

# Eight Pieces of Advice

*to Make Your Faith Community More Inclusive to the LGBTQ+ Community*

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(1) **Include messaging in your marketing materials that explicitly states that members of the LGBTQ+ community are welcome and accepted.** By marketing materials, I mean flyers, posters in the area of worship, advertising, social media posts, and however else your church finds new members.

(2) **Ask organizations like the ACLU or Indiana Youth Group for some of their marketing materials to display in your community spaces.** You can even find some statistics online and print those out. This not only sends the message that queer people are welcome but also provides resources to other places they'll find acceptance, too.

(3) **Include LGBTQ+ people and youth in your conversations, sermons, etc.** This doesn't have to be everyday, but hearing "love all our brothers and sisters including those in our LGBTQ+ community" or "including those who God has presented with a life that looks different than yours" can help erase the pain of hearing "homosexuality is a sin."

(4) **Bring in guest speakers or hold special events to help educate the adult members of your faith community.** The education you provide to parents can mean the difference between a kid being kicked out or continuing to have the safety of a roof over their head.

(5) **Create a LGBTQ-specific youth group or diversity youth group** that meets at a different time from the standard youth services so that these kids can be in a room of peers without feeling like they have to hide a part of themselves. In middle schools and high schools, these groups are often in the form of after-school clubs called GSA, for Gender & Sexuality Alliance.

(6) **Hire LGBTQ staff** who are comfortable and open with their orientation or gender identity. Having an LGBTQ+ adult around to set a real-life example of a queer person's future can mean a world of difference.

(7) **Find resources near your church that can teach your members of any age how to defend themselves if they are attacked**, or provide that resource yourself. Most people don't know this, but LGBTQ people are targeted for violent hate crimes at a rate of two times that of Muslims or black people, four times that of Jewish people, and 14 times that of Latinos. And approximately every four days, an American is murdered for being LGBT. The average was two LGBTQ homicides per month before the current president took office. This community needs to know how to protect themselves right now.

(8) **Normalize conversations about mental health and mental illness during your services**, including youth services, and provide information that will make it easier for your members to find therapy. Just as a tip, PsychologyToday.com has a great tool for finding mental health professionals.