



LGBTQ-Inclusive Lesson Planning Guide - February, 2010

The Safe Schools Coalition believes that we shouldn't isolate our recognition of LGBTIQ/2-spirit* people in the curriculum to Gay Pride Month (June) or GLBT History Month (October).

We believe *all* students, regardless of their own or their families' sexual orientations or gender identities, need to know about the sexual diversity in their school community and the wider world ... just as they all need to know about racial and religious diversity. As you are planning your lessons for February, you may find it helpful to integrate some of the following, to infuse LGBTIQ/2-spirit* cultural awareness into the every day life of your classroom. Especially those teaching **history, civics, social studies, family & consumer sciences, or language arts**. Items #5-6 will be useful as journal prompts for teaching **writing skills**. **Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) advisors and student leaders**, we offer this message partly for you. It will provide tools for discussions within your GSA and also to educate your entire student body.

- (1) Important events to recognize in February
- (2) February is **National LGBT History Month** in the United Kingdom
- (3) In honor of **African-American History Month**: Same-gender loving and gender-nonconforming people of African descent
- (4) Essay: *Martin Luther King Jr. and Gay Rights*
- (5) Quotes from African and African-American LGBT folks and heterosexual allies
- (6) Quotes specifically for Valentines Day ... from LGBTQ voices of various ethnicities

NOTE: You will find recent past email messages **archived** at <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/listserve/index.html> and all of these monthly history messages are **archived** at <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/blackboard-history.html>

* **LGBTQ** = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning and Queer. **Two-spirit** = a term of honor to describe a Native American or other Indigenous LGBTQ person, implying their special role as a spiritual bridge among genders. Usually the term is not chosen by an individual to describe him or herself (which would seem self-aggrandizing to many in Indian Country). More often it is a designation of respect conferred *upon* an individual by an elder. Some folks prefer to use the term of respect from their own nation's language, rather than the more recent term "two-spirit."



(1) Important events to recognize in February

February, 2009 – National LGBT History Month in the United Kingdom. See item #2 below.

February 1, 1902 - Langston Hughes is born. Here's what Blackstripe, "the Internet's leading resource for news, information and culture affecting LGBT people of African descent," said about him: "*James Mercer Langston Hughes [was the] writer most identified with the Harlem Renaissance. A prolific writer, he used almost every conceivable form to arrange his thoughts on paper: poems, songs, novels, plays, biographies, histories and essays.*" Believed by many scholars to have been gay, Hughes' sexuality was actually ambiguous, not surprising given the times in which he lived. See these web sites: <http://encyclopedia.stateuniversity.com/pages/182/-James-Mercer-Langston-Hughes.html>; <http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~wyatt/celebs-list.html>; http://www.glbtc.com/literature/hughes_l.html

February 1, 1942 - "[In] Germany, a legal amendment formally extends the death penalty to men found guilty of having sex with another man."
<http://www.aaronsgayinfo.com/timeline/Ftime40.html>



February 7, 2010 - National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness & Information Day. More info at www.blackaidsday.org.

February 7, 1978 - Oklahoma passes a "Teacher Fitness" statute, allowing local school boards to fire any teacher who "advocates, encourages or promotes" homosexuality.

February 8, 1994 - The European Parliament affirms that gays and lesbians are entitled to equal rights, including the right to marry.

February 9, 1944 - Alice Walker is born. A renowned author (of many novels including *The Color Purple*) and an African-American woman, Walker dislikes labels, but acknowledges having been in love with both men and women and, in a 1996 *Essence* article, described herself as "bisexual."

February 12, 2004 - Under the direction of Mayor Gavin Newsom, the City of San Francisco begins performing same-sex marriages, starting with Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, who had been a couple for 51 years. More about Mayor Newsom at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gavin_Newsom. More about author/activists Lyon and Martin at <http://www.now.org/issues/lgbi/021304lyon-martin.html>. (That marriage was invalidated by the California Supreme Court, but Lyon and Martin married once again on June 16, 2008, a couple of months before Del Martin's death on August 27, 2008.)

February 14 - Valentine's Day ... ALERT TO TEACHERS: This is one day of the year you can anticipate hearing/seeing gratuitous anti-gay behavior (limp-wrist horsing around, guys jumping apart from other guys in disgust as if today of all days they can't be seen together). Most of it is simply thoughtless silliness. It may, nonetheless, hurt casual observers and even participants. Keep your eyes open lest children/youth in your care spend the day feeling personally attacked.

February 18, 1934 - Audre Lorde is born. Lorde described herself as "a black feminist lesbian mother poet" and sometimes "warrior." Her first poem was published while she was still in high school. Besides poetry, she wrote essays and novels. Eventually she became a professor and was given the great honor of being named Poet Laureate of New York State. More here: http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/g_l/lorde/feminist.htm

February 19, 2002 - Sylvia Rivera dies at age 50. As a transgender (MTF) teen, Rivera was among those who resisted police brutality in the Stonewall Rebellion, the days of rioting that launched the modern gay rights movement. Later in her life, she was instrumental in opening shelters for homeless and drug-addicted transgender people and worked to help pass LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination legislation.

More: http://www.soundportraits.org/in-print/magazine_articles/sylvia_rivera/, <http://www.villagevoice.com/news/0209.wilchins.32645.1.html>

February 21, 1936 - Barbara Jordan is born. In 1972, she would become the first Black person ever from Texas elected to the United States House of Representatives. In 1994, President Clinton would award her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest award to a civilian in the country. She's been described as "one of the most revered leaders and orators of her time." She wasn't out during her life, but lived for 25 years with companion Nancy Earl and was outed in the press after her death from leukemia and multiple sclerosis in 1996. Read more at: <http://www.austinchronicle.com/issues/vol18/issue24/books.VSBR.html> and http://jrcla.org/?page_id=28

February 23-24, 1933 - "[In] Germany, Adolf Hitler's government launches the Nazi persecution of homosexuality with directives closing gay and lesbian clubs, banning pornography and homophile publications, and dissolving homosexual rights groups." <http://www.aaronsgayinfo.com/timeline/Ftime30.html>



February 24, 1969 - The U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of three public school students who wore an armband to school to protest the Viet Nam War. Writing for the majority in *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, Justice Abe Fortas, declares, "First Amendment rights, applied in light of the special characteristics of the school environment, are available to teachers and students. It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate. This has been the unmistakable holding of this Court for almost fifty years." **Hear Mary Beth Tinker interviewed on the 40th anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling. She speaks about the intersections of various human rights struggles:** <http://www.aclu.org/free-speech/mary-beth-tinker-40th-anniversary-landmark-free-speech-decision>

Feb 25, 1982 - Wisconsin Governor Lee Dreyfus [Republican] signed the bill which added the prohibition against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation to the state's civil rights statute, making Wisconsin the first state in the country to do so!

February 27, 1880 - African-American lesbian poet, essayist and playwright Angelina Weld Grimké is born. More here: http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/g_l/grimke/herron.htm

February 27, 6th Century BC - Sappho is born in Mytilene on the Isle of Lesbos. She has been called the greatest lyric poet of early Greece. Some historians believe she loved women romantically or erotically but, of course, interpreting fragments of poetry from other times in history across cultural and linguistic divides is more an art than a science. More: <http://www.glbtq.com/literature/sappho.html>



(2) February is National LGBT History Month in the United Kingdom

In the **United States**, National Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender History Month is **October**, in commemoration of the first two huge gay and lesbian marches on Washington in October 1979 and October 1987. But in the **United Kingdom**, since 2005, it is in **February**: <http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/> So plan your lessons, U.K. educators!

More about LGBTQ History here:

- General: <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/blackboard-history.html>
- For teachers: http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-teachers_history-civics.html
- Historical figures: <http://www.famousandgay.com/r.html>
- African-American and LGBTQ: http://www.marshall.edu/lgbo/african_american_history_month.htm
- Trans history: <http://www.humboldt.edu/~mpw1/history/>
- Bi history: <http://www.examiner.com/x-17829-Bisexual-Examiner~y2009m10d29-Famous-bisexual-people-in-history-IJ>



(3) In honor of African-American History Month: Same-gender loving and gender-nonconforming people of African descent

||| Safe Schools Coalition's Heroes and Role Models list:

<http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/herorolemodelcards.pdf> (includes bios, among many individuals of other ethnicities, of Josephine **Baker**, James **Baldwin**, Deborah **Batts**, Gladys **Bentley**, Ron **Buckmire**, George Washington **Carver**, Beauford **Delaney**, Steen Keith **Fenrich**, Jewell **Gomez**, Sakia **Gunn**, Langston **Hughes**, Tyra **Hunter**, Barbara **Jordan**, Audre **Lorde**,



Johnny **Mathis**, Me'Shell **NdegéOcello**, **RuPaul**, **Little Richard**, Bayard **Rustin**, Linda **Villarosa**, Alice **Walker**, and Arthur "JR" **Warren**)

||| Human Rights Campaign's page ***African Americans and Coming Out***:
http://www.hrc.org/about_us/7111.htm

||| Sisters in the Life features Ruth **Ellis**, who died at the age of 101 in 2000 and was believed to be the oldest "out" lesbian of African descent at that time:
<http://www.sistersinthelife.com/1024index.html>

||| Blacklist's "Proud History" page, no longer on the web, featured the stories of these men-who-loved-men and women-who-loved-women and gender non-conforming or trans-identified folks:

- scientist Benjamin **Banneker**,
- sculptor Edmonia **Lewis**,
- botanist and educator George Washington **Carver**,
- blues singer "Ma" **Rainey**,
- artist Beauford **Delaney**,
- poet Countee **Cullen**,
- entertainer and chorus girl Josephine **Baker**,
- human rights activist Bayard **Rustin**,
- playwright Lorraine **Hansberry**,
- dancer and choreographer Alvin **Ailey**,
- U.S. Army Sgt. Perry **Watkins**, and
- major league baseball player Glenn **Burke**.

||| Blacklist's "Names We Should All Remember" page, also no longer on the web, had brief descriptions of African Americans slain at least in part for their sexual orientation or gender expression:

- Steen Keith **Ferrich**,
- Nathaniel "Troy" **Hayden**,
- Tyra **Hunter**,
- Amanda **Milan**,
- Arthur "J.R." **Warren** Jr., and
- Ernest **Watts**

||| Civil rights leader and international social justice activist, Bayard **Rustin**, who was, among his many roles, an adviser to Dr. Martin Luther King, is profiled by his life partner Walter Naegle here: http://rustin.org/?page_id=11 **A great documentary film about him**, entitled *"Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin"* is available for \$24.95 and **every GSA, history and civics class should see it**.

||| A brief bio of clergyman Carl **Bean** can be found here: http://www.glbtq.com/social-sciences/bean_c.html

||| Ojibwa (Chippewa) Indian and African-American sculptor Mary Edmonia Wildfire **Lewis** is featured on these sites: http://www.glbtq.com/arts/lewis_me.html

||| Acclaimed, openly-lesbian, Jamaican-born slam poet Stacyann **Chin**:
<http://www.staceyannchin.com/>

||| Olympic gold medalist and three-time WNBA MVP Sheryl **Swoopes** came out as lesbian in October 2005: <http://sports.espn.go.com/wnba/news/story?id=2204322>, <http://www.waynebesen.com/2005/10/mvp-swoopes-out-of-closet.html> and http://www.thenation.com/doc/20051121/sheryl_swoopes_out_of_the_closet



||| The proud gender-defiance of NBA star Dennis **Rodman** is the focus of this great article by Monica Moorehead and Leslie Feinberg: <http://www.mamohanraj.com/Misc/rodman.html>



(4) Essay: Martin Luther King Jr. and Gay Rights

By Rev. Gilbert Caldwell

Gilbert Caldwell is a retired minister in the United Methodist Church and since meeting Martin Luther King in 1958 at the Boston University School of Theology and taking part in three of King's marches, he has devoted his life to championing "equality". Caldwell is a strong advocate of gay rights and in this article, written [in 2005] he considers what Martin Luther King might have to say on the subject if he were alive today.

Go to: <http://www.ukgaynews.org.uk/Archive/07/Jan/1501.htm>



(5) Quotes from African and African-American LGBT folks and heterosexual allies

"We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."

-- Barack Hussein **Obama**, January 20, 2009

"Cowardice asks, is it safe? Expediency asks, is it politic? Vanity asks, is it popular? But conscience asks, is it right? There comes a time when one must take the position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him, it is right."

~ Rev. Dr. Martin Luther **King**, Jr.

"I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits."

~ Rev. Dr. Martin Luther **King**, Jr.

"So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremist for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice?"

~ Rev. Dr. Martin Luther **King**, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail - 1963

"We have a lot more work to do in our common struggle against bigotry and discrimination. I say 'common struggle' because I believe very strongly that all forms of bigotry and discrimination are equally wrong and should be opposed by right-thinking Americans everywhere. Freedom from discrimination based on sexual orientation is surely a fundamental human right in any great democracy, as much as freedom from racial, religious, gender, or ethnic discrimination."

~ Coretta Scott **King**

"I still hear people say that I should not be talking about the rights of lesbian and gay people, and I should stick to the issue of racial justice. But I hasten to remind them that Martin Luther King Jr. said 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' I appeal to everyone who believes in Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream to make room at the table of brother- and sisterhood for lesbian and gay people. Homophobia is like racism and anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry in that it seeks to dehumanize a large group of people, to deny their humanity, their dignity and personhood. This sets the stage for further repression and violence, that spreads all too easily to



victimize the next minority group. Gays and lesbians stood up for civil rights in Montgomery, Selma, in Albany, Georgia, and St. Augustine, Florida, and many other campaigns of the civil rights movement. Many of these courageous men and women were fighting for my freedom at a time when they could find few voices for their own, and I salute their contributions."

- Coretta Scott **King**, in 1999 at the 25th Anniversary luncheon for the Lambda Legal Defense Fund

"Homophobia is hate, and hate has no place in the beloved community."

~ Martin Luther **King III**, in August 2003 at the 40th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington

"Some say let's choose another route and give Gay folks some legal rights but call it something other than marriage. We have been down that road before in this country. Separate is not equal. The rights to liberty and happiness belong to each of us and on the same terms, without regard to either skin color or sexual orientation."

-- U.S. Congressman John **Lewis**, D-Georgia, who was a close associate of Martin Luther King

"Something is happening to the very soul of America. It's more than same-sex marriage. It's more than whether you're gay or straight, black or white. It's about where we are going as a nation. I say this from my heart and gut, as someone who was beaten and arrested on the freedom rides. We've got some real fights ahead of us. But America is ready. So stand up tall and straight. Hold your head high. And do the work. Because we're not gonna go away."

-- U.S. Congressman John **Lewis**, D-Georgia

"When an individual is protesting society's refusal to acknowledge his dignity as a human being, his very act of protest confers dignity on him."

-- Bayard **Rustin**, who organized the 1964 March on Washington at which Dr. King made his "I Have a Dream" speech, in the book *Strategies for Freedom*, p. 42

"People...do not believe there can be tears between men. They think we are only playing at a game and that we do it to shock them."

-- author and activist, James **Baldwin**, who was African-American and gay

"People should not be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights, and the right to marry who you want to marry is one of those rights ... Interracial marriage was regarded with much the same hysteria years ago as gay marriage is today."

-- U.S. Ambassador Carol Mosely **Braun**, who, as far as we know, is heterosexual

"It is not the style of clothes one wears, neither the kind of automobile one drives, nor the amount of money one has in the bank, that counts. These mean nothing. It is simply service that measures success."

-- inventor, scientist and educator, George Washington **Carver**, who was African-American and gay

"Good parents are good parents - regardless of their sexual orientation. It's clear that the sexual orientation of parents has nothing to do with the sexual orientation of their children."

-- Former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Joycelyn **Elders**, who, as far as we know, is heterosexual

"A family doesn't have to be a man, woman and children. A family can be two men or two women and children. A family can be nearly anything you want it to be as long as it is full of genuine love, respect and care."

-- Clarence J. **Fluker**, who is a staff person at National Youth Advocacy Coalition, Next Generation Editor for Arise magazine, and sits on the Board of Directors for DC Black Lesbian & Gay Pride, the largest annual Black pride festival in the world.



"Silence kills the soul, it diminishes its possibility to rise and fly and explore. Silence withers what makes you human. The soul shrinks, until it's nothing."

-- documentary filmmaker, Marlon **Riggs**, who was an African-American man and who died from complications of AIDS in 1994

"I think that gay rights is a human rights issue like the rights of anyone else. I have said throughout my career, less known this campaign, that unless people are prepared to say that gay and lesbian people are not human -- and I don't know anyone in their right mind that would say that -- then why are they not afforded the same rights as any other human being?"

-- former U.S. presidential candidate, Rev. Al **Sharpton**

"To discriminate against our sisters and brothers who are lesbian or gay on grounds of their sexual orientation for me is as totally unacceptable and unjust as Apartheid ever was."

-- Archbishop Desmond **Tutu**, from a sermon delivered February 2004. Read the text of the sermon at <http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/12039.htm>

"We have inflicted on gay and lesbian people the tremendous pain of having to live a lie or to face brutal rejection if they dared to reveal their true selves. But oppression cuts both ways. Behind our 'safe' barriers of self-righteousness, we deprive ourselves of the rich giftedness that lesbian and gay people have to contribute ..."

-- Archbishop Desmond **Tutu**



(5) Quotes specifically for Valentines Day ... from LGBTQ and allied voices of various ethnicities

*"For death, or life, or toil,
To thee myself I join;
I take thy hand in mine,
With thee I would grow old."*

-- From an ancient Chinese male-male wedding **ceremony**

"Everybody's journey is individual. If you fall in love with a boy, you fall in love with a boy. The fact that many Americans consider it a disease says more about them than it does about homosexuality."

-- James **Baldwin**

"Love takes off masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within."

-- James **Baldwin**

"Penguins accept same-sex commitments. Why do some people have so much trouble with the idea?"

-- Canadians for Equal Marriage, **headline**

"Love is the big booming beat which covers up the noise of hate."

-- comedian and activist, Margaret **Cho**, weblog, 01-15-04. Cho is Korean-American. She's married to a man but generally, in interviews, avoids labeling her sexual orientation.

"Where there is great love, there are always miracles."

-- Pulitzer Prize winning novelist, Willa **Cather**, believed by many historians to have been lesbian and who, at the very least, transgressed gender in various ways (http://www.essortment.com/all/whowaswillaca_rlui.htm)



"Anyone who thinks that love needs to be cured has not experienced enough of it in their own lives."

-- Joan **Garry**, then Executive Director of GLAAD, the Gay Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation

"Love doesn't just sit there, like a stone; it has to be made, like bread, remade all the time, made new."

-- novelist, poet, essayist, translator and children's author, Ursula K **Le Guin** who writes from a feminist perspective, often with gender-bending or non-heterosexual characters and who's been married to a man, Charles Le Guin, since 1953

"One Year Of Love Is Better Than A Lifetime Alone."

-- Freddie **Mercury**, born Farok Bulsara in Zanzibar in 1946, openly gay lead singer of the band *Queen*, who passed away in 1991 from complications of AIDS

"For me [marrying] is about finding that person you call home. Realizing that you're traveling with someone that at times may be behind you, beside you or in front of you. We can be completely fine with that without having to prove anything."

-- Denise **Newman**, discussing her upcoming wedding to Vallerie Wagner in an interview with journalist MacArthur H. Flourney in **Arise** magazine

"The only abnormality is the incapacity to love."

-- author, Anais **Nin**, who was bisexual

"It takes courage to love, but pain through love is the purifying fire which those who love generously know. We all know people who are so much afraid of pain that they shut themselves up like clams in a shell and, giving out nothing, receive nothing and therefore shrink until life is a mere living death."

-- human rights advocate and U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Eleanor **Roosevelt**

"Oh! I want to put my arms around you, I ache to hold you close. Your ring is a great comfort. I look at it and think she does love me or I wouldn't be wearing it!"

-- Eleanor **Roosevelt**, in a letter to Lorena Hickok, March 7, 1933

"Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind; And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind."

-- William **Shakespeare**, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act i. Sc. 1. (Some historians believe that Shakespeare wrote love sonnets about men as well as women)

"The most successful marriages, gay or straight, even if they begin in romantic love, often become friendships. It's the ones that become the friendships that last."

-- Andrew **Sullivan**

"It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michelangelo, and those two letters of mine, such as they are. It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as the 'Love that dare not speak its name,' and on account of it I am placed where I am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it."

-- Oscar **Wilde**, at his trial

"Who, being loved, is poor?"

-- Oscar **Wilde**

"There is no good reason for denying these [same-sex] couples the rules, the responsibilities, and the respect of marriage. Allowing these families to be stronger is not going to take anything away from anybody else."

-- Evan **Wolfson**, founder and Executive Director of Freedom to Marry