



3.4 Being an Ally is a Verb

Suggested Grade Level: 6-12

Time: 40 minutes

Subject Area: Allyship

Overview:

This lesson will focus on combining the knowledge obtained from the previous allyship lesson with action steps. As previously mentioned marginalized communities need more than just your vocal support, they need action. This lesson explores a great way allies can use their privilege to take action and support trans and gender- nonconforming folks through participating in the “#IllGoWithYou” campaign. Some spaces can be non inclusive spaces for many trans and non conforming people and in this political climate the safety of trans and gender confirming folks in areas such as bathrooms are at risk, this campaign is way for allies to offer trans and gender confirming folks with “support, buffering, and nonviolence assistance when asked” (#IllGoWithYou website). More information can be found through the “#IllGoWithYou” website <http://www.illgowithyou.org/>.

Goals:

- Allows allies to a source of support for LGBTQ students
- Encourages collabrotations with LGBTQ students and her non- LGBTQ allies
- Fosters an environment of solidarity and friendship

Materials:

- Button Maker (not required but nice to have)
- Felt Fabric
- Paper
- Close pins or safety pins (if not using button maker)
- Art Supplies
 - Markers, Crayons, Paint, Color Pencil

Procedure:

Step One:

Create the “#IllGoWithYou” buttons. These can be made with a button maker machine if your GSA has access to one. If your GSA does not have access to a button maker, they can use Felt Fabric or paper to make a button. These can be attached to a person’s backpack or clothing with a safety pin or clothes pin. Wearing this button indicates that you are willing to be tapped as a bathroom buddy, which can help trans and gender nonconforming people feel safer in public restrooms or any other space. These buttons are worn all year long.

Below are examples from the #IllGoWithYou website:



Step Two:

Along with wearing these buttons the GSA can create posters explaining the buttons and their purpose. This will not only allow students to know these resources are available but may also encourage other students to be allies.

Pro Tip:

Remember that **Your button is not a sheriff’s badge**. The #IllGoWithYou campaign has created a “**How to Act as an #IllGoWithYou Buddy**” on their website, and for the GSA’s convenience we have pasted the information below.

1. **Ask your buddy where they’d like you to be.** If you don’t need to go, you can stand at the sink, or just outside the bathroom door – whichever is most comfortable for you and your buddy.
2. **Speak only when spoken to.** Don’t start a conversation with your buddy; staying quiet has likely helped them avoid harassment in the past. This also goes for harassers; dirty or mean looks cannot hurt you or your buddy. Words can escalate a situation very quickly; use your voice only when absolutely necessary.
3. **Stay calm.** Your buddy might get called names or asked inappropriate questions. You might not have experienced this kind of behavior before, and it’s okay to be nervous. Keep calm by breathing slowly and remembering the most important thing is to exit the bathroom safely.

4. **Answer questions in a quiet, respectful, and firm voice.** “My friend is in the correct bathroom, thank you.” “We’re just leaving.” “My friend is here to use the bathroom.” #IllGoWithYou does not condone threats, harassment, or assault. Your button is not a sheriff’s badge.
 - Special note on children: Kids will ask lots of questions like “Is that a boy or a girl?” If you and your buddy can consult ahead of time about who answers kid-questions, that’s great. If your trans buddy wants you to answer the question, you can say “My friend is a girl/boy/both/neither/person. Are you a boy or a girl?” Keep it light. Smile.
5. **Have an exit strategy.** If anyone starts to badger, yell at, or touch your buddy, stick close to your buddy and move towards the exit immediately and decisively. Do not make eye contact with the perpetrator. Tell your friend “Come on, we’re going to be late,” or “We’re leaving now.” Follow it up with “Please move out of our way,” if the exit is blocked.