

Educator Guide

Every April on GLSEN's [Day of Silence](#), people across the country engage in silent protest to call attention to anti-LGBTQ discrimination and the erasure of LGBTQ people and history by illustrating the silencing effect of bullying and harassment on LGBTQ students and those perceived to be LGBTQ. We need motivated people to come together to take action by choosing silence and then breaking the silence to raise awareness and support for the LGBTQ community.

Educators have a huge role to play leading up to and on GLSEN's Day of Silence.

Here are a few ways you can help:

WHAT CAN I DO BEFORE THE DAY OF SILENCE?

- › Help your colleagues understand the need for Day of Silence by discussing it at faculty meetings and other school community events.
- › Plan a school-wide assembly on the Day of Silence and/or a Break the Silence event.
- › Empower participating students by preparing to accept silent or written participation.
- › Teach your students about the history of silent protesting, the silencing of LGBTQ people and history, and the reason for participating in the Day of Silence.
- › Teach your students about breaking gender stereotypes and different types of families, including those with LGBTQ adults.
- › Send a letter to your families to let them know that the Day of Silence is coming up, and why you and some of your students are participating.
- › Watch this video of [Tips for Educators](#).
- › **Encourage your students to register [here!](#)**

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THE DAY OF SILENCE AS AN EDUCATOR?

It's tricky to teach silently, but not impossible! Especially if you're able to prepare your students and families beforehand:

K-5

- › Wear a Day of Silence T-shirt, button, or symbol to remind students why you are not speaking.
- › If you have a co-teacher or teaching team, arrange for them to speak while you communicate nonverbally, or remain silent during morning meeting, snack, lunch, or one lesson of the day.

MS/HS

- › Wear a Day of Silence T-shirt, button, or symbol to remind students why you are not speaking.
- › Post information about the Day of Silence in your classroom.
- › Have your lesson instructions written out and use a notepad or computer to type your responses to students.
- › Silently facilitate one of the Day of Silence lessons or activities (listed below).



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HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY STUDENTS ON THE DAY OF SILENCE?

The Day of Silence is still a school day when learning needs to happen. Be creative with your assignments and activities and methods of participation!

K-5

- › Have your students participate in the National Group Silence: 3:00 pm ET for 5 minutes.
- › Support students who choose to remain silent on April 21 and intervene if you witness any name-calling or harassment.
- › Plan a Silent Reading Time where students read or look at social justice picture books and books with LGBTQ and gender-diverse people.
- › Plan a letter-writing lesson where students write to local state legislators, principals, or superintendents to ask them to address bullying and support LGBTQ youth and families.
- › Use Sharing Time or Closing Circle to discuss how they help people who are being teased for what they like, how they look, or who they love.
- › Show a film from Groundspark's Respect for All Series, such as "That's a Family" or "It's Elementary," and hold a discussion.
- › Hold an all-school assembly and invite families to be silent at 3:00 pm ET for 5 min. Then break the silence with a social justice/LGBTQ-inclusive Read Aloud, and have students share what actions they will take to stop bullying.

MS/HS

- › Support students who choose to remain silent on Day of Silence, and intervene if you witness any name-calling or harassment.
- › Print out information on the Day of Silence, other silent protests throughout history, and statistics of anti-LGBTQ discrimination and bullying, like from the most recent [National School Climate Survey](#). Have

students read and silently write about what they learned and what they can do to make a difference.

- › Have your students participate in the National Group Silence: 3:00 pm ET for 5 minutes. Discuss the history behind the Day of Silence and anti-LGBTQ discrimination.
- › Plan a letter-writing lesson where students call on local state legislators, principals, or superintendents to support LGBTQ youth in schools.
- › Have students read GLSEN's [Pronoun Resource](#) or other [GSA resources](#) and write about actions they can take to be more inclusive of transgender and gender nonconforming people.
- › Ask students and colleagues to reflect on LGBTQ inclusion in your school policies, special events, and curriculum. Have students design their own lessons, policies, or events focused on LGBTQ inclusion.
- › Teach about Audre Lorde's writings on silence, such as: "Your silence will not protect you."

WHAT CAN I DO AFTER THE DAY OF SILENCE?

- › Get Involved: Contact principals, superintendents, and state legislators to demand that they show visible support for LGBTQ youth. Join [GLSEN Up](#) to be notified about policy actions you can take that will affect the LGBTQ community.
- › Create or support a GSA or other LGBTQ student-led group at your school.
- › Create or support a faculty LGBTQ-affinity or interest group.

Continue the conversation! The Day of Silence should not be the only time you discuss LGBTQ individuals in the classroom. Incorporate LGBTQ history, themes, and events into lesson plans you are already teaching. Get started with GLSEN's [LGBTQ-Inclusive Curriculum Guide for Educators](#).

