

Drawing Your Queer Heroes

Queer communities are full of heroes: people who help and share and create and make our spaces vibrant and beautiful. Throughout history and across geographies, queer people have told stories, created art and music, advanced science and technology, cared for others, and fought for justice—shaping communities small and large in powerful ways. Queer heroes are not only found in public office or among celebrities, but also in our everyday lives: the family members who support us, the friends who inspire us, the teachers who leads a GSA, the activists who move to make our communities fairer for all, the people who run mutual aid campaigns (sharing resources, time, money with people and communities who are in need), and the neighbours who organize local Pride events. Heroes can be as close as home and as visible as the public stage.

This Invitation to Play encourages children to imagine and draw their own queer heroes. Who do you look up to? Who makes you feel proud, cared for, or inspired? Through drawing, playing, and collaging children can celebrate queerness in their own communities while also learning about the many ways queer joy and resilience are honored around the world.

Planning	
Summary: In this Invitation to play, the room will be divided into stations with activities themed around queer heroes. After the educator briefly introduces the topic and the stations, learners will be able to move between and engage with stations however they like.	
Materials Needed	Preparing the Space
Drawing station: • Paper • Pencils • Crayons or markers Dress up and roleplay station: • Costumes & dress up station • Dolls & puppets • Doll clothes & props Collage station: • Tape • Glue • Magazines • Paper/cardstock Gallery walk: • Photos of queer heroes	Arrange tables and chairs to create 3 stations: • A drawing station, where learners can draw queer heroes • A dress up and roleplay station where learners can pretend to be engaging in heroic acts: sharing, creating, making, doing activism, foregrounding justice for all using themselves and dolls and puppets. Around the perimeter of the room, hang up photos of queer heroes from the community and from further afield. Encourage learners to talk to chat about what they notice about the photos and how they can embody the spirit of queer heroes in their own classroom (Sharing! Creating! Making! Etc!). • A collage station where learners can show what they think are heroic actions. Making! Doing activism! Sharing! Creating! There are many ways to be a hero.

• Share stories of queer heroes (magazine clippings / newspaper cutouts / stories from the library)	
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Connecting with Community

Consider inviting members of your local queer community to lead an activity for your learners. For example:

- **Guest speakers:** Invite a queer community member (artist, musician, activist, or family friend) to share a short story or talk about someone who inspires them. Children can then draw that person as a hero.
- **Queer Heroes Gallery Walk:** Print photos or short bios of local queer figures (from Pride organizers to teachers to musicians). Let children “meet” them through a gallery walk, then choose one to draw.
- **Hero Interviews:** Encourage kids to ask a queer friend, family member, or guest questions like “Who inspires you?” or “What makes you proud?” and then turn the answers into a hero portrait.
- **Community Celebration Connection:** Take children to a Pride event, queer art show, or library storytime hosted by queer community members, and invite them afterward to draw someone they met or saw.
- **Pen-Pal or Postcard Heroes:** Connect with a local GSA or queer youth group and exchange drawings or letters about “who our heroes are.” Children could illustrate their hero and send it as a postcard. Encourage intergenerational collaborations here (like queer “big buddies”).
- **Family & Friends as Heroes:** Encourage children to talk with queer relatives, neighbours, or family friends about their stories—then draw them as superheroes with capes, shields, or other imaginative symbols.
- **Hero Hat or Badge Making:** Invite a queer community member to visit and help kids design “hero badges” or hats to wear while they draw their chosen queer hero.

Expanding

Children may engage with the stations in ways we might not expect. They might combine activities from different stations in creative ways or find ways to play in the space that are completely different from what we imagined. Children’s inventiveness and suggestions for play can inspire our reflections on the activities and inform how we set up future learning spaces.

Engaging

Supporting	Extending
Educators may circulate among different tables and join some of the activities. Educators can be curious and ask their learners to tell them more about how they are exploring the idea of queer heroes.	Encourage learners to share stories about what they think hero means, and the heroes they have encountered in their lives.

	Ask learners what kinds of heroic things they have done (How do they help? What have they made? How do they create, etc)? If a guest is present, encourage learners to ask questions and learn more about what the guest thinks about heroes. And who are their queer heroes? Invite learners who are interested to share what they've made or something they learned in front of the group.
Noticing and Recording	
As you have conversations with your learners, summarize some of their ideas on a whiteboard. Take photos of the learners while they are doing the activities. Remember to ask learners if it is okay to take photos, and offer the option to not have their face in the photo.	
Reflecting	
Documenting	
Take photos of the stations before and during the activities. Ask learners if there is anything they would like added to the whiteboard where you've been keeping notes. Document the whiteboard notes by either taking a photo or writing them down. Write down your observations about what the learners enjoyed about the activities, how they engaged with the activities in ways you didn't expect, and any ideas you have for changes you'd like to make for next time.	
Initiating Community Reflection	
Share photos of the activities and the children's artwork on the school website and/or in the hallway outside the classroom. If you invited a guest, ask them how the experience was for them, and if there is anyone they would recommend inviting as a future guest.	
Reviewing	

How did the learners respond to the invitations to play? What can we add to foster curiosity and creativity?

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