

conversation sabbath

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. The Conversation Project encourages clergy to 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 92 percent of Americans say it’s important to discuss their own and their loved ones’ wishes for end-of-life care, only 32 percent actually had these conversations. Similarly, 71 percent of people say they want to die at home, but in reality, only 31 percent do. 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 happens whenever is best for you! While we used to specify certain dates in late October/early November, we now encourage you to celebrate whenever will create the most buzz or is most appropriate in your community. Perhaps, like many other community groups, you rally around [National Healthcare Decisions Day](#) and host a local Conversation Sabbath to encourage collective action around the weekends before and after April 16th.

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. Cities across the country have participated, including those from 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 Community Engagement newsletter.

###

For more information about Conversation Sabbath contact: Rev. Rosemary Lloyd
| ConversationProject@ihi.org |