

30 Ways to Rock LGBT Day of History at Your School

What are ways my GSA or student club can observe LGBT Day of History?

There are (at least) three ways to observe LGBT Day of History: in your GSA or student club, with your broader school community, and in the actual classroom. Over the summer and fall of 2008 we worked with Wisconsin students to brainstorm and identify activities you could do in each of these three areas.

For 2010 Wisconsin's LGBT Day of History will be observed on March 2nd. This was the day in 1982 that Wisconsin became the first state in the country to outlaw discrimination against gay and lesbian people in the areas of housing and employment. Be realistic when considering how much time it will take you (or others) to plan, get permission, and otherwise coordinate an activity. Consider using March 2nd as a day to start planning a project for later in the year, especially if it involves asking a teacher who is an ally to incorporate LGBT history or issues into the classroom instruction.

Most importantly, don't feel rushed. Any day is a great day to learn about and educate others about LGBT history!

In your GSA

Just because a person belongs to a GSA doesn't mean she/he/zie knows a whole lot about LGBT history, people, and issues. A great way to honor LGBT Day of History is to start the learning right within your own GSA or student club. An educated GSA is much better able to have conversations with teachers and school administrators about broader school projects.

1. Hold a movie night. Consider inviting other members of the school to join you. Movie suggestions include: *Sister Outsider*, *Brother Outsider*, *Out of the Past*, *Before Stonewall*, *After Stonewall*, *Celluloid Closet*, and *The Times of Harvey Milk*, and *Milk*. Many of these movies are available through Netflix and other online subscription services, your community library, and through inter-library loan. Several are reasonably priced and can be purchased on line.
2. Put on your detective hats and investigate what books related to LGBT history and/or issues are currently in your school library collection. Share your findings with your GSA. Brainstorm a list of other books you'd like to see added to your library. Arrange a time to meet with your school librarian and share both your findings and your suggestions with her or him. While you are talking to your librarian ask if you can work with him or her to create a display of books about LGBT people and history.

3. Play the LGBT History Quiz found on the GSAFE website. For a twist rewrite the questions and turn it into a Jeopardy style game.
4. Create and share a PowerPoint presentation about LGBT people or issues in history.
5. Bring in old t-shirts and have a t-shirt decorating night. Have each member include a different fact about LGBT history or a short bio of a significant LGBT person from history. Designate a day for club members to wear their shirts. Each person can carry around a sheet of paper with additional details about the historical fact or person to share with people who ask. Start a conversation!
6. Bring in a speaker to talk to your GSA about local LGBT history or issues. A representative from a local chapter of Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) could be a great place to start.
7. Give each member of your GSA a sheet of paper with the words "This is what I've learned about LGBT history in school" at the top and a picture of an open book with blank pages below it. Have each member take a few minutes to fill in what she/he/zie has learned and then have everyone share with the group. It's okay for people to pass or not share. Ask folks to identify whether they thought what they learned was portrayed in a positive, negative, or neutral manner. Consider getting permission to hang up your responses around school.

Beyond your GSA

Why keep the learning contained to just your GSA? Use your organizing skills from other days of action like Day of Silence to plan a project or event (big or small) for your school community. As with any event, be sure to follow school guidelines around what student clubs can and cannot do.

8. Create a bulletin board or display highlighting LGBT history and/or significant LGBT people from history. One idea is to print out the LGBT History Quiz questions and update the board with answers throughout the day, week, or month. Another option is to create a rainbow flag out of colored paper and write a different fact about LGBT people or history on each stripe.
9. Create posters about LGBT history to hang around your school. No time to make the posters yourself? Check out the "Five Resources for LGBT Day of History" on the GSAFE website. Most of these resources have easily downloadable and printable .pdf documents or PowerPoint slides that you can print out and hang up.
10. Ask your teachers if you can make a quick announcement about LGBT Day of History in class. Use the opportunity to tell people about the day, share a historical fact or two (bonus if you can make it relate to what

- you're currently studying) and invite them to attend or participate in any event you might have planned.
11. Hold a lunch time history contest. Set up a table and invite students and staff to answer questions about LGBT people and history. Correct answers should be placed in a raffle box. Have the winner's name announced at the end of the day.
 12. Invite a guest speaker on LGBT issues and/or history to come in over the lunch period or after school and open it up to anyone who wants to attend.
 13. Read LGBT history facts over your public announcements.
 14. Create a Hallway of History. Use music stands to display bios of significant LGBT people or tape the bios to the wall. Consider inviting community members to come walk through the hallway as well.
 15. Hold a bake sale. Give out an LGBT history fact sheet with each purchase.
 16. Research the history of LGBT people and events in your community. Create a bulletin board or display that includes copies of newspaper clippings, pictures, and written accounts.

In Classroom

The classroom is a perfect place for all students to learn accurate information about LGBT people and history, but it is often times seen as a controversial issue in many communities around the state. Although some of the ideas below might seem simple, be sure to give yourself and your teachers plenty of time to research, plan, and prepare for any questions or concerns that might arise from positive presentations of LGBT people in the school classroom.

17. Have a conversation with a favorite teacher or two. Share with them what you've learned while preparing for LGBT Day of History. Ask them where they think they could include information about LGBT people and issues. Ask them how you can help them make this happen.
18. Print up copies of the LGBT History Quiz and distribute them at the start or end of a designated class period. Consider doing this with your math class and create a bulletin board or handout that shows the percentage of right and wrong answers. Make a school-wide display that shows "What we do (and don't) know about LGBT History at our school." Be sure to share the correct responses with your class and if possible hold a discussion.
19. In English class read the writings of LGBT authors and poets or read a short story, poem, or essay that addresses LGBT issues.

20. As a GSA provide a 10-15 minute presentation on LGBT history or issues. Use information from the timelines found on the GSAFE website. Try to pull out information for your presentation that is relevant to the topic you are currently studying in class.
21. Find individuals profiled by the Equality Forum's *Daily GLBT Icons* or the *Queer People of Color Heroes Project* as listed on the "Five Resources for LGBT Day of History" handout that relate to a topic you are currently studying in class. Ask your teacher to let you use space on a wall or bulletin board to post the profiles of related individuals.
22. Organize and lead a tolerance workshop for a class or classes. Explore attitudes and opinions towards differences. Suggest ways people can support different groups at school including minority populations.
23. In science or psychology class examine past and current views of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Consider watching the segment on Barbara Gittings from the film *Out of the Past* and using the accompanying teachers guide found at GLSEN.org when discussing that segment.
24. In biology class hold a nature versus nurture discussion in regard to sexual orientation (LGB and straight) and gender identity.
25. In art class spend a few days creating work that explores and/or expresses acceptance or the experiences of being a minority. Study LGBT artists, their work, and the impact that being LGBT had on their work.
26. In modern language classes explore attitudes and opinions towards LGBT people in different countries around the world.
27. Track down a copy of Kevin Jennings's *Becoming Visible* (used copies can be found on websites such as Amazon.com and half.com) and share it with a teacher you think would be open to using a lesson from the book.
28. Watch the movie *Out of the Past* or other movies about the struggle for LGBT rights. If your class is studying the U.S. civil rights movement watch the segment on Bayard Rustin. Use the accompanying teachers guide found at GLSEN.org when discussing that segment.
29. Ask your teacher if you can get extra credit for putting together a presentation connecting LGBT people or history to the topic you are studying.
30. If you are learning about a topic or person related to LGBT issues in class and no one has mentioned that, bring it up.

**Compiled and Created by Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools
www.GSAforSafeSchools.org**