

# conversation sabbath

Oct. 25 – Nov. 3 | #ConvoSabbath

## 2019 Conversation Sabbath Fact Sheet

**WHAT:** The Conversation Project’s mission is to ensure that everyone’s wishes for end-of-life care are expressed and respected. Reaching out to people where they live, work, pray and gather, the nonprofit promotes having values led conversations about a topic that touches every human life: how we want to live at the end of our lives. This Fall, The Conversation Project will host Conversation Sabbath to bring its mission and message to faith communities across the country. Conversation Sabbath is a national invitation to clergy to preach or teach on the vital importance of having The Conversation.

**WHY:** The faith community is a powerful voice for change. Studies show that while 90 percent of Americans say it’s important to discuss their own and their loved ones’ wishes for end-of-life care, only 30 percent actually do. Similarly, 70 percent of people say they want to die at home, but in reality, 70 percent die in hospitals or institutions. Religious leaders can help close this gap. Clergy see too often how avoiding conversations about end-of-life care can leave family members in the dark. Confusion about a loved one’s wishes can result in strife at the bedside, increased grief and depression for caregivers, and can cause lasting damage in the relationships between families and loved ones. Engaging in these intimate and vital conversations can help preserve a person’s voice in the event they cannot speak for themselves in a medical crisis. And it is a gift to our loved ones to talk about what matters—sharing information and not leaving them in the dark. Preaching and teaching are ways clergy can help congregants to ground conversations about the kind of care we want in values and faith. Talking about a topic that touches us all—the reality of our mortality—is a pathway to a mature spiritual practice.

**WHEN:** Conversation Sabbath is happening October 25–November 3, 2019. Celebrating over the course of two full weekends, it is designed to accommodate different religions’ calendars and practices.

**WHO:** We expect hundreds of congregations to take part in Conversation Sabbath, sharing each faith’s teachings on this critical topic and supporting congregants in having the conversation in familiar settings, and not during a medical crisis in the ICU. As word of Conversation Sabbath spreads, we hope congregations in cities nationwide will join, adding to those who participated last year in California, Texas, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, New York and Massachusetts.

**HOW:** All religious faiths are welcome. There is no fee to participate. We encourage clergy to download our free resources: [Getting Started Guide for Congregations](#) and [The Conversation Starter Kit](#)—an easy to use, step-by-step guide that helps people have “the conversation” about their preferences for end-of-life care—with congregants. [Click here to register](#) for our monthly Conversation Sabbath newsletter.

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**For more information about Conversation Sabbath contact:** Rev. Rosemary Lloyd | [rsmllloyd@ihi.org](mailto:rsmllloyd@ihi.org) | (617) 301-4807