreading joy.

6 Mark LGBTQ+ celebrations on the yearly calendar

Like the Jewish calendar, the LGBTQ+ calendar has moments of celebration! LGBTQ+ history month, National Coming Out Day, Trans Day of Visibility, and Pride month are just a few examples of some of the celebratory moments throughout the year.



7 Integrate LGBTQ+ history and culture into your curriculum

LGBTQ+ history is full of moments of queer joy, resistance, and resilience. Teaching the history of marginalized people can help students understand their own history and the history of people they are in community with. It can also encourage students to continue working towards a world of full LGBTQ+ belonging.

8 Celebrate LGBTQ+ milestones

Students pay attention to how their teachers and other adults respond to big events. Remember to have a positive response to personal milestones like coming out or sharing a relationship as well as any big events they might see in the news. This will affirm LGBTQ+ youth and set the example for non-LGBTQ+ students that these moments deserve to be celebrated.

9 Share and celebrate LGBTQ+ events in your area

If there are organizations in your area holding events that celebrate the LGBTQ+ community, share them widely. This will let people know these events are happening and it supports your local organizations and LGBTQ+ community.



10 Have symbols of Pride out for all to see

Having symbols that explicitly celebrate the LGBTQ+ community sends a message that LGBTQ+ people belong.

