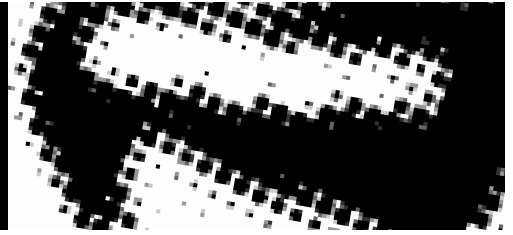


HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT— WITH AN ASK!



“The Day of Silence is a perfect tool for creating change. We wanted a queer-friendly prom, and after showing that many students and staff care—we got a queer friendly prom. We said we wouldn’t be silenced, and we won’t.”

THE DAY OF SILENCE CAN BE A GREAT TOOL TO CATAPULT CHANGE AT YOUR SCHOOL! DO YOU WANT A MORE LGBT INCLUSIVE LIBRARY, TEACHER TRAINING, LGBT INCLUSIVE NONDISCRIMINATION POLICIES OR SOMETHING ELSE? IF YOU WANT SOMETHING TO CHANGE — YOU CAN USE THE DAY OF SILENCE TO HELP WITH YOUR “ASK!”

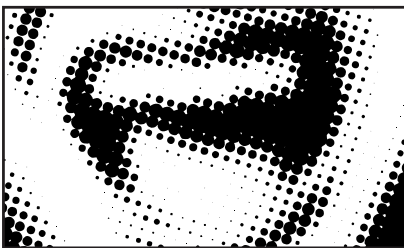
SO, YOU MIGHT BE WONDERING WHAT AN “ASK” IS. SIMPLY PUT, IT’S AN ORGANIZING TOOL, BUT LET’S BACK UP FOR A MINUTE. ORGANIZING IS WORKING WITH A GROUP OF PEOPLE, LIKE STUDENTS IN YOUR STUDENT CLUB, TOWARDS AN “ISSUE.” AN “ISSUE” IS A PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM. FOR EXAMPLE, TEACHER TRAINING IS A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF HARASSMENT AND NAME-CALLING. WITH ANY “ISSUE,” THERE’S ALWAYS ONE PERSON WHO CAN GIVE YOU WHAT YOU WANT, AND THIS PERSON IS CALLED THE “TARGET” OR “DECISION-MAKER.” WHEN YOU ASK THE “DECISION-MAKER,” LIKE THE PRINCIPAL, TO AGREE TO YOUR “ISSUE,” OR APPROVE THE TEACHER TRAINING, THEN YOU HAVE MADE AN “ASK!”

SO, AN “ASK” IS A VERY SPECIFIC QUESTION THAT USES YOUR ALLIES TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE “DECISION-MAKER.” PARTICIPATING IN THE DAY OF SILENCE IS GREAT, BUT WHY STOP THERE? YOU CAN GET A LOT OUT OF THE DAY OF SILENCE AND REALLY CHANGE THE CLIMATE OF YOUR SCHOOL, SO PLAN AN “ASK”! IN ADDITION TO THIS RESOURCE, THERE’S AN ENTIRE SECTION ON PLANNING AN “ISSUE” IN THE DAY OF SILENCE ORGANIZING MANUAL AS WELL AS IDEAS FOR GENERAL AND STATE-SPECIFIC “ASKS” ON WWW.DAYOFSILENCE.ORG— CHECK IT OUT!

HERE ARE A FEW STEPS TO FOLLOW IN ORDER TO MAKE YOUR ASK A LITTLE BIT EASIER:

1. IDENTIFY YOUR ISSUE! What does your group want to “ask” for with the Day of Silence? With that, your group will want to determine what the problems are and pick one as well as one solution to that problem – this is your group’s “issue.” Strategically, you’ll want to remember the mission of your group and the purpose of the Day of Silence. Don’t be afraid to think too big, but remember you can make change happen in steps. Students in Florida and New York used the Day of Silence to “ask” elected officials to pass the statewide legislation pending in the state legislature. Their “asks” were on the back of the Day of Silence speaking cards as postcards for Day of Silence participants and other students to sign and send to elected officials to show student support for passing laws to protect all students from discrimination and harassment.

2. PREPARE! GET THE FACTS! Who needs to know about and support your “ask?” What research do you need to do? If you want a better library, what books do you want and whom should you talk to in order to get that? If you want a teacher training, what things and topics do you want included? It is good to contact schools that already have what you want for your school. Find out ways that other people have gone about making this change and use that information too. Also, you might want to consider showing how the problem of harassment affects students. You can use statistics from GLSEN’s National School Climate Survey or implement the local school climate survey to determine the extent of name-calling in your school.



DAY of SILENCE

www.dayofsilence.org



3. WHAT'LL YOU SAY? Once you have your “issue” and facts, it will be important for your group to agree to “messages” or “talking points.” Simply put, these are the standard phrases that everyone will use and which are easy enough for each Day of Silence participant to be able to remember. It will be important to have your “talking points” include your “issue” and facts as well as the most compelling reasons why your “ask” should be approved. Catchy phrases are also good, like “Day of Silence: Support the GSA! Teacher training, and stop name-calling TODAY!”

4. FIND YOUR ALLIES! What adults or students would make a good contribution to your “ask?” If you want a teacher training, why not attempt to become allies with the Future Teachers club? Finding your allies can be easier than it sounds – brainstorm as many student clubs or individuals to join as participants or as part of a coalition or planning group for Day of Silence. Not everyone is going to be interested in joining you, but don’t be afraid to “ask” people. Also, don’t rule anyone out! The GSA at Homestead HS in Wisconsin asked the Bible Club to join their Day of Silence coalition and support their “ask” for changes to the school’s policy because the club’s members has also experienced harassment in school. The first step in getting allies is asking them if they are interested in being a visible ally and participating in Day of Silence with you. Also, don’t discount the allies who are already visible. Make sure you include them in your strategy.

5. LET FOLKS KNOW! Make sure that Day of Silence participants are aware that participating in the Day of Silence is also asking for a specific request. Students at Hellgate HS in Missoula, MT made pins, posters and t-shirts. You can also have a petition at the Day of Silence sign up or just include the request on your posters, speaking cards or t-shirts – this allows the “ask” to get out there. Also, check out ideas for “postcard asks” on the Day of Silence website. Let people know what you want!

6. SET IT UP! After Day of Silence, it’s time to “ask!” Set up your meeting and bring your research, your student support and you and your planning committee or coalition! If you had petitions, letters of support, the number of students who supported or participated in Day of Silence or any other information that relates and can help – then prepare and bring it all to your meeting. Remember to plan this meeting well and designate facilitators as well as an agenda and “talking points!” It will help the meeting go better!

7. WORK IT OUT! Remember “asking” does not guarantee a “yes,” but try your hardest. That said, you should follow up, and always send a thank you or acknowledgement to everyone who helped and the “decision-maker” (even if the problem was not solved). Remember, don’t give up! If it does not work out this year – there is always next year. You’re starting something! Good Luck!



> K-12 Students Contact **GLSEN** @ (212) 727 0135 OR info@dayofsilence.org

> College & University Students Contact **USSR** @ (202) 347-8772 OR lgbt@usstudents.org