

Instructions for Power Shuffle

The Power Shuffle can elicit strong feelings or reactions. If possible, ask a minister or lay chaplain to sit in on this session and be available to someone if they leave the activity in distress. Notify participants if a chaplain is available.

Tape the “Agree” and “Disagree” signs on opposite ends of the room and stretch a line of masking tape across the floor between the signs, with a hash mark in the middle of the room. If necessary, move some of the furniture away from the masking tape line.

Read the series of statements below. In reaction to each question, give participants time to place themselves along the masking tape line depending on how they react to the statement. People can choose an “I don’t know” or “Ambivalent” response by standing in the center of the room, but they are encouraged to take a position other than the exact center and/or to change to a different location as they are moved. You can invite participants to share their thinking after each statement is read, or postpone the conversations until after the group resumes their seats at the end of the exercise.

Statements:

- Unitarian Universalists believe that life is valuable.
- It is possible to be a eugenicist and truly believe that life is valuable.
- If a fetus is diagnosed with Downs syndrome and the family may not have adequate resources to provide for it, deciding to end the pregnancy would be ablelist.
- If a fetus is diagnosed with a rapidly degenerative disease and the child would live no more than three years, deciding to end the pregnancy would be a moral decision.
- Some lives are more valuable than others.
- Using reproductive technology to determine the health of a fetus is a good idea.
- Given enough time and resources, members of this congregation could agree on one idea of personhood.
- I believe that personhood starts at conception.
- I believe that personhood starts at fetal viability.
- I believe that personhood starts at birth.
- Coming to consensus about personhood doesn’t matter.

If participants would prefer to stay seated or stationary during the exercise, provide them with a set of papers with large numerals (1-7) written on each paper. The “1” represents strongly agree, the “7” represents strongly disagree, and the “4” represents “I don’t know” or “Ambivalent.” Or, if they would prefer, they can sit somewhere near the middle of the room and point to where they would place themselves on the spectrum.

After all the statements are read, invite the group to resume their seats. Take down the “Agree/Disagree” signs and open the floor for reflection and discussion. If some participants are introverts or non-verbal processors, offer a separate quiet space for them to use while the rest converse.