

# How to Use Faith Language to Advocate for Abortion Access

## The Problem

Faith language has been weaponized to limit and restrict access to reproductive health care, including abortion care. While this position does not represent the majority of people of faith, a vocal minority has dominated the mainstream conversation with a false narrative that:

1. Creates the illusion that all people of faith oppose abortion access.
2. Has isolated and silenced faith leaders who support reproductive health access, making them more hesitant to speak out in support of abortion access.
3. Limits the perspectives people of faith hear on faith, abortion access and reproductive health access.



## The Solution



Provide faith leaders with a supportive community and resource them with nuanced, culturally competent and faith-forward messaging that connects with people of faith and helps them begin to develop theological and social positions that support reproductive health access.

For messaging guides, work samples and to learn about our listening sessions and cohorts, visit:

**FAITH**  
IN PUBLIC LIFE

[FaithInPublicLife.org/ComNet23](https://FaithInPublicLife.org/ComNet23)





# Positions of People of Faith

## The Opposition

- Believe that faith condemns abortion access.
- Beliefs are deeply tied to their religious leaders' teachings.
- May be a "single issue voter."
- Smallest, but most vocal group.
- Least likely to be moved, but may be inoculated with faith messages that highlight the values of compassion, empathy, decency, human dignity, and kindness.

## The Challengers

- Oppose due to lack of information.
- Repeat the opposition talking points they heard; have never participated in conversations where those talking points are challenged.
- Can be moved when presented with new information like other people's lived experiences, explanations of reproductive health care procedures and new theologies and faith teachings.
- May not ever fully advocate for access, but can be moved to stop supporting systemic barriers to abortion access.

## The Questioners

- Beginning to question their embedded theology.
- Motivated by anecdotes about the consequences of lack of access.
- Recognizes how the lack of abortion access is stripping people of their inherent, God-given dignity.

- Open to new theological teachings that protect the dignity of others. (e.g. "I've never heard this in church or school, but it feels right.")
- Need support and community as they discern with God and deconstruct their embedded theological beliefs.

## The Sideliners

- Believe they are called to care for those in their communities.
- Have not involved themselves in the faith and abortion conversation because of its divisive nature; don't want to alienate anyone by taking a position.
- Can be moved into taking a position based on the urgency of this moment and the needs of their community.

## The Discerners

- Seeking God's clarity on whether they should publicly speak out.
- Desire to support their communities and be in alignment with God.
- Benefit from being in community with faith leaders who have been speaking out.

## The Social and Political Supporters

- Believe abortion access should be legal and available.
- May or may not be an active advocate.
- Discuss their support for abortion and reproductive health access, but do not include faith language or their theological beliefs.
- With resources and support, they can become faith-forward reproductive health supporters and advocates.

## The Faith-Informed Supporters

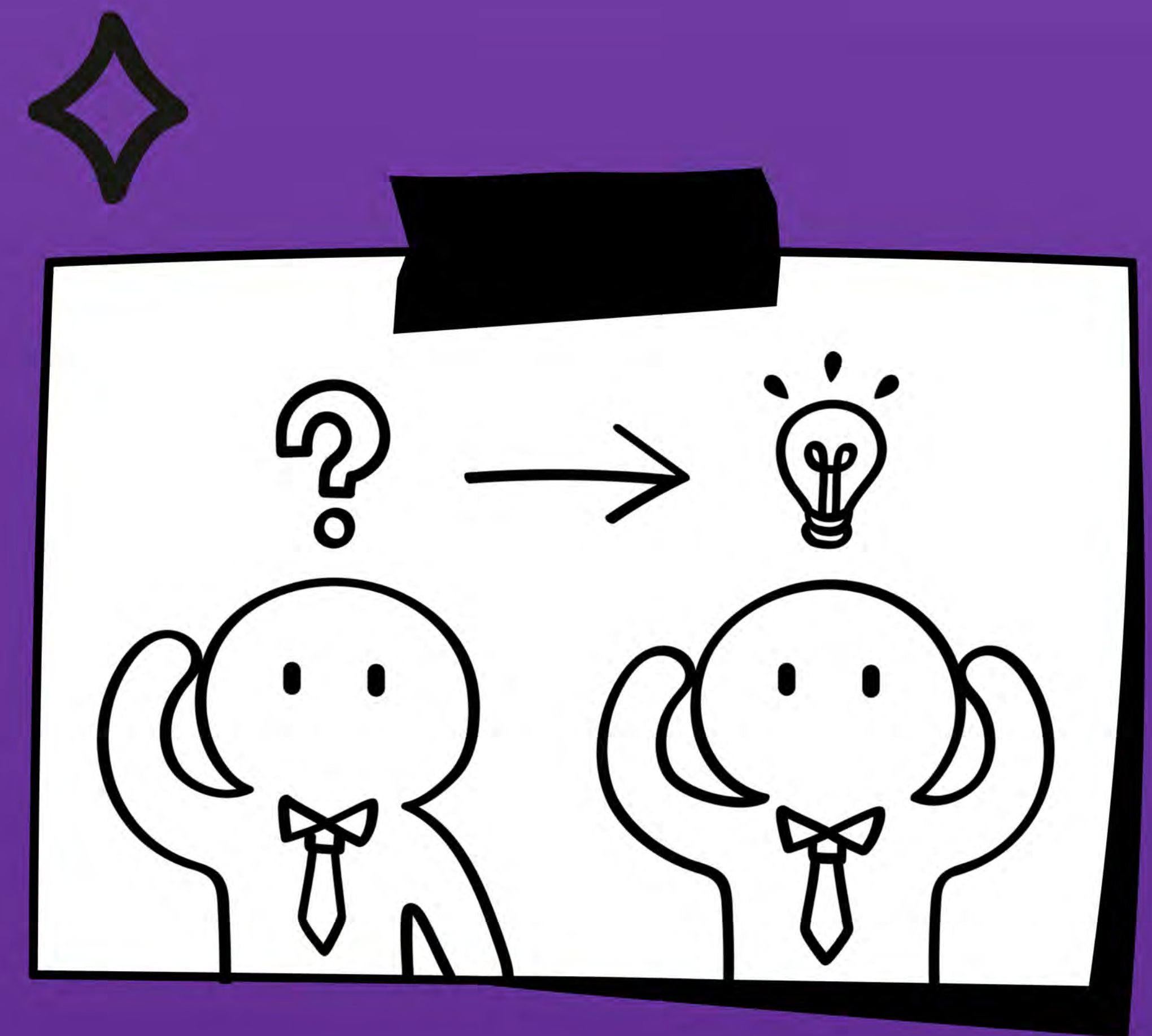
- Believe their faith calls them to speak out in support of abortion and reproductive health access.
- May fear retribution from employers and/or isolation from their community. Need support of other faith leaders to support them as they do this prophetic work.
- Essential to shifting the dominant narrative on faith, abortion and reproductive health access.



# Resources

## Points of Entry When Talking to People of Faith

- Reproductive Justice
- Religious Freedom
- Maternal Mortality Rate + Access to Quality Health Care
- Criminalization of Black & Brown People
- Compassion, Empathy, Dignity & Love of Neighbor



## Journey Stories Work!

- A journey story models a change of belief or behavior.
- Modeling a change journey helps audience members see how a person's mindset and opinions shift and connects their experiences to those shifts.
- Ultimately, it helps the audience begin to change their minds and positions as well.

## Types of Messaging

- **Inoculation Messaging:** Moves people from supporting systemic, structural and policy barriers. They may never become supporters of access, but they will cease to advocate for widespread bans and barriers due to the harm it causes other people.
- **Informative Messaging:** Introduces people to new theologies and faith beliefs; educates them on comprehensive reproductive health and the consequences of bans; pokes holes in opposition messaging; provides audiences with new information.
- **Activation Messaging:** Moves faith leaders; ensures faith leaders have the prophetic courage to speak out, advocate and educate others.
- **Mass Messaging:** Offers the broader public a new narrative on faith, abortion access and reproductive health access.

