

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Congregational Dialogues Create Understanding About "Choice"

Discussing reproductive choice can be difficult, and perhaps nowhere more so than in a religious congregation. The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice's new Congregational Dialogue workshop is helping pro-choice people of faith gain the knowledge to talk about their denomination's stance on issues such as sex education, family planning, and abortion. To date, 29 congregations in Minnesota and Ohio have taken part in these faith-based, denominationally specific dialogues created for Episcopal, Presbyterian (USA), United Methodist, United Church of Christ, Unitarian Universalist, Reform Jewish and Conservative Jewish congregations. Many individuals became interested in the dialogues because they were troubled by the rigid polarization on this issue and have found that the dialogues are important in increasing understanding.

Minnesota RCRC Executive Director Kiely Todd Roska, who developed the curriculum, recalls her "breakthrough moment." At the end of a workshop, a minister stood up and said, 'I believe that abortion is wrong, but after today, I think that we need to work together to prevent abortions from happening—by supporting birth control access and education—rather than just talking about how abortion is bad and banning it.' I realized that the Religious Coalition can be a real catalyst in broadening the dialogue about reproductive choice. We define reproductive choice in the broadest possible sense, believing that it encompasses the many choices that people make about how and whether to become parents. We faithfully support comprehensive sexuality education, family planning, contraception, and other reproductive health services, as well as maintaining that abortion can be a morally responsible choice."

For information about Faith and Choice Congregational Dialogue workshops, contact Field Services Director Barbara Kavadias at bkavadias@rcrc.org or 202-628-7700 ext 29.