

Christian Students Lead 'Day of Truth' to Promote Dialogue on Sexuality

☒ Thousands of Christian students are participating in the sixth annual Day of Truth Thursday, a student-led initiative that seeks to encourage peer-level conversations about relationships and biblical sexuality.

The event, sponsored by Exodus International, is a response to the annual Day of Silence, an event created by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) that encourages students to remain silent to show support for students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Since the Alliance Defense Fund started the Day of Truth in 2005, more than 13,000 students nationwide have participated.

"When I was a young man, I struggled with unwanted same-sex attraction and found that God not only had answers, but could change my heart and my life," said Jeff Buchanan, who oversees the Day of Truth for Exodus. "We hope Christian students across the country will take advantage of this opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ to peers who may be in a similar situation looking for answers."

To help "get the conversation started," Exodus has released two videos with man-on-the-street interviews about relationships, sexuality and faith.

"Students today have more questions than ever about life, relationships, sexuality and God," Buchanan said. "These videos are designed to start an open and casual conversation about these important issues that young people are struggling to understand."

Participating students also are being encouraged to wear Day

of Truth T-shirts and pass out cards that read: "People with differing, even opposing, viewpoints can freely exchange ideas and respectfully listen to each other. It's time for an honest conversation about the biblical truth for sexuality. Let's get the conversation started."

The Day of Truth precedes this year's Day of Silence, which is scheduled for Friday. Some say the Day of Silence, which is organized by students in Gay-Straight Alliance clubs, is aimed at prevent bullying of homosexual students. But others argue that it seeks to promote a gay agenda that includes "queer-friendly" proms, homosexual-themed books and materials in school libraries and classrooms.

Some Christian groups have encouraged parents to keep their children home on Friday. The American Family Association, Liberty Counsel and Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX) are among more than two dozen groups supporting the Day of Silence Walkout. PFOX posted on its Web site a sample letter for parents to send to school officials explaining their reasons for keeping their children at home. It has also created a flyer to discourage students from identifying themselves as gay at an early age.

"Adolescence is a tumultuous time of change and self-discovery-research shows that many young people who experiment with same-sex behaviors during their youth often do not adopt a gay identity as adults," PFOX board member Christopher Doyle said. "Our children deserve a comprehensive message about sexuality, not just one side."

Christian psychologist Warren Throckmorton says Christian students should neither remain in school on the Day of Silence nor protest it. Instead, he is encouraging them to sign the Golden Rule Pledge to show their opposition to bullying and harassment of students who identify themselves as homosexual.

"There can no doubt that [gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender] students, as well as others who appear different, have been the target of bullying and violence," said Throckmorton, an associate professor of Psychology at Grove

City College. "We believe Christians should lead the way to safer schools."

The Golden Rule Pledge has support from Michael Frey, Western Pennsylvania Regional Director of Campus Ministries for Campus Crusade for Christ, and the Rev. Bob Stith, national strategist for Gender Issues at the Southern Baptist Convention. The initiative, which is in its third year, has created cards for students to carry that read: "This is what I am going to do. I pledge to treat others the way I want to be treated. 'Do to others as you would have them do to you.'"