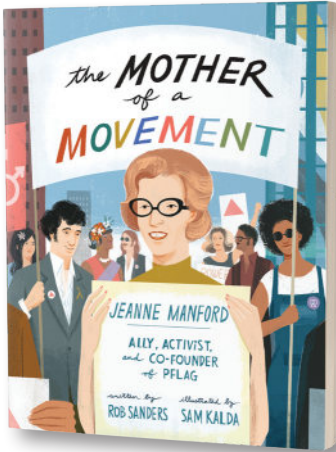




Be Like Jeanne: Allies and LGBTQ+ History



When her son Morty was beaten by New York City officials for handing out pro-gay leaflets, Jeanne Manford wrote a powerful letter to the New York Post to complain about how Morty was treated. In the letter, which was published, she came out as the mother of a gay son. Morty invited his mother to march with him in the June 1972 Christopher Street Parade. While marching, she had the idea to form a group to help parents and families of LGBTQ+ people. That was the beginning of PFLAG.

The Mother of a Movement: Jeanne Manford-Ally, Activist, and Co-Founder of PFLAG, by Rob Sanders, is a true story of parental support and unconditional love. Here's an excerpt from the Discussion Guide at the end of the book.

She could listen. She could love. She could learn and lead. She could speak up. She could show support. That's what Jeanne did.

Activist—someone who speaks out and protests about a cause or issue, especially a political or social cause.

Ally—a person or group who works with others for a common cause or purpose, especially a supporter of a marginalized group, who is usually not a member of the group.

To Think About and Discuss

Use the open-ended questions below to begin conversations with the children in your family, class, club, or organization.

- When was a time you were an ally to someone? Why did you do it? How did it feel to stand up for someone else?
- Has there been a time when someone was an ally to you?
- Do you think it's important to be an ally to others? Why or why not?
- What is an ally and how can I be one?***

In the LGBTQ+ community, an ally is supportive of LGBTQ+ people, behaves in supportive ways, and invites others to be allies, too. While Jeanne Manford is a famous ally, throughout history there are people just like you who have been willing to provide support, encouragement, and help.

Here are some simple ways YOU can be an ally:

START BY LEARNING

Allies are always learning so they can do more and help educate others. You won't always have all the answers, and that's okay! If you make a mistake, apologize and learn how to do better next time.

DON'T LET FEAR STOP YOU

There are lots of reasons why people might be afraid to be allies. Maybe they're nervous about speaking up. Maybe they aren't sure where to start. Listen to what others tell you. Figure out what feels scary to you. Then you can figure out how to take action.

BE ACTIVE

Start with something simple, like putting a rainbow sticker on your backpack and telling friends why it's there. Use what you learn from books like this one to talk about why you care and help others be allies. Most of all, treat others with kindness and respect.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO BE AN ALLY

There's no one way to be an ally. Some of us are loud and visible, while others help in quieter ways. But we're all working to reach the same goals of equality and respect for everyone.

Hear 13 celebrities read *The Mother of a Movement* aloud.

This Article's Author

Rob Sanders is a former elementary school teacher who writes funny and fierce fiction and nonfiction. He is the author of such acclaimed titles as *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag*, *Stonewall: A Building. An Uprising. A Revolution.*, and *Peaceful Fights for Equal Rights*. He lives in Brandon, Florida. Visit his website or follow him on Twitter.

**The information in this section is adapted from *Guide to Being a Straight Ally* and *Guide to Being a Trans Ally* by PFLAG National, part of the Straight for Equality™ program ©2022 PFLAG, Inc.