

VALENTINE ROAD

Discussion Guide

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VIEWING AND DISCUSSION

Valentine Road tells the troubling story of the 2008 murder of a 15-year-old transgender student, Lawrence “Larry” King, by his middle-school classmate. The film examines sensitive topics like gender identity, gender expression and school violence. It also raises important questions for adults charged with the responsibility to care for children—in school and elsewhere. It can serve as a starting point for “what would we do in this situation” conversations.

These discussion questions are intended for use by adults working in schools and other youth-serving organizations. Teaching Tolerance urges caution in screening this film for students.

BEFORE VIEWING

- What do I know about transgender people, especially transgender students?
- Does our school/district/state have clear policies for supporting trans kids?
- How can we assess our own biases and their influence on our relationships?
- What procedures are in place at our school to celebrate diverse identities?
- What does our school do to support students from troubled family backgrounds?
- What signals communicate to our students that our school is a safe place for all?

AFTER VIEWING

- Could something like the tragic situation that happened in Oxnard happen at our school?
- In the film, the prosecuting attorney remarks, “The system is only as fair as the players.” How can we ensure that the system and the players are fair in our school?
- Why is it our responsibility to learn about individual students and their families?
- How are students labeled in our school and how is that harmful?
- What systems can we establish to ensure that all identities are respected?
- How can our school establish policies for addressing instances of hate/bias?
- Must we accept that middle-school boys are naturally homophobic?
- At what points in this tragedy do adults fail to take inappropriate action or act?
- What warning signs did students display prior to the tragedy?
- Who were the secondary victims of this tragedy, and what did the adults do to support them?
- How can curricula that embed social emotional learning help those affected by this tragedy?

Teaching Tolerance Resources to Aid Your Discussion

Responding to Hate and Bias at School
tolerance.org/hate-and-bias

Speak Up!
tolerance.org/publications/speak

Best Practices: Creating an LGBT-inclusive School Climate
tolerance.org/lgbt-best-practices

The Gender Spectrum
tolerance.org/gender-spectrum

Gender Doesn't Limit You
tolerance.org/gender-doesnt-limit-you

tolerance.org/inclusive-tips

