# THE TZEDEK CENTER GUIDE TO PRIDE

## DVAR TORAH BY EMILY JAEGER

I love Pride Month. I love that we take time to celebrate LGBTQ+ resilience—the courage to live openly, to refuse to disappear, to claim space even in the face of adversity. There is something deeply familiar and profoundly Jewish about the instinct to mark survival with joy, to say, *we survived–let's eat (something rainbow colored!)*. And yet, I also resist Pride Month. Because haven't we, LGBTQ+ people, always been here–whether hidden or in plain sight? Our stories have been woven into our tradition between the lines of Joseph's fabulous rainbow cloak and beyond. Our ancestors, our families, our clergy, our teachers, our neighbors have been integral to Jewish life–*l'dor vador*–from generation to generation. We deserve belonging and visibility every day, not just in June.

And still, we mark this month. We need a moment that is set apart—a marker, like the stone under Jacob's head in Gen. 28:16. Jacob wakes up from his dream of angels and ladders and says, "Surely God was in this place (*makom)*, and I did not know it." Sometimes we need a reminder to see what has always been there. Pride Month is that *makom* once a year, to say *we are here!* We are holy, we belong, we are the "we" of this community. So that July 1st, we can all return, day after day, to the deeper truth: that every person is created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God, and that our communities are only sacred when all of us belong.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF PRIDE MONTH

In June of 1970, the first Pride parade was held in New York, after decades of protest against LGBTQ+ oppression. Since then, Pride Month has been celebrated in June to appreciate the queer and trans people who fought for our rights yesterday so we could thrive today. While it is extremely important to recognize and celebrate these gains, we also must remember our responsibility, especially as Jews, to continue fighting the battles that lie ahead.

## LGBTQ+ BELONGING IN YOUR SYNAGOGUE

The first step towards creating a culture and environment of belonging is a commitment to a vision and the values of equality and respect for all people.

This **Keshet guide** provides some helpful tips on creating a community of belonging. Check out the full guide for more detailed information.

**Here are five things synagogues can do to advance this vision:**

1. Use inclusive language on all communications and in documents
2. Designate all-gender restroom
3. Respect people's names and pronouns and don't assume
4. Host a training for your staff/community members on terms and concepts
5. Organize LGBTQ+ programming (like a Pride Shabbat!)

## HOSTING A PRIDE SHABBAT AT YOUR SYNAGOGUE

Pride Shabbat is one way to provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ congregation members. This celebration reminds us that our communities are beautiful, joyous, generative spaces of love and belonging.

Our **Pride Resources One Pager** can be used as a resource to support your planning a Pride Shabbat in your community.

**Additional Resources**

- Our **Trans Toolkit for Advocates and Allies**
- **Keshet's Guide to Pride Shabbat Planning** and **Pride Shabbat Sermon Guide**

**Here are five steps to take into consideration:**

1. Involve LGBTQ+ community members in planning process
2. Define goals for your community's Pride Shabbat
3. Ensure accessibility for all members
4. Add prayers and readings to service that highlight queer voices and experiences
5. Develop D'var Torah that connects June Torah portions to LGBTQ+ themes