

40 DAYS OF FAITH IN ACTION



TOOLKIT FOR LGBTQ PEOPLE OF FAITH & ALLIES

Believe 
OUTLOUD™

[#FaithFamilyLGBTQ](#)


**NATIONAL
LGBTQ
TASK FORCE**

WELCOME!

FAITH AND FAMILY NEXT STEPS: 40 DAYS OF FAITH IN ACTION

Thank you for committing to take action!

Over the next 40 days, we'll put our faith into action to celebrate and expand LGBTQ-affirming faith. This 40 Days of Faith in Action Toolkit is a guide for taking action during these 40 days and beyond. This guide contains tools and resources to get started as we begin our journey together.

We invite you to reference this toolkit as you explore ways to build power in your home community and show the world we are pro-family, pro-faith, and pro-LGBTQ!

HOW TO STAY CONNECTED

Over the next 40 days, Believe Out Loud in partnership with the National LGBTQ Task Force will offer a daily guide with words of inspiration for your work and actions.

These daily guides will share success stories from faith communities across the country, cultivate a community of support, and offer the tools and resources you need to make your actions successful!

Sign up for this guide here:

<http://bit.ly/40DaysSignup>

By signing up, you're joining a community of people of faith who are committed to the liberation of LGBTQ people!

HOW TO ASK FOR HELP

If you have questions or need help, contact James Rowe from Believe Out Loud or Rev. Rodney McKenzie at the National LGBTQ Task Force. You can reach James at team@believeoutloud.com or tweet at @BelieveOutLoud. You can reach Rodney at rmckenzie@thetaskforce.org or tweet at @thetaskforce.

Spread The Word!

Just signed up? We're glad you're here!

Choose a tweet below to tell the world you're joining the 40 Days of Action!

I just signed up for 40 Days of Faith in Action for LGBTQ People!

Will you join me? <http://bit.ly/40DaysSignup> #FaithFamilyLGBTQ

I joined 40 Days of Faith in Action because [fill in the blank]! <http://bit.ly/40DaysSignup> #FaithFamilyLGBTQ



#FaithFamilyLGBTQ

HOW TO PLUG IN—TWITTER 101

Social media is a beacon of light for organizing and building community with like-minded individuals.

For the 40 Days of Faith in Action, we invite you to join us on Twitter to help us show the world that we are people of faith who support LGBTQ people!

Check out the tips below to learn how to connect with us on Twitter, then find these tips in action in our sample tweets!

- The “#” symbol is a hashtag—using a hashtag connects you to a conversation, like #FaithFamilyLGBTQ!
- The “@” symbol is a mention—mentioning another Twitter user opens a conversation with that individual or organization, like @TheTaskForce.

We’ll continue to use the hashtag #FaithFamilyLGBTQ during the 40 Days of Faith in Action!

There are many ways you can use Twitter as a tool for your work. Here are just a few ideas:

Connect with other LGBTQ people of faith and allies who are engaging in the 40 Days of Faith in Action!

- Promote your events and actions!
- Tell your story of faith and family in a series of tweets!
- Share why you are doing this work with the rest of the world!
- Tweet us @BelieveOutLoud or @TheTaskForce with any questions or concerns!

Make sure to use these tools throughout the duration of the 40 Days of Faith in Action to stay connected with our growing community.

Remember—everything you post on Twitter is public. This means Twitter is a powerful tool to connect with our friends and with people who disagree. Be sure to use it wisely!

Sample Tweets

Using hashtags and mentions will connect you to a growing community of LGBTQ people of faith & allies.

Don’t miss out on this growing conversation!

Just told my pastor about #FaithFamilyLGBTQ—she said our church can host an event for 40 Days of Faith in Action!

Hey @BelieveOutLoud! How can I sign up for the 40 Days of Faith in Action emails? #FaithFamilyLGBTQ

Howdy @thetaskforce! How can I be part of 40 Days of Faith in Action? #FaithFamilyLGBTQ



#FaithFamilyLGBTQ

Faith In Practice

Graceful dialogue means speaking the truth in love!

Here are some ways to stay grounded in conversations when people disagree with our work toward LGBTQ liberation:

Exchange stories—center conversations on each person's personal experiences

Share your faith—explain why you believe what you believe

Ask specific questions—express genuine curiosity about their faith and family values

Find common ground—connect in the places you do agree

Converse wisely—use your energy with people who are genuinely curious about your faith and family values

HOW TO ENGAGE WITH GRACE

During the **40 Days of Faith in Action**, we will introduce the voices and values of LGBTQ people of faith to the world. We want to disrupt the idea that people of faith cannot support LGBTQ people. We know this narrative is false because we are people of faith who support LGBTQ people!

40 Days of Faith in Action will show the world that people of faith come in many different shapes, sizes, practices, sexual orientations, and gender identities!

It is also our goal to show that, as LGBTQ people of faith and allies, we can do **AMAZING** faith-driven work. That's where you come in! As a participant of our **40 Days of Faith in Action**, you will become one of many faces of our movement. As we engage in this work, we each take on this supremely noble responsibility to help change how "people of faith" are seen in our world.

When we face opposition in our work, it is important to remember that we are part of a community of affirming people of faith. First and foremost, this community can offer support and even take our place in conversations when it becomes difficult to engage. We are not alone in this work! Secondly, our work is beautiful because we are rooted in centering the needs, personhood, and experiences of LGBTQ people. As affirming people of faith, our goal is to welcome more people into this transformative work! Let's focus our energy on welcoming and affirming LGBTQ people instead of exhausting our energy by debating non-affirming individuals and media.

To focus our energy on growth and welcome, we invite you to:

- Stand resolute in your faith values
- Welcome dialogue when you deem it constructive
- Stay focused on the people who support you and need your energy the most

As a community, we have faith that our positivity, perseverance, and grace in the face of opposition will make the difference we all wish to see!

EXTENDING THE WELCOME

Let's welcome more people into our transformative pro-faith, pro-family, pro-LGBTQ work by inviting them to join us in 40 Days of Faith in Action!

Think about who you want to grow with and take action with over the next 40 days!

First, name the people who are in your community and the people you call on for many types of support.

Please write down 5 names and phone numbers for each prompt below.
You can type or write out your list. Only use each name once!

Who would you have over for a birthday party?

1. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
2. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
3. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
4. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
5. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____

Who do you call to watch your pets when you go out of town? Who calls you to do this?

1. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
2. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
3. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
4. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
5. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____

Who do you invite into your home to celebrate holy days? Who invites you?

1. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
2. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
3. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
4. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
5. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____

Who are you most excited to see and talk with when you enter your place of worship?

1. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
2. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
3. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
4. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
5. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____

Finding Our Biggest Supporters

One of the biggest misconceptions about building a list like this is to reach out to folks we perceived to have the great ability first.

But—just because someone has more time because they are retired or tend to spend more time engaging in your faith community doesn't mean they will have more time for this.

Folks show up because they care! We make time for things that we are excited about and are important to us!

Rule #1: start with BELIEF!

Who is your family—by relation and/or chosen family?

1. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
2. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
3. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
4. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
5. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____

Who would you call on to pray for you and your family in a time of hardship or need?

1. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
2. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
3. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
4. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____
5. NAME: _____ PHONE NUMBER(S): _____

Now look at all of the incredible people you have on your list!

Now, we are going to use the ABC's to think about the very best people to invite to join us for 40 Days of Faith in Action.

- Ability
- Belief
- Contact

A = if someone is able to help in any way, they have the ability!

B = do they care about you, the issue you're working on, or both?

C = can you reach them to have a live conversation—in-person or on the phone?

If you can contact them and they can help in some way, belief is the thing to focus on in order to best filter your outreach list. If someone believes in you personally, values faith, family and LGBTQ people, or both, there is a high likelihood that they will respond to your request for help in some way!

Start by reaching out to the folks with the biggest belief—people who share a belief in you personally and who value faith, family, and LGBTQ people.

If someone on your list is not pro-faith, pro-family, and pro-LGBTQ, don't reach out to them yet. Let's invest our energy in the people with the biggest belief right now while we are building our team. We will invite the rest to join our transformative work at a different time!

HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY OF FAMILY & FAITH

With a persistent media narrative about homophobic and transphobic religious traditions, the stories of LGBTQ people of faith and allies are more important now than ever before! Use this storytelling guide as you craft your story of faith & family to share during these 40 Days of Faith in Action.

Dear Holy Father,

My name is James Rowe, and I am a gay Catholic.

I used to be embarrassed by this story I share, but now I look back at it with beaming pride. At the young age of four I wanted to become a nun. My parents weren't Catholic, but that didn't stop my dream of one day helping to do the Lord's work as a nun in the Catholic Church. But by the time I was seven I realized my dreams of becoming a nun would be just that, dreams. I could have perhaps grown up to become a priest, but from my perspective, with all due respect, priests mostly talked about doing the Lord's work while the nuns were actually *doing* the Lord's work.

While my gender was preventing me from becoming a nun, it wasn't preventing me from becoming Catholic, so as a young boy I began to attend Sunday mass every week by myself. I received all the sacraments and for the next 11 years I was the only member of my immediate family to attend church almost every Sunday morning.

Everything changed however when I came out as gay at the age of 18. It was 1982 and it was the dawn of the AIDS crisis. Churches around the world began to use this life-ending disease as an example of God's punishment and I found myself no longer feeling welcome in the Catholic Church, or any church for that matter.

Thirty years later that would all change again when I decided to finally return to the Church I once loved. I have found a Catholic Church here in New York City that recognizes and celebrates ALL of her church members. But I know I'm lucky. Most LGBTQ Catholics don't have these welcoming Catholic Churches to attend.

During the AIDS crisis as thousands were dying around the world, "Silence Equals Death" was literally shouted by those fighting for their lives. My sincerest hope is that you apply this warning to the bishops in Philadelphia when discussing the LGBTQ community and our place at the Catholic table. The silence in this case may not cause a physical death but it most certainly can cause a spiritual death, which is just as horrific.

The Catholic Church I grew up in taught me how to love, as Jesus loved. And as a result of this teaching I feel confident that Jesus would have not only invited us to his table he would have listened to us as well.

In Peace,
James Rowe

CHALLENGE
CHOICE
OUTCOME
OUTCOME

Challenge

Write about the challenges you've faced because LGBTQ people are excluded by your faith tradition:

- Why did you feel it was a challenge?
- How did it impact your life?
- How did it make you feel?

Choice

Write about the choice you made!

- Why did you make the choice you did?
- How did it feel?
- Where did you get the hope/courage—or not?

Outcome

Write about the outcomes you experienced.

- How did the outcome feel?
- What did it teach you?
- What do you want to teach the reader?
- How do you want the reader to feel?

FAITH AND FAMILY NEXT STEPS: 40 DAYS OF FAITH IN ACTION

As we get ready to continue to commit our faith to action, it is the deepest desire of the National LGBTQ Task Force and Believe Out Loud, that all of us feel full, uplifted, connected to each other. All of us are ready for what's next in our lives and communities dedicated to liberation for all.

How can we take what we know to be personally engaged in liberation and justice? How can we raise up a new event or faith action in our communities, or put a new twist on an already scheduled event? As part of the 40 Days Of Faith In Action Toolkit for LGBTQ People of Faith & Allies, Believe Out Loud and the National LGBTQ Task Force have created steps to raise awareness and foster education with you individually or with your communities. It includes suggestions and samples of actions and projects that you could do to highlight that all types of faiths and families support LGBTQ people. Through both of these organizations websites and social media work, we want to highlight your work for liberation over these next 40 days.

During our final plenary on Friday, we will work together to design next steps that will grow your communities while doing action for liberation and justice. Don't wait! Start thinking now about what you can plan, something small or as big as you can dream and let's spread the word that Faith is in Action to proclaim justice for LGBTQ people across the globe!

50 WAYS TO PUT YOUR FAITH IN ACTION

Participate Immediately in the 40 Days of Faith Actions, October 23 - December 1!

1. Commit to 40 Days of Action! Make a list of friends and family you want to join you over the next 40 days!
2. Join the conversation about 40 days of Faith in Action on Twitter! Tell folks on twitter that you're ready to join the conversation by using #FaithFamilyLGBTQ!
3. Find the National LGBTQ Task Force's Facebook page and like us! www.thetaskforce.org.
4. Find Believe Out Loud's Facebook page and like us! www.believeoutloud.com.
5. Call and email your friends, family and faith community members and ask them to take action with you!
6. At services, ask your faith community to join you in the 40 days of action! Choose actions from this list and share with Believeoutloud.com!
7. Think about why speaking out over these 40 days is important to you and tell people about that.
8. Have intentional 1-on-1 conversations with 10 people to learn why they care about speaking up for LGBTQ justice.
9. Think about how injustices are connected and write about that at believeoutloud.com.
10. Share the media and action tool kit with 5 friends and tweet about that using #FaithFamilyLGBTQ.
11. Think about the stories you know of strong families who support their LGBTQ members and share them.
12. Think about who you are an ally to in your life! Write about that during Ally week.
13. Celebrate Halloween and Day of the Dead by writing about one of your ancestors who helped you stand up for justice.
14. Celebrate the Christian All Saints Day by posting about someone in your life who commits random acts of kindness for you at #FaithFamilyLGBTQ!
15. Join the conversation—look for posted questions to answer every morning during the 40 days of faith in action at BelieveOutLoud.com.
16. On Twitter #FaithFamilyLGBTQ and Facebook: Share the moment you first understood your faith to be LGBTQ-affirming!*
17. Look for people whose values of treating people the way they wish to be treated match with you. Post about a newly discovered LGBTQ person or ally you've recently met.*

18. Look for faith-affirming events in your community that you wouldn't usually attend – tweet about your experience at #FaithFamilyLGBTQ.
19. Celebrate difference! Learn about Muslim, Christian, Jewish faith and family traditions that are new to you!

Sanctuary / Worship / Devotional

20. Special services or blessings before a service for all those working on anti-oppression issues: #blacklivesmatter, Immigration, Family Justice, Youth, LGBTQ.
 21. Give a special blessing before service for all families of all kinds appreciating their bond and the work it takes to maintain their connection to each other.
 22. Write a daily devotional for a week to explore our own ability to see or discover the divine in transgender experience and gender diversity.
 23. Speak out for those working on or being affected by the public discourse of overly broad religious exemptions.
 24. Convene a Faith vigil to call attention to murders of transgender women of color.
 25. Celebration of difference in our faith community!
 26. Lift up and celebrate youth within your faith community - learn what welcome and support looks and feels like for them.
 27. Offer regular pastoral care for people to vent and/or be sad about conversations or encounters with unsupportive and/or apathetic people when talking about religious liberty.
- * Brainstorm with your team to develop other actions to implement a sanctuary strategy; also see #16, #17 and #39. Those tactics could also be developed as sanctuary tactics.*

Visibility

28. Have a press conference in front of your synogogue/church/mosque/temple on religious exemptions.
 29. Coordinate 15-50 people to participate in supportive sign holding in front of your synogogue/church/mosque/temple after service.
 30. Wear a supportive button and talk to others about why you are wearing it.
 31. On November 20, communities around the world hold "Transgender Day of Remembrance" ceremonies to memorialize those lives lost to anti-transgender violence. Find a memorial in your area at <http://tdor.info/>, and if none are being planned, consider hosting one. (Please note, these are intended to be secular ceremonies.)
 32. Organize your faith community to support a no religious exemptions resolution and post it on Facebook and throughout social media.
 33. Reclaim your welcoming statement in a ceremonial, celebratory and public way.
- * Visibility is a broad concept. Brainstorm with your team to develop other possibilities. Those could also be considered part of a visibility strategy. Any tactic that draws media attention could be considered a visibility strategy.*

Clergy from the pulpit

34. Preach about some aspect of the harm caused to LGBTQ people, love your neighbor.
35. Invite guest clergy to preach an inclusion or radical welcome sermon.
36. Hold and publicize a Celebration Service of working families.

- 37. Hold a service that celebrates the Muslim 5 pillars or Jewish values and beliefs, or Mormon beliefs and practices and how they support LGBTQ people.
- 38. Bible study classes that illuminate importance of relationships.
- 39. Sermon that celebrates an interfaith, synagogue's, denomination's historical commitment to issues of liberty and justice.*

** Brainstorm with your team to develop other tactics to involve clergy in the pulpit. Any weekend could be designed as a statewide Justice from the Pulpit action; these tactics could be developed with a collective action strategy and/or a visibility strategy.*

Education: Religious Exemptions

- 40. Hold 1-2 monthly educational forums on religious liberty and religious exemptions.
- 41. Write a blog post for Believe Out Loud or the National LGBTQ Task Force about why you care that no overly broad religious exemptions are added to your non-discrimination laws and actions from your list.
- 42. Invite a guest speaker from the ACLU to your fellowship time after service to present a legal forum about the form religious exemption laws can take.
- 43. Develop educational forums to match holidays and holy days to justice values or specific issue values.
- 44. Become skilled at talking about why you care about the harm overly broad religious exemptions can cause.
- 45. Plan a daily post for a week on your Facebook page concerning the harm caused by overly broad religious exemptions.
- 46. Research many of the ways different denominations match justice to spiritual values: pick a few new methods to discuss and/or educate people.

** Brainstorm with your team to develop other educational tactics; many trainings could be considered education of political justice. Any charity work your congregation does to counter harm might have a political justice education opportunity. This strategy could be used to develop tactics to educate about intersectional justice work as well.*

Hospitality In Your Worship Space

- 47. Invite an LGBTQ youth group to use your space to conduct a special event or meeting and provide refreshments.
- 48. Contact the college LGBTQ organization and multi-cultural center and ask what refreshments they might need for meetings, then collect them from your faith community and deliver them with an invitation to come and celebrate with during worship or other events.
- 49. Coordinate a 40 days of Faith in Action hospitality team.
- 50. Have conversations or trainings about interrupting oppression-based comments in a kind and respectful way.

** Brainstorm with your team to develop other tactics that extends hospitality or radical welcome and invites campaign volunteer actions into your space. These tactics could also develop your organization's capacity and advance your unique mission.*

thetaskforce.org
believeoutloud.com



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