

the conversation project

Six reasons why we are invested in sharing The Conversation Project in congregations:

1. They are existing communities of people that are committed to living according to shared values, and to advocating for vulnerable populations;
2. They are places that encourage living with more compassion and less fear—things we all need if we are going to engage in these kinds of tender conversations;
3. Congregations are story-telling communities—and really, so much of this work is about sharing our stories: what happened when someone died; what works and what doesn't; what we hope and what we fear—this is the heart of storytelling;
4. Some congregations are places where the seeds of cultural change are planted—from abolition to equal rights—and we can all agree that we need some culture change on this topic;
5. Faith communities seem to like to eat together. We are seeing wonderful success with programs like Let's Have Dinner and Talk about Death (or "Death over Deli" as one congregation billed their gathering) where people get to talk in comfortable settings over comfort food. The resulting conversations are remarkable for their intimacy and liveliness;
6. And faith communities are places that are positioned to support care-providers who are sandwiched between caring for young children and older parents.

Additionally:

- Starter Kit workshops are a good way for clergy leaders to gain practice and skill in having The Conversation. Like doctors, clergy are often called upon to support people through illness and dying. But--also like doctors—clergy do not all receive training in how to have these crucial conversations. Using the Starter Kit is a gentle way to begin having the Conversation with loved ones as well as with congregants.
- It is said that 11:00 on Sunday morning may be one of the most segregated hours in America—with different racial, ethnic, and class groups gathering in their own congregations. By working inside and across faith communities, The Conversation Project is able to reach a very diverse population where they live and pray and gather.