

Small Group Ministry Session Plan
Reproductive Justice: Choice and Loss

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Opening Words:

Conscience is the name given the governing principles of life to which a person is ultimately committed. The totality of the self and thus the integrity of personhood is involved in the moral dictates of conscience. This is the primary arena of the spirit's struggle with the moral claims made by the will of God. The depths of one's own being and the ground of meaning of one's own existence are expressed in the struggles of conscience.

- Paul D. Simmons; Personhood, the Bible, and the Abortion Debate

Check-in

Focus/Topic: *Reproductive Justice: Choice and Loss*

As members of a religious tradition with a long and substantive history working for reproductive rights and a firm commitment to anti-racism, multiculturalism, and social justice, Unitarian Universalists are called to widen the current socio-political debate on "reproductive rights" to one on "reproductive justice."

Within the framework of reproductive justice, the Unitarian Universalist Association works against the cultural, political, economic, and structural constraints that limit women's access to health care and full reproductive choice. Reproductive justice, a concept put forth by coalitions of women of color, promotes the right of all women to have children, not to have children, and to raise their children in safe and healthy environments. It does not isolate or pit important social issues against each other, rather it works to promote these rights across many areas, including comprehensive sex education, economic justice, environmental justice, violence against women, and racial justice.

1. Unitarian Universalists affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Please share experiences you have had in which your autonomy over your reproductive and sexual life (or lack thereof) impacted your sense of your own 'inherent worth and dignity'?
2. Tell us about an important moment in your reproductive life. What made it important, and how does that moment relate to your faith and the rest of your life?

3. The bodily autonomy of pregnant (and potentially pregnant) people is being threatened in legislatures across the United States and in Washington D.C. What role do faith communities have in the current debates?

Likes & Wishes

Closing Words:

The Larger Circle

We clasp the hands of those that go before us,
And the hands of those who come after us.
We enter the little circle of each other's arms
And the larger circle of lovers,
Whose hands are joined in a dance
And the larger circle of all creatures
Passing in and out of life
Who move also in a dance
To a music so subtle and vast that no ear hears it
Except in fragments.

- Wendell Berry

This session was prepared by Jessica Halperin, the UUWF Clara Barton Intern at the Unitarian Universalist Association. A member of the UUA's Multicultural Growth and Witness staff group, Jessica advocates on issues of reproductive justice and women in poverty, and provides resources and opportunities for Unitarian Universalist congregations and leaders to do the same.