



PFLAG Chapter Social Events

Social events provide an opportunity for PFLAG members and their communities to interact outside the bounds of your chapter's other more structured activities and programming. This can lead to community building and increased engagement in your chapter and can be just as healing as a support meeting.

Social events can occur as a one-time thing, or can be something your chapter does annually, quarterly, or even monthly. The events can be free of charge to attend, or for special events you might charge a fee, either to cover the cost of the event or to fundraise for your chapter. Whether they are open to members only or the wider community, adults only or for the whole family, social events are a great way to bring people together beyond a typical meeting.

Here are some tips and suggestions for these events.

Event Brainstorming

Often PFLAG chapters know they want to host a social event but aren't sure where to start or what the event might look like. The very first thing you'll want to do is brainstorm.

Here is a list of possible events to kick off some thoughts

- Picnic
- Bowling
- Craft night
 - Consider making crafts that can be handed out by the chapter when tabling at other events
- Board game night
- Community meal
 - This can be a potluck or have prepared food. If you're asking people to bring food to share, ensure they list ingredients to avoid food allergies and respect dietary restrictions and preferences. [Sign Up Genius](#) is great for these types of events

- If you're hosting the event at a restaurant, ask if you can get a private room
- Consider getting takeout or catering and hosting at your regular meeting place
- Holiday party
- Coffee/tea hour
- Drag story hour
- Group meditation or mindfulness
- Yoga or another group fitness class
- Trivia night
- Birding/Hiking/Nature walk
- Swim party
- Fishing club
- Sports game or event
 - A group can go to a local sporting event like a Pride night or roller derby bout
- Theater Night
 - A group attends a local theater performance, usually with LGBTQ+ themes
- Story hour/open mic night
 - This may be a larger-scale event, and offers an opportunity for chapter and community members to show off their storytelling or other performance skills
- Ice Cream Social
- Bingo - with or without drag performers

Family Event Brainstorming

While PFLAG is not a youth-serving organization, often parents or family members want to include their children in PFLAG activities. While you should avoid having minors attending support meetings or events (and they should never be permitted without a legal parent or guardian present), family events can be a great way to build community engagement and create opportunities for social connection.

As you plan your family event, be sure that no minors attend without their parent or legal guardian. *Explicitly state this in your advertising to avoid having to turn away individuals at the door.*

LGBTQ+-Focused Activities for Families

- Do a read-aloud. Consider pairing it with an activity or craft, and consider including a local drag performer as part of your story hour!

- Read [The Mother of a Movement](#), the story of Jeanne Manford and the founding of PFLAG.
 - Activity suggestion: Make signs (with images and words of the attendee's choice) to mimic Jeanne Manford's sign at the Christopher Street Day Parade. You could even save them for the next parade your chapter is in!
- Read [Marsha and Silvia Start a Revolution!: The Story of Trans Women of Color Who Made LGBTQ+ History](#).
 - Activity suggestion: Create flower crowns to mimic Marsha P. Johnson's. This can be out of real or fake flowers, origami or cut paper flowers made as part of the activity.
- Have a dance party! For LGBTQ+-specific music, [check out this album of music for children focused on trans and non-binary identity](#).
- Have the attendees make their own personal Pride flags to reflect who they are as people, not just their LGBTQ+ identity or the identity of their loved one.
- Do a nature walk. Ask the children to find an item in nature that is the same color as each color in the rainbow or each color in a Pride flag of your or their choice.
- Play a match or memory game! Consider using LGBTQ+ imagery like Pride flags, LGBTQ+ celebrities or historical figures, or rainbows.
- Paint rocks! Using paint or paint pens, kids and their adults can paint rocks with LGBTQ+ iconography, inclusive messages, or Pride colors. Consider putting in attendees' yards or out in the community. If the latter, keep safety in mind when deciding where to place your newly painted treasures.

Non-LGBTQ+-Focused Activities for Families

- Plant plants. Consider decorating terracotta pots with paint pens before planting seeds or starters in them.
- Engage in volunteer work! Many volunteer projects do not accept youth under a certain age, but a reliable family-friendly volunteer activity is a trash pickup along a local roadway or in a local park.
- Any arts and crafts project is great. Have a coloring station, a bracelet-making set up, a

collage station, or anything else you can dream up. Explore Pinterest for more craft ideas.

- In an outdoor space, consider including bubbles! [Giant bubbles](#) especially can be a huge hit.
- If you have a volunteer who is interested and has some artistic skill, ask them to do face painting for the youth attendees.
- If your event is in a park, invite the children to make fairy houses or do nature art, such as leaf stamping.

Event Planning

Once you decide on the type of event you are going to host, make sure you then engage in a thorough, thoughtful, and detailed planning process. Depending on the scale of the event, you may need to start planning as early as six months out. For more information about a planning timeline, [be sure to review our sample plan and timeline](#).

Liability and Safety

Most critical to any successful event are considerations for liability and safety.

Here are a few tips:

- Avoid serving alcohol at events. A liquor license may be required and liability issues arise. This is especially true for family events.
- Check into local and state regulations about auctions, raffles, bingo, and gambling. Start with your state Attorney General's office website.
- Consider getting liability insurance for a larger-scale event, and remember that some venues will require you to have insurance in place in order to hold the event.
- When hosting events in public places like parks, ensure the area is clean and safe and be prepared to appropriately engage with any members of the public that may approach the event.
- Keep safety at the forefront of your event planning! See [PFLAG National's safety guidelines](#) for important information.