

# **RACHEL'S VINEYARD**

## **BALTIMORE**

Archdiocese of Baltimore

### **Parish Community**

### **Awareness Guide**



# *Neither Do I Condemn You . . .*

## **Who this guide is for:**

Parish Respect Life Groups and Individuals interested in spreading the message that Post-Abortion Healing is available and reaching out to women and men suffering from the pain of past abortion.

## **What's included in this guide:**

- (1) Introduction to Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore (sponsored by the Archdiocese of Baltimore). RV Baltimore is part of the National Rachel's Vineyard Model and followed their registered trademark guidelines.
- (2) Information about Abortion & Post-Abortion Stress
- (3) How to create awareness in your community
- (4) Resources

## **Have questions? Want more information:**

Please visit Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore (local office) online at [www.rvbaltimore.org](http://www.rvbaltimore.org) & Rachel's Vineyard (national office) online at [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org).

Email Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore at [rvbaltimore@archbalt.org](mailto:rvbaltimore@archbalt.org). Call Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore at (410) 625-8491.

*Thank you very much for assisting in this healing ministry and spreading the message of love & hope that it offers.*

## Introduction to Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore & Rachel's Vineyard



**Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore** is the church's ministry which operates as a network of professional clergy, licensed counselors and volunteers all trained to provide one-on-one spiritual and psychological support for those who are suffering from the trauma of abortion.

**Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore** offers special **Rachel's Vineyard Retreats** several times a year. Rachel's Vineyard is the world's largest ministry for healing after abortion.

*Rachel's Vineyard is a safe place to renew, rebuild and redeem hearts broken by abortion. Weekend retreats offer you a supportive, confidential and non-judgmental environment where women and men can express, release and reconcile painful post-abortive emotions to begin the process of restoration, renewal and healing.*

*Rachel's Vineyard can help you find your inner voice. It can help you experience God's love and compassion on a profound level. It creates a place where men and women can share, often for the first time, their deepest feelings about abortion. You are allowed to dismantle troubling secrets in an environment of emotional and spiritual safety.*

*Rachel's Vineyard is therapy for the soul. Participants, who have been trapped in anger toward themselves or others, experience forgiveness. Peace is found. Lives are restored. A sense of hope and meaning for the future is finally discovered.*

Healing the pain of abortion - one weekend at a time.

Rachel's Vineyard Retreats are held nationally and internationally. Contact 1-800-286-4224 for retreats convenient to the Baltimore/Washington Metro area.

## **Facts about Abortion & Post-Abortion Stress**

- Roughly one in five pregnancies end in abortion.<sup>1</sup>
- 43% of women will have at least 1 abortion by the age of 45.
- 47% of abortions are repeat procedures. This repetition is closely related to unresolved abortion trauma.<sup>2</sup>
- Men also suffer after their participation in an abortion with unresolved guilt, shame and grief and need to hear about the good news of healing in Project Rachel/Rachel's Vineyard.
- 70% of women choosing abortion believe that abortion is morally wrong. They are choosing against their consciences because of some pressure, from others or circumstances, which make them feel they have no other choice.<sup>3</sup>

*The women who choose abortion and suffer from the pain of that choice are our daughters, partners, wives, sisters, relatives, friends and members of our parish communities.*

- 64% of abortions involve coercion. Coercion is a known risk factor for psychological problems after abortion.
- Women encounter various sources of pressure & manipulation – from parents, boyfriends, husbands, doctors, bosses, school officials, nurses, and counselors at abortion clinics.
- Women are often given inadequate counseling about their abortion.
  - 67% of women report that they receive no counseling and 84% of women report that they received inadequate counseling beforehand
  - 79% of women were not counseled about alternatives
  - 54% were not sure about their decision at the time
- The suicide rate for women in the year following their abortion is 6-7 times higher than the average.
- Women have a 65% increase in clinical depression following abortion, even after taking into account the factors of age, race, marital status, income, and prior psychiatric state.
- There is a 30 % increase in anxiety disorders in women following abortion.
- Women who have had an abortion have a 100% higher chance of developing a sleep disorder that was not present before the abortion.
- Women suffering from abortion are 144% more likely to abuse their other children.

*We are called to reach out to these women and help them find healing.*

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<sup>1</sup> Nearly half of pregnancies among American women are unintended, and four in 10 of these are terminated by abortion. Twenty-two percent of all pregnancies (excluding miscarriages) end in abortion. *Facts On Induced Abortion in the United States*. <http://www.guttmacher.org>.

<sup>2</sup> *Forbidden Grief*, by Theresa Burke with David Reardon. Springfield, IL: Acorn Books, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> *The Jericho Plan: Breaking Down the Walls Which Prevent Post-Abortion Healing*, by David C. Reardon. Springfield, IL: Acorn Books, 1996.

# WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THIS MESSAGE?

CLERGY & RELIGIOUS  
EMPLOYEES & VOLUNTEERS  
GROUP LEADERS  
ALL PARISHIONERS

## How to Create Awareness of Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore and the Healing it Offers

We encourage parishes to identify a “Rachel Awareness Advocate,” a volunteer to be the liaison between Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore and the parish. This can be the Respect Life Coordinator, but need not be. This role, though minimally time-consuming, would be best filled by someone with a special interest in post-abortion healing ministry. To let Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore know your Rachel Awareness Advocate, please email [rvbaltimore@archbalt.org](mailto:rvbaltimore@archbalt.org).

Simple ideas to promote Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore in your parish community:

(1) *Distribute Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore Business Cards*



Leave Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore business cards in brochure racks and restrooms in your parish. Often women and men are ashamed to admit a past abortion, so a restroom is a non-intimidating place to pick up a card. Inexpensive business card holders and brochure racks are available at most office supply stores.

Also, ask your pastor if he would like these cards placed in the Confessional to be available to clergy during Confession.

## (2) Offer Brochures

Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore has beautiful, sensitive brochures available that provide an overview of the ministry and reach out to women and men in need. Include some of these in your church bulletin rack or on a table with other literature.



## (3) Advertise Retreats

Five times annually, Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore hosts healing Rachel's Vineyard retreats. Advertise these retreats in your church bulletin, on bulletin boards, through emails, etc.



## (4) Put Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore on your Parish Website

Ask your pastor if he would be willing to link to the Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore website from your parish website.

## (5) Encourage Support for Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore

Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore cannot survive as a ministry without the help of committed people like you. It needs volunteers for retreats and ministry development and donations for retreat scholarships and advertising.

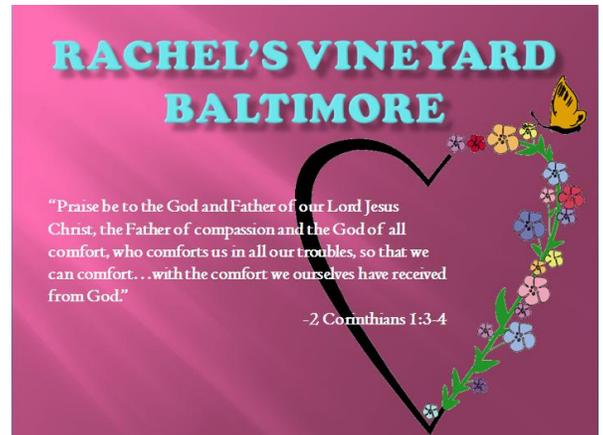
Financial support and volunteers are always welcome.

Specific volunteer roles include:

- Retreat leaders
- Support volunteers on retreats
- Prayer partners for retreatants
- Supporters of Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore to write letters to retreatants
- Event volunteers for fundraisers and educational events
- Counselors for the referral network

(6) *Offer a Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore Presentation to Parish Ministries*

Various groups in your parish might be interested in hearing about Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore (Knights of Columbus, Women's Groups, Bible Studies, Sodality, etc). If you would like to do the presentation yourself, a PowerPoint and notes are available. Otherwise, invite Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore to give the presentation.



(7) *Use a bulletin insert to spread the message of healing*

Consider occasionally stuffing a special insert in your parish bulletin, such as one of these:

- Relevant text from Pope John Paul II's *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 99
  - "I would now like to say a special word to women who have had an abortion. The Church is aware of the many factors which may have influenced your decision, and she does not doubt that in many cases it was a painful and even shattering decision. The wound in your heart may not yet have healed. Certainly what happened was and remains terribly wrong. But do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope. Try rather to understand what happened and face it honestly. If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You will come to understand that nothing is definitely lost and you will also be able to ask forgiveness from your child, who is now living in the Lord. With the friendly and expert help and advice of other people, and as a result of your own painful experience, you can be among the most eloquent defenders to everyone's right to life. Through your commitment to life, whether by accepting the birth of other children or by welcoming and caring for those most in need of someone to be close to them, you will become promoters of a new way of looking at human life."
- An anonymous letter from a parishioner (or even a non-parishioner) explaining about his or her healing journey, which can help to allay others' fears and encourage them to seek reconciliation
- A brochure describing the Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore post-abortion ministry in our diocese
- A message from the pastor that speaks about the painful aftermath of abortion and the availability of pastoral help and the Sacrament of Reconciliation

*(8) Include Weekly Bulletin Announcements*

Include information about Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore in the weekly bulletin. Periodically include more detailed information (statistics, retreat dates, etc).

Suggestions for weekly bulletin inserts are available online at <http://www.rvbaltimore.org/resources/guide.cfm>.

Retreat dates will be sent regularly to include in parish bulletins.

**Please don't hesitate to contact Rachel's Vineyard Baltimore  
with any questions or concerns.**

**[rvbaltimore@archbalt.org](mailto:rvbaltimore@archbalt.org)**

**(410) 625-8491**