



Catholic Allies
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An Open Letter to our Indianapolis Catholic School Educators and Administrators

Hello to our dear teachers, administrators, and priests to whom we entrust our children's minds and hearts. We are so honored for you to hold such an important role in our children's lives. We as parents are proud to trust you as their mentors as they grow spiritually, academically, and in their social-emotional wellness. We need you to know that we see you. We see how you notice even the most subtle signs that a child is struggling or in need of something more. We see how you love and accept our children as your own. We see how you make financial sacrifices because our Catholic community is so important to you. For all of this, we and the next generation of Catholics are forever grateful.

There are also some things we need you to hear. We believe in the importance of having hard conversations and in teaching our kids that some things are *too important* to avoid discussing. Young people who identify as LGBTQ are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers ([Johns et al., 2019](#); [Johns et al., 2020](#)). We believe it is our duty to teach children how to respect, uphold the dignity of, and accept *all* of their peers as children of God. We believe in proactively ensuring that our schools are safe for LGBTQ children instead of assuming that our status quo is good enough.

The Catechism specifically states that the LGBTQ population "must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided" ([Catechism of the Catholic Church section 2358](#)). To heed this call, we must discuss *and* provide a space for students to safely connect with their peers on this topic. Lots of small conversations are crucial in making sure that all of our children absorb this message. These conversations start at home. They continue at school. Our schools are not *just schools*. They are the primary exposure sites to the most influential people in our children's lives outside of our homes: their peers and their educators

Research supports the value of alliance groups between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ students. LGBTQ students who *attend* schools that have these groups (regardless of group participation) hear fewer anti-LGBTQ+ remarks, are less likely to feel unsafe or miss school, experience less-severe victimization and have higher GPAs ([GLSEN 2021 National School Climate Survey](#)). The presence of such a group alone is enough to send a message that these kids are not alone. Establishing a group that is *specific to this cause* does not create division. It creates a lifeline for a group that has historically been oppressed and targeted by discrimination - a group that exists within our classrooms and church pews.

We believe that the coexistence of LGBTQ-specific conversations and Catholic education is not only possible but *mandated* by the Catechism. Supporting LGBTQ student mental health and preventing suicide is a pro-life issue. "Having at least one accepting adult can reduce the risk of a suicide attempt among LGBTQ young people by 40%." ([The Trevor Project, 2022](#)). We envision a world in which a Catholic educator could be a student's one accepting adult. *You* have the agency to make that possible. Your words hold power. The decision to act on this issue could be the difference between a student thriving or a community mourning.

In earnest prayer,
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