



An Original EduGuide for

COLORING WITH MAX & MCKENNA

AN IT GETS BETTER® YOUTUBE SERIES

IT GETS
BETTER
PROJECT

ABOUT THE SERIES

COLORING WITH MAX AND MCKENNA

Coloring With Max and McKenna is a 2018 original video series from the [It Gets Better Project](#). It features internet sensation, Max Emerson ([@TheMaxisms](#)), and It Gets Better® all-star intern, McKenna Palmer ([@ItsJustMeKenni](#)), chatting with LGBTQ+ YouTubers and bloggers about their inspiring, hilarious, heartbreaking, and empowering stories. They discuss subjects like coming out, finding community, dealing with family members, how to find resources, and so much more. The series features:

Max Emerson:

www.youtube.com/TheMaxVicious

ElloSteph:

www.youtube.com/ElloSteph

Ambers Closet:

www.youtube.com/AmbersCloset

Tommy Lei:

www.youtube.com/belongingblog

Kat Blaque:

www.youtube.com/KatBlaque

Ryan Carrillo:

www.twitter.com/RyanACarrillo

Amy Ordman:

www.youtube.com/AmyOrdman

MacDoesIt:

www.youtube.com/MacDoesIt

Anthony Watson:

www.twitter.com/AnthonyWatson

This official viewer's guide (and [Google Slides presentation](#)) for *Coloring With Max and McKenna* will walk you through each video in the series, asking you to think critically about the stories you hear. It's intended for young adults (YA) ages 14+, or those already in late middle or high school. You can follow this guide on your own, with your fellow GSA members, during family night, or even in a classroom. The options are limitless!

To watch the series, visit:

www.itgetsbetter.org/MaxAndMcKenna

EPISODE #1

ELLOSTEPH SPENT ALL HER BAT MITZVAH MONEY ON THIS?!



Watch the video:

<https://youtu.be/XxVrpLvl6wg>

5 minutes, 48 seconds

Trivia

Q - What did ElloSteph spend all her bat mitzvah money on?

A - The boots Idina Menzel wore in the movie Rent.

Questions

1. When Stephanie was 12 years old, she looked up “what is being gay” online. That’s how she learned that she, herself, was gay. How has the Internet helped or hindered you in discovering who you are?
2. In the video, Stephanie said the following: “I feel like, technically, I’m still coming out every day because if I meet a stranger for the first time, because of society, people just don’t assume I’m gay.” Describe what you think that daily experience must be like.
3. Why is it so hard sometimes to imagine that things can get better? What can we do to push back against those thoughts? How can we help others do the same?
4. Your turn: what would you say right now to 12-year-old McKenna, or any other young person who might be feeling isolated or scared?

EPISODE #2

YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHO AMBER'S CLOSET USED TO CRUSH ON



Watch the video:

<https://youtu.be/9m4ZR-HOeWg>

5 minutes, 37 seconds

Trivia

Q – Who did Ambers Closet use to crush on when she was growing up?

A – Jada Pinkett Smith and Jessica Biel (and her babysitters, too).

Questions

1. Amber shares that being biracial was hard in Texas, and that being gay was hard in Northern California; at times she even felt like she had to choose whether she was one or the other. Why do you think that is? What can we do to break down those challenges?
2. When it came to coming out, Amber did it in stages – she started by just telling a few close friends in High School. Why is it good sometimes to do things in stages, one step at a time?
3. Ambers wishes she'd had YouTube growing up, like McKenna did, imagining that it could have helped her be more comfortable with who she was. What kind of influence has YouTube played in your life?
4. What do you think: do entertainers and influencers, like those with major platforms on YouTube, have a responsibility to speak up on important social issues? Why or why not? Defend your position.

EPISODE #3

TOMMY LEI (@MYBELONGING) MET HIS FIRST BOYFRIEND ON...



Watch the video:

<https://youtu.be/6JxMHK5WOCw>

7 minutes

Trivia

Q - Where did Tommy Lei meet his first boyfriend?

A - On Xanga.com, where he also found a vibrant gay Asian community.

Questions

1. Tommy shared that he knew as early as 4 years old that he was different from the other kids on the playground. How old were you when you first realized something made you different from how others told you to be? What was that realization like?
2. Growing up in a very traditional Chinese home, Tommy often felt pressure to be more masculine, and topics regarding all types of sexuality were generally avoided. How is that similar or different from what you experienced growing up?
3. Xanga, a website that hosts weblogs, photoblogs, and social networking profiles, played a big role in helping Tommy come out to himself. What places, platforms, or things have helped you embrace who you are?
4. When it comes to fashion, Tommy shares that androgyny – a combination of masculine and feminine characteristics – has helped him challenge his comfort zone and be more confident in who he is. How does fashion or other forms of artistic expression impact your life?

EPIISODE #4

KAT BLAQUE'S ADVICE TO YOUNG LGBTQ+ PEOPLE IS...



Watch the video:

<https://youtu.be/T3UFUNmmlW4>

7 minutes, 5 seconds

Trivia

Q – What was Kat Blaque’s advice to young LGBTQ+ people

A – “Don’t be too proud to ask for help.”

Questions

1. At the beginning of the video, Kat mentions that it's important in America today that LGBTQ+ people carve out their own image. What do you think she means by that?
2. Kat uses the term LGBTQIA+, an acronym that adds intersex and asexual identities to the more traditional LGBTQ+ label. What do you know about the intersex and asexual communities? How can you help spread awareness of those identities?
3. Kat waited until her second year in college to come out to her family as trans, but she didn't wait for their permission to start her transition. That must have required a tremendous amount of courage. What can we do as a society to better empower people like Kat throughout their journey?
4. Max, McKenna, and Kat agree that they'd like to see more LGBTQ+ visibility in the media and more LGBTQ+ people included in traditional cis het (cisgender + heterosexual) spaces. What other things would you like to see in the "Queer Future" mentioned in the video?

EPIISODE #5

RYAN CARRILLO DID WHAT FOR A REALITY SHOW??



Watch the video:

https://youtu.be/_4dBGSDrqzk

7 minutes

Trivia

Q – What did Ryan Carrillo do for a reality show?

A – He ripped up a competitor’s plane ticket and threw it in the trash.

(“I’m trying to win a million dollars, what do you guys want from me?!”)

Questions

1. Ryan comes from a family of ice skaters, where “sports was a way of life; sports brings the world together.” What role do sports, hobbies, or other extracurricular activities play in your life? How have these activities helped you connect with the world or community around you?
2. Coming out experiences aren’t always positive, as Ryan’s story and the end to his relationship with his parents go to show. But Ryan says he was determined not to let that derail his life. What are some ways you prepare yourself, either emotionally or physically, to face challenges that come your way?
3. Ryan’s experience with his parents’ religion wasn’t a positive one. But surveys show that, over time, most religions and people of faith are actually becoming more and more accepting of LGBTQ+ people (see below). Why do you think this change is occurring? What sort of impact do you think this shift will have on the world of tomorrow?
4. At the end of his interview, Ryan shares these words of wisdom: “Nothing brings the world together like a little pink.” What sort of slogan or mantra describes your personal outlook on the world?

“Most U.S. Christian groups grow more accepting of homosexuality”

by Caryle Murphy, Pew Research Center

December 18, 2015

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/12/18/most-u-s-christian-groups-grow-more-accepting-of-homosexuality/>

EPIISODE #6

AMY ORDMAN'S MOM MIGHT NOT APPROVE OF HER NEXT...



Watch the video:

<https://youtu.be/piogizNX-GM>

6 minutes, 33 seconds

Trivia

Q - What next thing might Amy Ordman's mom not approve of?

A - If she got a tattoo of a slingshot on her arm.

Questions

1. When Amy came out just before graduating from college, her friend responded by asking: “What’re we gonna do about it?” Why do you think that question made such an impact on Amy?
2. Amy says she was initially pretty intimidated by others lesbians before meeting them. Think of a time when you’ve felt similarly. How did you overcome that intimidation? How do you personally cope with social anxiety in general?
3. On platforms like YouTube, Amy was able to find a community of LGBTQ+ people like her online. Who are some people you’ve watched or connected with online? What kind of impact have they had on you?
4. Amy has learned that “life is like a slingshot: anything that pulls you back is just going to propel you forward.” How true is that statement for you? Give a few examples to back up your perspective.

EPIISODE #7

MACDOESIT SAYS HIS MOM CAN TELL THE FUTURE?



Watch the video:

<https://youtu.be/ex79d2nsPEk>

5 minutes, 1 second

Trivia

Q - What makes MacDoesIt believe his mom can tell the future?

A - She knew he was gay since before he was born (“homosexual dreams”).

Questions

1. It was towards the end of elementary school, start of middle school that MacDoesit first realized he was different from “the other guys.” Why does that time period seem to be so significant in many LGBTQ+ people's lives? Explain your reasoning.
2. MacDoesit says that his mom was his biggest resource when coming out. How do you see your parent(s) in terms of being an accepting ally for you? What are they doing well, and what could they improve on?
3. MacDoesit kind of, sort of, accidentally came out on Facebook. In your perspective, what are the top 5 pros and cons of coming out on social media? Overall: thumbs up or thumbs down?
4. According to MacDoesit, shows like RuPaul’s Drag Race are helping to show that LGBTQ+ people aren’t subhumans, superhumans, or sidekicks; we’re complex individuals, just like everyone else. What are some of today’s other pop culture elements that are changing the way the world sees LGBTQ+ people?

EPIISODE #8

ANTHONY WATSON'S STORY IS SERIOUSLY SO INSPIRING



Watch the video:

<https://youtu.be/4G9avShbwvs>

6 minutes, 14 seconds

Trivia

Q - What name does Max bestow upon the animal Anthony chose to color?

A - Hedgie-pine (hedgehog + porcupine).

Questions

1. While growing up in the UK, Anthony watched Bizarre, a sketch comedy TV show that featured LGBTQ+ characters. Seeing them helped Anthony grasp his own identity. Who is an influential character or icon you identify with? Why so?
2. Anthony went to college to study theology and to become a minister. He thought at the time that if he were extra “good,” the “gay would go away.” While harrowing, Anthony feels that his experience is still fairly common for many LGBTQ+ people today. Why do you think that is?
3. For a few months after coming out, Anthony experienced homelessness. In today’s world, it’s estimated that roughly 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+. What are some ways you could help homeless LGBTQ+ youth in your city or local community?
4. Anthony shared this heartwarming thought in his video: “I can go to any country around the world and meet [LGBTQ+] people and feel like they embrace me, they understand me, and they accept me.” Why do you think that kind of camaraderie exists so readily throughout the global LGBTQ+ community?

BONUS

ACTIVITIES

Watching is only half the fun! You can also choose one of the following activities to take your learning one step farther. Don't be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

- ★ **COLOR** – In the spirit of *Coloring With Max and McKenna*, find an image online or draw one of your own that represents your unique identity. That can mean your identity in relation to the LGBTQ+ community, or one that represents your race, ethnicity, or culture. Next, color your image in, making sure to use your favorite colors. Take a selfie with your work of art and upload it to social media. Use the hashtags #ColorMePROUD and #ItGetsBetter to spread your art and your smile far and wide!
- ★ **BRAINSTORM** – Imagine you were given the chance to sit down and color with one of your favorite LGBTQ+ YouTubers, celebrities, icons, or just everyday heroes. Who would it be? What image would you choose to color? What image do you think they would choose to color? What 4-5 questions would you ask them while you're coloring? How would you help share their answers, story, or words of inspiration with your community?

BONUS: Consider posting your questions to this special person on Twitter. Hopefully they respond!

★ **SHARE** – Make an It Gets Better® video or write your own personal story. Tell the world who you are, why stories like those in *Coloring With Max and McKenna* matter to you, and what message of support you'd like to share with an LGBTQ+ young person having a tough time. Submit your video or written story to the It Gets Better Project's website at www.itgetsbetter.org/share-your-story.

ABOUT THE

IT GETS BETTER PROJECT

This viewer's guide was written by education staff at the [It Gets Better Project](#), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles, California (USA). With affiliates operating on 4 different continents, the It Gets Better Project boasts a truly global operation. Together, we use the power of story – told through online videos (like the *Coloring With Max and McKenna* series), social media, films, books, and more – to uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe. So far, over 60,000 It Gets Better® videos have been shared.

The It Gets Better Project has also identified over 1,000 organizations in 30+ countries around the world offering support to LGBTQ+ youth. To find a resource near you, go to www.itgetsbetter.org/GetHelp.

YouTube:

www.youtube.com/itgetsbetter

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/itgetsbetterproject

Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/ItGetsBetter>

Tumblr:

<http://itgetsbetterproject.tumblr.com>

Instagram:

www.instagram.com/itgetsbetter

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