

### O&A Prompt/scenario ideas

- Write from the perspective of a volunteer/visiting preacher forced to preach what he/she doesn't believe (condemning homosexuality).
- Write from the perspective of an LGBTQ person who is part of an accepting congregation.
- Write from the perspective of an altar boy, and his struggles of being closeted at church, or of his journey of coming out to his pastor who turns out to accept him.
- Write from the perspective of a youth group leader who teaches acceptance to her students.
- Write about how religion plays a role in your life, as an ally or as an LGBTQ person.
- Write from the perspective of an ally or LGBTQ person who refuses to be a part of a church or religion, because of the general trend that churches preach against homosexual behavior.
- Write about how religion plays a positive role in your life.
- Write about your search for an accepting community.
- Write about self-love and self-acceptance
- Write from the perspective of someone advocating for gay rights/acceptance in the church.
- Write about your experience being trans and religious/your stance on religion.
- Write about your experience being gay/lesbian and religious/your stance on religion.
- Write about your experience identifying as being gender fluid and being religious/your stance on religion.
- Write about your experience as identifying as having fluid sexuality and being religious/your stance on religion.
- Write about your experience being LGBTQ of color and being religious/your stance on religion.

From the publication *“Why Congregations Need LGBT Members and Motivating Greater Rights Advocacy Among Clergy and Congregations.”*

*From the point of a church attendee:*

“The minister at our church preaches about homosexuality like it’s a condition afflicting people out there in the secular world. He has no idea that my sister is a lesbian... I am very uncomfortable when I hear him saying such condemnatory things about gay and lesbian people when I know how deep my sister’s faith is...”

“My son is gay, but I know he doesn’t talk about it in church. And I don’t feel as if I can talk about it in church. He’s in the closet, and his father and I are in the closet too....We don’t feel we can be open, and I’m sure there are others who are in the same position....”

“At church, we’ve helped each other through some tough situations: divorce, deaths of loved ones, illnesses...but when it comes to LGBT youth in our congregation, I feel as if people would be too shocked to handle it. Aren’t we supposed to have the love at church that can handle anything?”

“Kids at church and our youth advisor make these jokes about fags and queers. I’d never be accepted there if they knew I was gay.”

“I can’t decide whether God cares about my being bi.”

“I think homosexual behavior is a sin, but it’s clear that these kids aren’t choosing their homosexual orientation... So what do we want them to do? Become heterosexual? This would be a solution for the church, but is that possible?... We’ve got to let them know that we don’t blame them for an orientation and that God loves them and wants to help them. But how do we convey that when we see the behavior as a sin?” (take on a positive stance with this, not so negative)

*From the perspective of a clergy member:*

“...On a personal level, I fully accept them (LGBTQ) and would be delighted to be pasturing a church that was truly welcoming of them. But I’ve done nothing in my church to encourage that kind of openness...I’ve been too afraid of starting a controversy or getting in trouble with the district superintendent... The gay and lesbian people of my denomination must be disappointed in me...”

“I have a lot of guilt... I’ve let my fear become more important than my faith...”

“...I’ve always been a big advocate for civil rights and a greater role for women in the denomination. If I were younger and had less to lose, I think I would be more openly supportive of gay and lesbian rights including ordination...but some of my members are very conservative. I’m afraid that by speaking out, I’ll damage the church. The truth, of course, is that the church is damaged by my not speaking out...”

“She isn’t a member of my church, and she rarely ever comes, but I have a friend who is a male to female trans. I admire the courage that she’s shown, and I’m ashamed that I don’t think she would be welcome in my church.”

“Our coming out in full support of gay and lesbian people was one of the best things we’ve done at our (local) church. I was afraid we might lose a few members over it, but the reverse is what happened.”

“I know that many ministers in my denomination would disagree, but I think civil unions ought to be legal for gay people... Why would we deny them the opportunity to express commitment?”

“Although the ceremony doesn’t have any legal standing in my state, I’ve performed commitment ceremonies for four gay couples. These have been among the most meaningful services I’ve ever performed.”

“If my marriage isn’t good, it’s not because gay people are able to get married. It’s because my wife and I have a problem.”

“...Most of these young (LGBTQ) people are continuing to be active (in the church). That says to me that God and the church are very important to them.”

“When I think of all the pain that some of the gay people I’ve known have gone through because of rejection by friends, family, and the church, I just have to think that they didn’t “choose” to have this orientation. It’s just a part of who they are, and that has to mean it’s a part of God’s plan.”