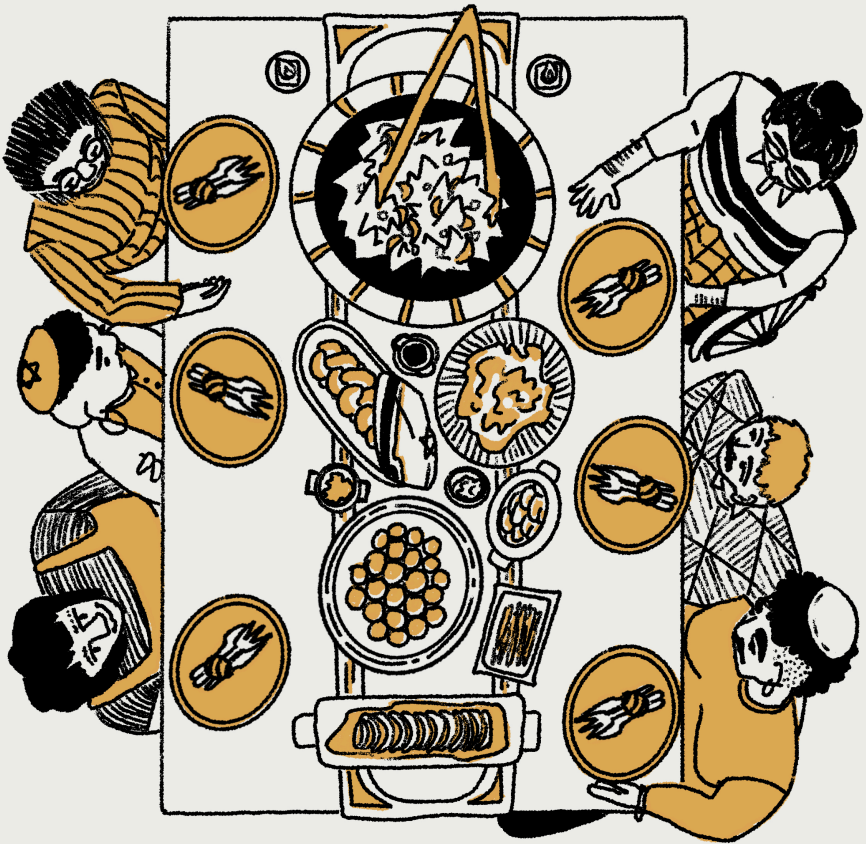


**YOUTH  
PROJECT!**

# NAVIGATING QUEERNESS AND FAITH



a toolkit for supporting  
religious 2SLGBTQIA+ pals

Just like there are people across the world who are 2SLGBTQIA+, there are people all across the world who are religious, and as a result there are many people who are both 2SLGBTQIA+/queer or trans and religious.





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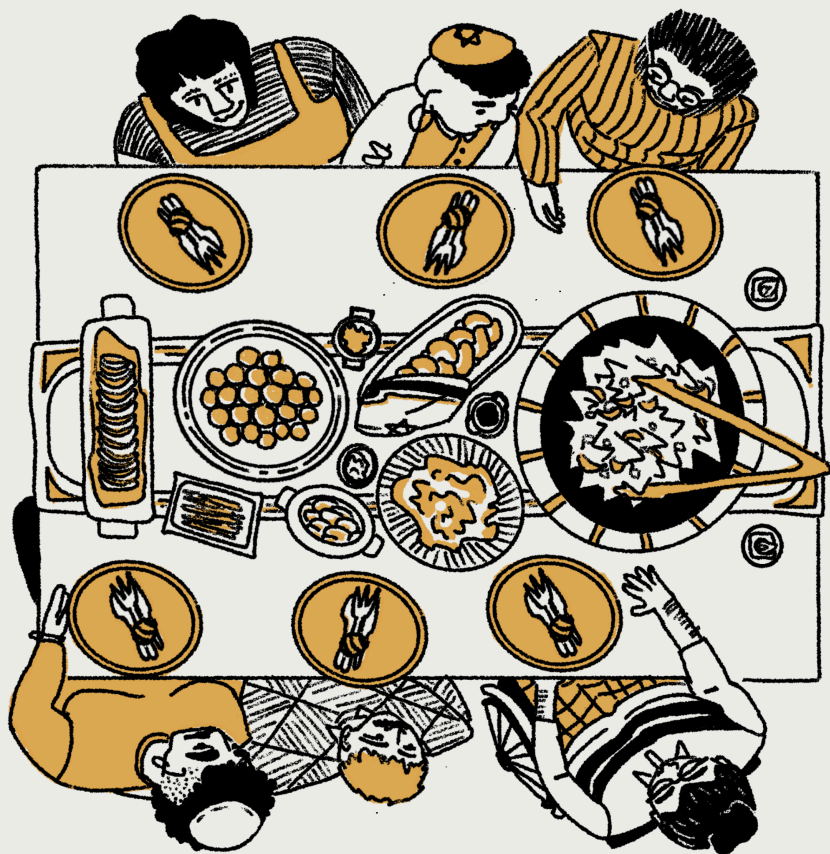
# HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR 2SLGBTQIA+ RELIGIOUS FRIENDS

Don't tell them being queer or trans is a sin or immoral. It can already be difficult to uphold all the intersections of one's identity, and this only adds to the pressure and exclusion they may experience. Likewise, don't tell them that being religious is incompatible with being queer or trans, or that they are less important than other members of their religious communities or 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

It is important to celebrate and welcome all of the ways that our diverse lived experiences make up resilient and beautiful communities.

Get to know a little bit about their religious calendar. Many religions have holy days that affect whether your friend can go to events, work, or eat freely. Schedule events on days that aren't religious observances.





For example, Friday nights are Shabbat for Jewish people, so try holding events before sunset on Friday, or after sunset on Saturday, and the full moon is a time of worship for many pagan religions and may require different accommodations based on their individual practice.

Another example is that many Muslims fast during Ramadan, so be aware of when it is appropriate to invite them over to dinner. You can show care and interest for your friend and this major part of their life by doing research into their religion and checking in about how you can be a good ally, or letting them know you are interested in learning more about it!



# WHAT EXTRA PRESSURES DO RELIGIOUS 2SLGBTQ+ PEOPLE FACE?

There are frequently several intersections of identity when someone is queer and religious. While many 2SLGBTQIA+ people feel no disconnect between their religion and gender or sexuality, there are cases when religious queer or trans people have experienced specific oppression as a result of being who they are, either from their religions community, the queer community, or both.

Many queer and trans spaces are subtly or overtly anti-religious, and that can make your 2SLGBTQIA+ religious friends feel invalidated and unsafe in queer spaces. Some of this is due to trauma from religious communities they have interacted with in the past, leading to a distrust of religious communities as a whole. This means that many Two Spirit, queer and trans people who are religious feel the need to hide this core part of their life and belief system in order to fit in, or set aside their religious practices in order to attend events or feel included.



Solstice Blessings





Teasing your religious friends about their beliefs can feel invalidating, hurtful, and alienating. Religious 2SLGBTQIA+ people can face discrimination both in their religious community and within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and we want to make sure that the spaces we host, create, and participate in are not adding to this reality.

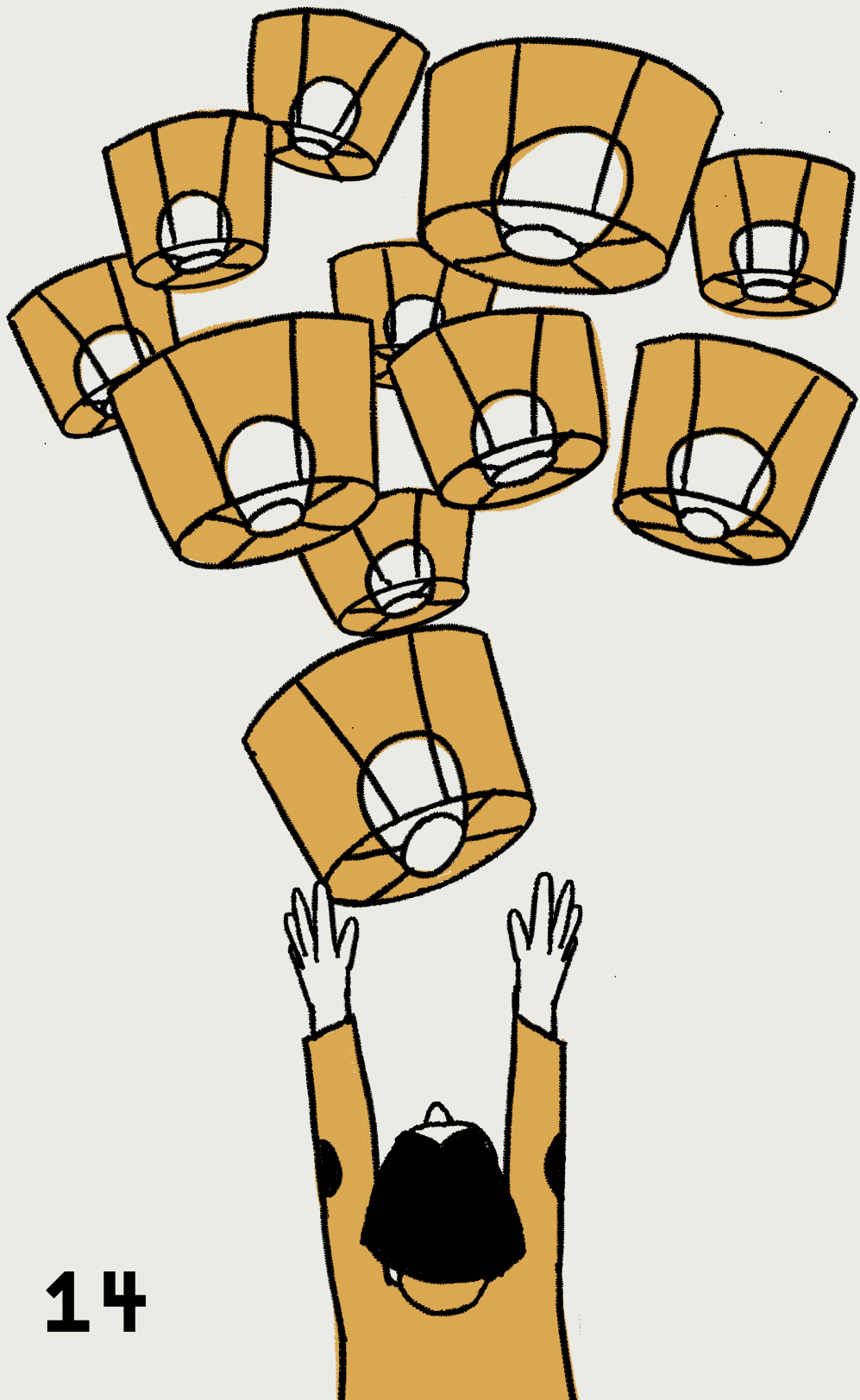


# BUT DON'T RELIGIONS SAY THAT IT IS WRONG TO BE QUEER/ TRANS?

This is a common misinterpretation. Nearly all religions, whether monotheistic or polytheistic can have interpretations that are against their members and the greater community being queer or trans, and many queer and trans people have been hurt by the religion they grew up with.

However, these interpretations say more about the beliefs of those practicing them than they do of the religion as a whole. Some people may not support the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and the queerphobia/transphobia they express would exist regardless of their religious identity. Some people may not support the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and the queerphobia/transphobia they express would exist regardless of their religious identity or the religious community influence that they may have/hold.





There are a great number of religious denominations and/or congregations that love and empower their members to explore their identity, openly identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and actively support healing processes/ reconnection process to religion or faith, and the religious texts themselves are open to interpretation.



# MAKING YOUR OWN RELIGIOUS RITUALS

For religious members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, some parts of religious practice can feel inaccessible due to trauma or a lack of inclusivity from their religious community. By creating rituals that are your own, and taking the learnings and observances of your religion that work for you, you can connect with your religion on your own terms. Look at your religion and religious texts through your own eyes, and learn what will connect you to it through your own heart.

You can also find people who practice the way you do. There are many congregations that meet online who are queer and trans affirming, and allow for accessibility within their meeting times and capacity.



# WAYS TO ASSERT BOUNDARIES WITH YOUR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

Sometimes religion can be like a family where everyone has strong opinions, which can clash in ways that are harmful to some members, and just like our family and/or chosen family and/or communities, it is important to uphold loving boundaries so that our needs can be met and we have room and space to care for ourselves.



Only you get to decide how to participate in your communities and your religion. Some helpful possibilities are:

## Creating Belief Confidence

Developing confidence in yourself and your beliefs, understanding your value with or without the support of the larger religious community.





## Creating Your Own Community

Whether physically near or far, there are others who are part of your belief system that will be supportive of your practices and identity, and you can find or create these spaces for yourself.

# Not Letting Anyone Define You But You

Remember that you are at the centre of your life and practice, and only you can define your relationship with your religion, not others.



## Find Your Own Sacred Spaces

Observe your religious practices in spaces that are safe and holy for you, whether that be public or private. It does not need to be a grand building, even a humble display in a corner of your room or a quiet park can be a sacred space for religious practice.

## **Affirm United**

Working for the full inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the United Church of Canada and in society. [affirmunited.ause.ca](http://affirmunited.ause.ca)

## **Salaam Canada**

Queer Muslim Community is dedicated to creating space for people who identify as both Muslim and queer and trans. [salaamcanada.info](http://salaamcanada.info)

## **Keshet**

Keshet is a national organization that works for full LGBTQ equality and inclusion in Jewish life. [keshetonline.org](http://keshetonline.org)

## **Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists**

As the only organization solely devoted to building the Welcoming and Affirming movement within the Baptist traditions, AWAB has a unique call to be "The National Voice for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Allied Baptists" in the US. [awab.org](http://awab.org)

# QUEER-FRIENDLY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

## Seventh Day Adventist Kinship

To provide a safe spiritual and social community to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex current and former Seventh-day Adventists, their families, and those who support them.

[sdakinship.org](http://sdakinship.org)

## Proud Anglican

On this site, you'll find a list of gay-positive parishes compiled by Integrity, a group of gay and lesbian Anglicans and our friends:

[proudanglicans.ca](http://proudanglicans.ca)

## Metropolitan Community Church

Founded in 1968, Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) has been at the vanguard of civil and human rights movements by addressing issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, economics, climate change, aging, and global human rights [mccchurch.org](http://mccchurch.org)



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