thing is that you honor your own values and beliefs. Religious events can be wonderful opportunities to create new traditions and bring families and friends even closer.

**What can I do to help others?**

Speaking about your experiences, either one-on-one or in small or large groups, is a great way to lend support to others. Everyone feels better once they realize that they are not alone. You can also get involved with interfaith alliances or other groups working for religious change.

PFLAG SD can put you in touch with some of these groups and is always looking for new people to assist with its own educational program on faith issues.

**For more information, ask for our brochures:**

- *Faith in Our Families: Parents, Families, and Friends Talk About Religion and Homosexuality*
- *Is Homosexuality a Sin?*

**Additional pamphlets available:**

Answers to Parents’ Questions About Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered People

Answers to Common Questions About Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgendered Youth

For more information, ask for our special brochure for parents—Our Daughters and Sons.
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“Most of the emotional disturbance experienced by gay men and lesbians around their sexual identity is not based on physiological causes but is due more to a sense of alienation in an unaccepting environment,” the American Medical Association states.

How can I reconcile my love for my friend/family member with my religious beliefs?

Many have experienced the feeling of being pulled in two seemingly opposite directions.

The first step is to examine your beliefs and, in doing so, to ask yourself if homosexuality is, indeed, contrary to your religion. As you explore, keep in mind that many religious groups with varied backgrounds and teachings have revised earlier teachings against homosexuality and have moved towards a more open and accepting philosophy. Though your current congregation may be firmly against homosexuality, there may be other congregations of the same religious denomination in your area that have more open and welcoming attitudes. PFLAG SD can provide you with the names of open and affirming congregations in New York City.

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What if my religion does not accept gays?

If your congregation does not accept gays, you have several options and will have to choose which is the best for you. You can stay and worship without further action or you can choose to stay and worship, but also work to make it a more accepting congregation. You may decide to change congregations or, if there are no affirming congregations, to change denominations. Some choose to leave organized religion and to instead find faith on their own. None of these is easy, so you should be sure to give yourself plenty of time to consider all of your options before making a decision.

What about traditional religious ceremonies?

Religious ceremonies such as weddings, christenings, and funerals can become complicated for gay people and their friends and families. Yet gay people are made to feel they must hide these aspects of themselves. For them, coming out is a positive way to challenge our assumptions and to help affirm their self-esteem.

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