

Faith and 2SLGBTQI Youth

Proud 2SLGBTQI People-of-Faith

Every student deserves a learning environment in which they are reflected. Too often, Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, and intersex (2SLGBTQI) identities are falsely positioned as irreconcilable with identities of faith.

The quotations below are excerpted from sources you will find in the Additional Learning Resources Handout.

They capture inspiring examples of 2SLGBTQI folks whose gender and/or attraction identities are proudly integrated with their rich sense of identification with a wide range of faith traditions. These parts of themselves are united not in spite of one another, but as an expression of their wholeness.

Use the examples below, and explore many additional stories from the Additional Learning Resources Handout to amplify diverse representation of 2SLGBTQI people-of-faith in your own classrooms, Gender-Sexuality Alliances (GSAs), and whole school communities.

Dr. Alexandria Wilson

“Two spirit enables us to circle back to where we belong and reclaim, reinvent, and redefine our beginnings, our roots, our communities, our support systems and our collective and individuals selves.”

Genovese, M., et al. (2011). *Safe and caring schools for Two Spirit youth: A guide for teachers and students*. Two Spirit Circle of Edmonton Society. <https://www.teachers.abca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Diversity-Equity-and-Human-Rights/Safe%20and%20Caring%20Schools%20for%20Two-spirited%20youth.pdf>

Yunique

“As an immigrant queer Muslim woman of color, I feel non-existent, sometimes even within my queer community. There aren’t many like me who are out there and visible. But...Allah never left me. I never left Allah. In my day-to-day life I hold Allah close to my heart. I feel the guidance, and that’s my relationship with Islam: Allah guiding me through my everyday life.”

Habib, S. (2016, Apr 11). *Just me and Allah : A queer Muslim photo project*. Tumblr. <http://queermuslimproject.tumblr.com/>

Jay

"I would not have come out as a gay man if it weren't for my Church. I would not go walking though the street in make-up and in drag if it weren't for my faith and Jesus. [...] Sexuality and spirituality are very interconnected. I believe in God. I believe that Jesus loves me because I am gay, not in spite of my sexuality."

Them. (2018, May 3). *Can you be religious and queer?* [Video]. <https://www.them.us/video/watch/can-you-be-religious-and-queer>

Melissa

"I feel very Jewish, very queer and very human. I grew up in an Ultra-Orthodox Jewish community. [...] I do Yiddish theatre and I did this play and it was a lesbian love story. And to be able to do something I love, which is act, play a queer woman, which I am, and to say all these loving things and sexual things to this woman in Yiddish is really amazing. It was things that I was able to express that brought together all these things in my life."

Them. (2018, May 3). *Can you be religious and queer?* [Video]. <https://www.them.us/video/watch/can-you-be-religious-and-queer>

Vivek Shraya

"The thing about the religious atmosphere is I think that it just really built my confidence because it was one of the only safe spaces I had as a kid. One of the things I talk about is how for a lot of queer people and gender nonconforming people, religion tends to be a place where we are ostracized or our identities and dismissed and for me that wasn't my narrative. I think it is largely because Hindu masculinity and Indian masculinity are very different from North American masculinity—so like, the Gods have very long hair, they're very pretty, they sing and play flute and all their friends are women – In a lot of ways, Hindu male gods are kind of like my first male role models and my first queer role models in the absence of queer role models in Edmonton and so, my religious faith was really a space where I get to flourish outside of school where I was being treated as abnormal."

Esposito, C. (Executive Producer). (2017, Nov). Vivek Shraya. (Episode 18). [Audio Podcast Episode]. In *Queery With Cameron Esposito*. Earwolf. <https://open.spotify.com/episode/4NBbr6Zc9o3Mzr1XJ1Q7mw>