



## Beacon Press Teachers' Guide

*Mama's Boy, Preacher's Son*  
*A Memoir of Growing Up, Coming Out,*  
*and Changing America's Schools*  
**Kevin Jennings**

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### CONTENTS

1. A Note to Teachers and School Administrators
2. How to Use This Guide
3. Prereading Exercise
4. Interdisciplinary Connections for Advanced Students
5. Writing Prompts and Discussion Questions
  - o Prologue
  - o Chapter 1: "Deathbeds Are Waiting"
  - o Chapter 2: "Happy Birthday to Me"
  - o Chapter 3: "The Road to Salvation, Part One"
  - o Chapter 4: "The Road to Salvation, Part Two"
  - o Chapter 5: "Tests of Allegiance"
  - o Chapter 6: "Getting Out"
  - o Chapter 7: "Harvard Boy"
  - o Chapter 8: "Going Back In"
  - o Chapter 9: "Out for Good"
  - o Chapter 10: "Getting Organized"
  - o Chapter 11: "Making History"
  - o Chapter 12: "Going National"
  - o Chapter 13: "Going Home"
  - o Chapter 14: "Alpha and Omega"
  - o Epilogue
6. Special Projects
7. About Kevin Jennings
8. About the Author of This Guide

## A NOTE TO TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

If your school is like many others in the United States today, you are-to varying degrees-addressing ongoing problems and conflicts that arise from student-on-student bullying and teasing. The targets of ridicule, ostracism, and violence haven't changed over the years. They are children who are perceived to be "different" in some way, falling outside the community's norm or ideal. They might be from homes with limited economic means or from families deemed "nontraditional" for a variety of reasons. Sometimes children with learning disabilities or certain physical characteristics are bullied. There are others who, by virtue of their sexual orientation or gender identity, find themselves targets of teasing and abuse.

Even though most teachers and school administrators believe that discrimination and bigotry against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people is wrong, relatively few have had the will, wisdom, or tools to address the problem. So, unlike other victims of harassment, children and young adults who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered are faced with an untenable choice: attempt to live life in the closet or face a hostile and even dangerous world as their true selves. A significant number of young LGBT persons simply can't live with this choice and thus attempt suicide. Others internalize negative messages sent by our society concerning LGBT people, spurring self-hatred and self-destructive behavior, including substance abuse. Still others suffer from years of depression and low self-esteem, often triggered by family and friends' rejection.

In his compelling memoir, Kevin Jennings shares the struggle, secrecy, and shame of being someone who for many years felt unacceptable to both his family and his community. But he also shares each step in his journey toward his personal and professional coming out and coming on strong against institutionalized homophobia. Through his story, readers learn about the day-to-day challenges of a closeted gay boy in a typical school community. But that is only the beginning. Jennings's story inspires personal, local, and national introspection and an open examination of why homophobia in our public schools, while a persistent and prevalent problem, remains largely ignored.

In a world in which discrimination against LGBT persons is tolerated, it may seem a daunting undertaking to address the issue in a school setting. After reading Jennings's book, you and your students may well feel a moral imperative to be silent no more.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide provides a variety of discussion questions and extension activities that can help students make personal connections with and more deeply understand the central ideas in *Mama's Boy, Preacher's Son: A Memoir of Growing Up, Coming Out, and Changing America's Schools*. Depending on your style, these questions can be used in large or small classroom discussions, in tests or quizzes, or as in-class writing or homework assignments, among other possibilities.

Writing prompts and discussion questions are provided for each of the book's chapters. These prompts may be given before or after reading the corresponding chapter. For best results in

stimulating lively participation in class discussions, we recommend distributing the discussion questions in advance. You may choose to use all of the prompts and discussion questions or select those that you think will be most compelling to your students. Note that some of the prompts and questions are more challenging than others and thus may be more appropriate for older or more advanced students. Additionally, you may prefer to combine chapters, using only one or two of the prompts or questions to cover multiple chapter assignments. Suggested standards-based educational tie-ins are included, as well as ideas for multimedia and technology-based projects.

## **PREREADING EXERCISE**

To foster students' ability to connect with the subject matter, it may be worthwhile to begin each class with a writing exercise that stimulates personal reflection on key themes. Here are some to try prior to reading Chapter One.

1. How would you describe your role and the way you act in the following groups?
  - In your family
  - In your school
  - With your friends
  - In your community

Do you act differently or the same in each of these groups? In what ways? Do you ever worry that if someone in one of those groups saw your behavior or heard you speak in another group, he or she might not like you anymore?

2. Have you ever tried to "pass" as someone different from who you really are? For example, have you ever tried to make people think you were wealthier, smarter, or more experienced than you really are/were?

If students have trouble with this question, ask them if they have ever laughed at a joke they didn't understand, worn a fashionable pair of shoes or other clothing that they couldn't really afford, acted as though they had seen a popular movie or band, or traveled somewhere special when they hadn't.

3. List three or four things about yourself that define you (for example, you're an accomplished student or athlete, you follow a specific religious tradition, you have a particular hair color or style, or you love a certain kind of music). Now, pick one that is especially important to you and write about what it might be like if you had to keep that part of yourself a secret from everyone. How would that make you feel? What might you do about it?
4. What are the biggest challenges that most or all adolescents face as individuals in middle and high school? List as many as you can think of and then order them, with number one being the most difficult. Possible responses might include inclusion or exclusion by certain groups, bullying and teasing, first love and romantic attractions, stereotypical gender roles and expectations, or family problems and pressures.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS

Jennings's memoir offers a number of opportunities for interdisciplinary study. You could include in your class sessions an introduction to adolescent psychology, especially the stages of psychosocial development. This may enable students to gain a deeper understanding of Jennings's development from childhood to adulthood as well as their own. It would also help students to grasp the universality of the coming-of-age process-regardless of sexual orientation or identity.

You could also introduce anthropological, sociological, and/or historical perspectives on orthodox or fundamentalist religions. This could enhance student understanding of the power of religious systems in shaping individual identity. The documentary film *Jesus Camp* could be a useful complement to this discussion.

And, of course, an introduction to gay history and activism in the United States would help students appreciate Jennings's story within a broader context. Here, you could include the film *The Times of Harvey Milk*, which is mentioned in the book.

## WRITING PROMPTS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Prologue

**Writing Prompt I:** Can you remember when you first had an understanding of your family's economic situation? How old were you? Did a family member use any particular words to describe your status, such as "poor," "working class," "middle class," "comfortable," or "rich"? Were there material things that you wanted but were told your family couldn't afford? What kinds of things? Or, were you always given everything you asked for? Did you ever feel envy or awkwardness about money around your peers? Did you ever feel superior to other children because of what you had?

**Writing Prompt II:** Respond to the following excerpt: "I was not a wanted child . . . I was supposed to be reassured that my birth was part of God's plan, but when the troubles and misery of the years to come struck and I witnessed my mother's struggle to take care of this unplanned, unwanted child-of me-knowing this story only made me feel like a burden who should never have been born."

### Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jennings open his story the way he did? What important contextual information is conveyed through the setting, the historical references, and the Bible verses?
2. Predict the extent to which religion will affect Jennings's development, as a boy and later as a young man.
3. The Prologue ends with, "So I guess there was never a time when I felt like I was a normal boy." What is he saying? Can you recall a time when you felt that way?

## Chapter 1: "Deathbeds Are Waiting"

**Writing Prompt I:** Think about your sisters and brothers (if you have any). Do your parent(s) or guardian(s) have categories they use-either openly or through their behavior-to describe each of you? For example, who is considered the "good student," the "reliable one," the "troublemaker," or the "athletic one"? Are these categories useful or limiting? Have you ever felt that the way you are categorized in your family is inaccurate?

**Writing Prompt II:** Think about some of the key messages you received about how you should behave when you were little. List as many as you can. Examples might include "Share with others" or "Be nice to younger kids." If you were raised in a religious tradition, try to recall some of the messages your faith conveyed about how to be "good" and "bad." Which of those messages are still meaningful to you? Are there any that make you uncomfortable or that you simply reject?

### Discussion Questions

1. What role did sports play in the Jennings family? How did it influence each member and the family as a whole?
2. How does young Kevin "fail" at sports? Why does it matter to him? Can you think of one of your interests or activities that your parents valued more than you did? Were you successful in it or not? Who cared more about your success-you or your parent/guardian?
3. For advanced students: Chet Jennings, Kevin's father, became a preacher after a stint in the Merchant Marine and becoming a born-again Christian. How does Kevin feel about his father, based on the description of his conversion and ministry on pages 5-10? Find examples from the text to support your opinion.
4. For advanced students: How do Kevin's questions about God and salvation-and his parents' answers-lead him to conclude that "the world was unfair, that death and damnation loomed at every turn, and that God was more intent on punishment than on mercy"?

## Chapter 2: "Happy Birthday to Me"

**Writing Prompt I:** What kinds of mixed messages does eight-year-old Kevin get about how to behave after his father's sudden death? How does he respond to those messages? What messages didn't Kevin get at that difficult time that might have helped him?

**Writing Prompt II:** At his father's burial, Kevin begins to cry. His brother tells him, "Don't cry. Be a man. Don't be a faggot." What was Kevin's brother's underlying message? If you are a boy, describe what you have learned about what it means to be a man. If you are a girl, describe your ideas about masculinity. (Alternatively, you could ask students to make a list of the defining characteristics of manhood and masculinity.)

### Discussion Questions

1. How does Kevin's mother respond to his illness on the heels of her husband's death?

2. What is Kevin's reaction to saying good-bye to his father? Did you expect that or find it surprising? Why?
3. For advanced students: What observations does Kevin make-about his father's death, his family's reactions, the funeral, his father's body-that sound like those of a small child? For example, Kevin still remembers the sight of his mangled birthday cake that his mother accidentally drops in the sink. What is it about that detail that is true to a child's experience?

### **Chapter 3: "The Road to Salvation, Part One"**

**Writing Prompt I:** On page 24, Kevin recalls the many times he has been asked, "When did you know you were gay?" How does he answer this question?

**Writing Prompt II:** Think about a story you have heard (more than once) told by a parent, grandparent, or guardian. It may be a story about immigrating to this country, growing up poor or wealthy, being raised by strict or lenient parents, being forced to work at a young age, or something else. Tell the story and reflect on how this experience may have shaped the person's identity and values.

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Skim pages 26-32 and list some of the things Jennings mentions that give you a picture of his family's lifestyle and economic status. What does the tone reveal to you about his attitude toward growing up poor?
2. Kevin's mother's stories were "all of chores and deprivation" (p. 34). How does Kevin respond to their need for more money? What does his mother do?
3. Kevin refers to his daily visits from his "internal policemen" (p. 42). Why does he call them that?
4. For advanced students: Kevin blames himself for his father's untimely death. How does he conflate his emerging sexuality with his father's death?

### **Chapter 4: "The Road to Salvation, Part Two"**

**Writing Prompt:** Think of a time in your life when someone either encouraged or discouraged your interest in some activity-maybe it was a sport, drama, singing, playing an instrument, writing, or learning a martial art. Who was it? What did he or she say to you that made a difference-either positively or negatively? How did that encouragement or discouragement affect your interest and your pursuit of the goal?

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Kevin's mother was forced to end her education in the sixth grade. How did she encourage her son's learning? How did she demonstrate her own intellectual curiosity?
2. On pages 48-52, Kevin describes a conflict with a teacher over a geography question. What is the nature of the conflict? Why is this conflict so difficult for Kevin-beyond his fear of getting struck by his teacher? How does his mother respond to his plight?

3. This chapter details some of the bullying and teasing incidents that Kevin endured during elementary school and junior high school. Make a list of all the ways he is teased, bullied, and threatened. Then, make another list that describes how he responded-physically and emotionally-to this abuse.
4. How do Kevin's teacher Mr. Cultrou and his guidance counselor, Mr. Schiessekopf, make matters even worse? How might they have behaved differently toward Kevin? Have you ever had an experience when a teacher or coach either teased you or ignored your concerns? How did it feel? What did you do about it, if anything?

## **Chapter 5: "Tests of Allegiance"**

**Writing Prompt I:** Think about a social or political issue about which you feel strongly. It might be global warming and the environment, poverty, domestic violence, or animal rights. How did you first become interested in the issue? Why do you feel the way you do about it? How does your religion, if you practice one, affect your views? Do members of your family agree or disagree with your position?

**Writing Prompt II:** Young children seldom question their parents' or guardians' political or social views. As they grow up, however, and are exposed to other points of view, children and young adults often begin to disagree with family members. Can you think of an issue or an idea about which you have changed your perspective? For example, you might have had one position regarding the war in Iraq when it began but have a different opinion now. What influenced your change of heart? Has it caused any disagreements with family members or friends?

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What are the roots of Kevin's activism? Even though his parents tell him that antiwar activists were wrong, Kevin questions this perspective and cites it as the beginning of his identification with social and political action. What else does he mention as an influence in his transformation?
2. Kevin mentions on page 67 that his first political hero was George Wallace, Alabama's outspoken segregationist governor. He also said that he was raised to respect members of the Ku Klux Klan. How does Kevin come to understand his own racism and change? Who, in particular, influences that change? How? Suggest that students look at the book's dedication.
3. How does Kevin's visit to his brother and sister-in-law in Connecticut help to revise his view of blacks? What other realizations does he have about other people who face discrimination, like the poor and women (like his mother)?
4. What did Kevin learn from his work on behalf of women's rights? Are there any similarities between the women's rights movement of the 1970s and the gay rights movement of today?

## Chapter 6: "Getting Out"

**Writing Prompt:** Make a list of the types of kids at your school who are teased, bullied, or simply excluded. Why do people treat them unkindly? What motivates the bullies and teasers to act this way? How do the victims respond to the teasing/bullying?

### Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the differences between Mount Tabor High School and Paisley High? Why was Kevin more comfortable at Paisley High? What were some of the challenges of making the switch?
2. At age sixteen, Kevin decides that "the road to popularity ran through a distillery" (p. 93). What did he mean by that?
3. About what things did Kevin feel shame? How does Kevin use girls, alcohol, and clothing to help?
4. How does Kevin's relationship with Peter end? Why does it end this way? What does how it ends tell us about the different ways gay adolescents cope with their sexuality? How does this breakup affect him?
5. As Kevin becomes less able to resist "temptation" in terms of his sexuality, his views on God change. "Before, I was the one who was failing God; now I decided He was the one who had failed me. I had tried to please Him, had placed my faith in Him, had prayed for Him to lift this cross from my shoulders, and He had repeatedly let me down. Why put faith in Him?" What is "the cross" that Kevin refers to in this passage? What do you make of his reasoning?
6. At the end of this chapter, Kevin has been accepted at Harvard and is graduating from high school. He writes, "I left twelve years of public school-twelve years of never feeling quite normal, twelve years of never feeling like I belonged, twelve years about which I could muster precious few pleasant memories but had countless ones of isolation and sadness-behind" (p. 104). What is it about the high school experience that makes even the popular kids feel like this from time to time? Does this passage speak to your experience, in any way, in high school?

## Chapter 7: "Harvard Boy"

**Writing Prompt:** High school students often complain that their interests, political views, life goals, or lifestyle preferences conflict with those of their parents or guardians. What is it about this time of life that makes young adults reassess how they have been raised and sometimes reject parts (or all) of it?

### Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the exciting and scary parts for Kevin about his first year at Harvard? How does he come to terms with his fears, one by one?
2. Despite the fact that there is a gay student association at Harvard, Kevin initially goes back in the closet, going so far as to secure a "girlfriend" at Smith College. And, after his

first year in college, Kevin starts to engage in extreme dieting and bulimia. Why, after all he had been through in high school, do you think he does these things?

3. In what ways is meeting Andrew, a gay architecture student, a breakthrough for Kevin?
4. Kevin finally comes out to his mom in this chapter. What is her reaction? What is Kevin's reaction to how she receives the news?
5. On page 121, Kevin describes "internalized homophobia," a common problem for people who are LGBT. Can you think of some other examples of this kind of internalizing of self-critical or self-destructive images or messages that is fostered by our culture? [Note: students may need some help with this. Offer the way our culture views women, especially women who are heavy or no longer youthful. Sometimes children whose families are poor refer to others' clothing as "ghetto." More generally, people who make derogatory comments about their own group may have internalized the negativity they feel about this group.]
6. How does Kevin decide on teaching as his first job out of college? What is his mother's reaction to his decision?
7. Kevin is chosen to deliver the Class Day speech during his commencement week at Harvard. How does his speech reflect who he has become as a person, both in terms of the content and the act itself?

## Chapter 8: "Going Back In"

**Writing Prompt:** People tend to act differently in different contexts. It can sometimes seem that we are one person when we are at home with our family, another person when we're with our close friends, and yet another person when we're at church, at our jobs, or with the sports team. It can even seem that we have different "selves." Why is it so hard to "keep it real" and be authentically oneself at all times, with everyone?

### Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of things does Kevin do (and not do) in his first teaching job to connect with students?
2. What are some of the ways the Moses Brown School failed to live up to its progressive ideals, rooted in the Quaker tradition?
3. On page 140, Kevin says that he was "living a lie" at Moses Brown. What does he mean?
4. Why do you think Kevin chose to come out to the young adults enrolled in the Upward Bound program? What are some of their questions? What are their misunderstandings about what it means to be gay?
5. Kevin realizes that he needs to leave Moses Brown because he could not be fully himself there. "By staying silent, I hadn't fooled them into thinking I was straight: I had simply confirmed that this was indeed something too shameful to discuss . . . My silence had confirmed the most horrible lie of all: no one you admired could be gay." How was this realization a breakthrough for Kevin?

## Chapter 9: "Out for Good"

**Writing Prompt:** Why is it okay for straight people to talk about their personal lives and lovers or spouses publicly while it is often not okay for gays or lesbians to do the same?

### Discussion Questions

1. Kevin asks Jim, the headmaster at Concord Academy and someone who said he advocated diversity, about how to deal with "The Question" if students asked. What does Jim's response reveal about him?
2. How does Kevin inadvertently come out to several of his students? What is their reaction?
3. How did Kevin's determination to be openly gay and move the school to a more welcoming climate for gays and lesbians conflict with the headmaster's agenda?
4. Why does Jim refuse to revise the school's mission statement to include language that would forbid discrimination because of sexual orientation? What do you think is the effect on gays and lesbians of this kind of refusal to explicitly forbid discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation? What was the effect for Kevin? [*Note: teachers might consider having a copy of a standard antidiscrimination statement to read to students.*]
5. Kevin's chapel reflection appears on pages 172-74. Reread it (or ask one or more students to read it out loud) and then discuss the points that you find most compelling. How do the students react to the speech?

## Chapter 10: "Getting Organized"

**Writing Prompt:** Why do gay and lesbian students have a problem with "Don't ask, don't tell" policies, such as the one that was instituted in the U.S. military? (You may need to explain this policy to students.)

### Discussion Questions

1. Kevin begins to be asked to speak at other schools and for teachers' groups. What is it about him that makes him a "nonthreatening" messenger for what some see as a difficult topic?
2. How was GLISTeN (in its first iteration) born? Why was it important to form alliances with the broader education community, beyond gay rights activists? (Remind students of whites participating in the integration of lunch counters during the Civil Rights era, of lawyers who are trying to get legal hearings for detainees at Guantanamo Bay prison, men who fought for voting rights for women.)
3. In the wake of Kevin's chapel talk at Concord Academy, what did the students do to encourage the administration to change its stated policies? Did it work?
4. Why does Kevin feel compelled to seek out legal advice after his stormy interaction with Jim, the headmaster at Concord Academy?
5. Analyze the school's official response to students' demands (pp. 190-92) by making two lists. On the left side of the page, write down the school's argument ("Adolescence . . . is a time of confusion over sexual roles and identities"). On the right side, write down

Kevin's response ("adolescents are told that their sexual feelings and identities are merely phases that they will outgrow"). Which arguments seem more compelling to you? Why? How does the school's "solution" backfire on the administration? Why?

## Chapter 11: "Making History"

**Writing Prompt:** In this chapter, Jennings mentions that the slogan for AIDs activists in 1992 was "Silence=Death." What, exactly, did they mean by that? How does that slogan work for the LGBT movement in general? Could it be applied to other political or social movements as well? (Encourage students to think about Darfur, the current antiwar movement, or the environmental movement of today.)

### Discussion Questions

1. How does Kevin document the plight of LGBT students in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on behalf of the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth? What does he find out?
2. How are the public hearings "cathartic" for the students (p. 199)? What is it about telling the truth that really does "set you free"?
3. What does Kevin mean by "policies are nice, but laws are better" (p. 201)? What was the next step for GLSEN?
4. How does Concord Academy attempt to fire Kevin? How does he respond?
5. *For advanced students:* Read Kevin's farewell chapel talk (pp. 207-9). Then compare it to his first. What does the comparison illustrate about how he has changed during the time he was at the school? How has the school changed?

## Chapter 12: "Going National"

**Writing Prompt:** The anthropologist Margaret Mead famously wrote, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." What did she mean by that? Is it true?

### Discussion Questions

1. For GLSEN to go national, a few things had to happen. What were they? Which ones were planned and which were a matter of good fortune and timing?
2. How does Kevin get to meet President Clinton? What happens as a result of this meeting?
3. Create a timeline of GLSEN's development over the course of this chapter. On the top of the line, chart the positive developments. On the bottom, indicate at what points something bad happens or an obstacle appears. What does the timeline reveal about how to deal with setbacks?
4. *For advanced students:* How do the stories of Gerry, the teacher at Byron Center High School, and Robbie, the high school student who commits suicide, fuel Kevin's mission? What are the differences between Robbie's and Jeff's (Kevin's partner) experiences in their communities? What do they reveal about the necessity of addressing homophobia in schools?

5. For advanced students: How is Kevin reminded of the importance-and risks-of the work he is doing?

## Chapter 13: "Going Home"

**Writing Prompt:** Everyone wants to be loved unconditionally by his or her parents/guardians and other family members. Why is this need so universal? Do you have a personality trait, characteristic, or activity that your family dislikes, but that is very important to you? Write about how it might feel if, suddenly, you were loved, and even respected, for this part of yourself.

### Discussion Questions

1. This chapter reveals the steps that Kevin's mother took to regain a loving relationship with him. What were those steps (for example, going to a therapist, starting a chapter of PFLAG, joining Kevin at a Gay Pride march, and volunteering at a hospice for AIDS patients), and how did they each contribute to her transformation as a person? What does Kevin mean when he writes, "Change is a process, not an event" (p. 235)?
2. How do Kevin and his mother reconcile by the end of Chapter 13? Do you think that she would have come to the same understandings had she not sought out the answers on her own?

## Chapter 14: "Alpha and Omega"

**Writing Prompt:** Think about someone you have known or still know who has had a profound influence on your life. It might be a relative, a family friend, a teacher, a camp counselor, or a clergy member. What did you learn from this person? Why is this lesson so important? How did this person's life and experiences give him or her the wisdom to impart such a lesson?

### Discussion Questions

1. How does Alice Jennings show that, right up until the end of her life, she is feisty, she's a fighter, and she loves her son?
2. Kevin notices that he is treated differently (with more respect) from some of the other patients' families at the hospital (p. 251). Why is that, according to Kevin?
3. What does Kevin realize about his mother when he goes to identify her body?
4. Why do his siblings argue about their mother's belongings? What does Kevin take with him from her home? Why did he choose these items? What do his choices tell us about his values and his relationship with his Mom?
5. What is especially noteworthy about the letter of recommendation that Mrs. Jennings's boss wrote about her? Do you agree with the letter's contents? Why does Kevin end the formal book with this letter?

## Epilogue

**Writing Prompt:** How has reading *Mama's Boy, Preacher's Son* influenced your views of people who are gay or lesbian? Do you have any new understandings of what high school life is

like for someone who is either in or out of the closet? Is there anything that you will do differently as a result of having read this book? What would you recommend that your school do to combat homophobia in the school community?

### **Discussion Questions**

1. After his mother's memorial service, Kevin's cousin Nathan insults him and calls him a "disgrace to the family" (p. 259). How does Kevin use the Epilogue to address some of the common criticisms leveled against members of the LGBT community? Which one of his responses do you find most effective? Why?
2. For what does Kevin thank his mother at the end of the book?

### **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

After reading Kevin Jennings's memoir, students may be inspired to investigate and address the problem of bullying and homophobia in their own schools. Here are several possibilities for special projects.

**Interviews and podcasts:** If your school has the technological resources, have students carry MP3 recorders around with them to interview students who have experienced teasing and bullying. The students could ask students to speak (either anonymously or "on the record") about the nature of the abuse; why they believe they have been targeted; and the effects that the teasing has had on their academic performance, their social lives, and their self-esteem and confidence. The students should also be encouraged to make recommendations for how this behavior should be addressed on both individual and school-wide levels. The interviews could be the basis for a podcast on school climate and serve as one element in a more comprehensive antibullying program.

A second option is to survey students to determine the rates of name calling and bullying of different groups within the school community. This data could then be analyzed in math classes, and/or used for essay or journalism assignments.

**Gay-Straight Alliances:** If your school does not yet have a GSA, there are resources available to help you get one started.

### **ABOUT KEVIN JENNINGS**

**Kevin Jennings** is the founder and executive director of [GLSEN](http://GLSEN.org), a national education organization working to make schools places where young people learn to value and respect everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE**

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