

Rainbow Ready



Are you, your congregation, school, or organization new to Pride Month, the annual celebration in June that honors the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan?

One way to celebrate Pride is to focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion in your institution. Here are some suggestions to get you started this June!

Please note that best practice is to be in relationship with the queer folks in your community, listen to their experiences, and learn how to best welcome them and the people who support them.

Language is important.

Usually we call everyone up to the Torah in a very gendered way: "May he/she stand (Ya'amod/Ta'amod) who is the son/daughter (ben/bat)..." Our movement now also endorses a gender neutral way of calling up individuals to the Torah, altering the Hebrew ever so slightly. These seemingly minor changes of wording will feel very welcoming for those non-binary and gender nonconforming Jews who do not experience gender as female or male. For many trans individuals, using the gendered forms of ya'amod/ta'amod is an affirming way to publicly recognize them for whom they are, just as na la'amod is for many trans and non-binary individuals. Continuing to offer all options is important to recognize the many ways in which trans and non-binary people express themselves.

Resources:

1. "[Calling Non-binary People to Torah Honors](#)" is the teshuvah written by Rabbi Guy Austrian, Rabbi Robert Scheinberg, and Rabbi Deborah Silver and approved unanimously by the Committee of Jewish Law and Standards in 2022.
2. Here is Rabbi Deborah Silver's piece explaining the teshuvah on [Exploring Judaism](#).
3. Articles reporting on the CJLS 2022 teshuvah [here](#) and [here](#).
4. [Ready-to-use gabbai page](#) from Adath Jeshurun in Minnetonka, MN
5. [Ready-to-use aliyah cards](#) from the Rose Crown Minyan (lay-lead minyan within Anshe Emet Synagogue in Chicago).

Idea for implementation:

On one Shabbat in June (or better: the whole month!) call up everyone who is willing with "na la'amod" and "mibeit" to help people acclimate to saying it and hearing it. (Some congregations might add individual's preferred phrases to the gabbai's cards. Consider continuing to use it yourself as a model for others.)



Utilize your role as a Jewish teacher/leader

Lift up the voices of queer Jews with the suggestions below. Sing/lead a song of the gay rights community. Read a poem or prayer written by a member or ally of the Jewish LGBTQ+ community.



1. Bring in a speaker from the LGBTQ+ community.
2. Utilize [Rabbi Alex Braver's divrei Torah ideas](#), corresponding to each Shabbat this June, or go a different direction with [these texts](#) from Keshet.
3. Teach and sing "[Singing for Our Lives](#)" by Holly Near. [Learn](#) how it became an anthem of the Queer community. This is an example of the [lyrics](#), and it's common to add verses that speak to your community.
4. [This is a poem by puckmaren glass.](#)
5. [This is a poem by Alden Solovy.](#)
6. This [Prayer for the End of Hiding](#) from Congregation Bet Haverim.
7. Find inspiration with relevant poems, blessings, and divrei Torah on [Ritualwell.org](#).
8. Explore [Keshet's](#) collection of articles, rituals, and Torah commentaries for Pride Month.

Show your support for the queer community

Be loud, be proud.

1. Participate in or attend your community's Pride March. Take pictures for your community's website, emails, and publications. Add [hashtags](#) to raise awareness and show support.
2. Display inclusive, welcoming language in your building, on your websites, and in your emails and publications. You can find some examples [here](#).
3. Put up stickers letting people know that you are inclusive and welcoming of everyone on your front door or your office door. Examples are [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).
4. At least for the month of Pride, encourage people to wear stickers or buttons stating their pronouns. When a [cisgender person](#) states their pronouns, it helps those who are non-binary or trans feel safer in that space. Some folks may be in transition with their pronouns, so there's no need to pressure anyone to state them. Or you can say: pronouns you'd like to use today. Don't reinvent the wheel; [try these pronoun stickers](#), or [these](#).



Making even restrooms welcoming to all.

Entering a public restroom can be stressful for someone who is transgender and/or non-binary. You can help by:

1. Understanding the issue better.
2. Labeling an all-access, single-user restroom as all-gender, too, with signs like [here](#) or [here](#) (if your state doesn't already require it).
3. Labeling restrooms to indicate that people are welcome to use the bathroom that corresponds to their gender identity, (or that they're most comfortable with if there's no all-gender restroom). An example is "You are welcome to use the restroom that best aligns with your gender identity," seen on [this website](#), that also includes explanations on why this change is important and how to do it sensitively.
4. Providing menstrual products in all bathrooms so that transgender men and non-binary individuals also have access.
5. Acknowledging that this can be a very emotional topic for folks. Make sure your congregation is a part of the conversation, so that queer folks are not bearing the side-eye of sudden changes.



Looking for more resources?

This is just a beginning! There is so much more learning to do and so many other ways to find out more!

1. We love [Keshet](#). The website is full of resources, and the organization creates community for LGBTQ+ Jews, and for those who want to learn more and support them.
2. [Svara](#) empowers queer and trans Jews to be active participants in our tradition by learning Torah and Talmud, strengthening their courage, and changing the world.
3. Learn more about the Queer Liberation Movement in [We Are Everywhere](#) by Matthew Riemer and Leighton Brown.
4. Find more prayers, poems, and rituals in [Mishkan Ga'avah: Where Pride Dwells](#), edited by Rabbi Denise L. Eger.
5. Swimming in a sea of new terms? Greater understanding can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
6. Check out [this guide](#) to the various pride flags from The Advocate!
7. Ready to take values-based action to make our world better - especially for members of the LGBTQ+ community? [Start here](#).
8. Read the Rabbinical Assembly's 2023 Statement Condemning The Wave of Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislation Across the US [here](#).
9. Catch up on [RA Resolutions](#) on matters regarding LGBTQ+ folks (and gender).

PRIDE IS EVERYDAY

This document was compiled by Cantor Paula Pepperstone, Rabbi Alex Braver, Danit Rothstein, and Jacki Honig with contributions from members and supporters of the LGBTQ+ Working Group of the Masorti/Conservative Movement's Social Justice Commission: Cantor Sheri Allen, Ariel Berry, Rabbi Micah Buck-Yael, Rabbi Kerry Chaplin, Hazzan Elisheva Dienstfrey, Rabbi Ashira Konigsburg, Cantor Dara Rosenblatt, Rabbi J.B. Sacks, Mike Scheinberg, Cantor Robert Scherr, and Rabbi Zev Sonnenstein.