



TAG in Action: *Our Whole Lives* Sexuality Education

As part of its national call to action, **Adolescent Health, Think, Act, GrowSM (TAG)**, the Office of Adolescent Health, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service has identified a number of successful strategies for improving adolescent health throughout the country.

The Goal

The *Our Whole Lives* sexuality education program, together with the *Sexuality and Our Faith* resource, helps teens make informed and responsible decisions about their relationships, health and behavior within the context of their faith. The United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association developed both curricula.

The Game Plan

Our Whole Lives is designed to provide accurate health and sexuality information in affirming and supportive settings with trained adult leaders. The accompanying resource, *Sexuality and Our Faith*, specifically puts the exploration of identity, relationships, and sexuality in the context of faith, worship, scripture, and sacred principles. This program is part of the United Church of Christ's broad faith-based efforts to support justice, peace, and community building.

The *Our Whole Lives* program covers the entire life span with age-appropriate curricula. The curricula for teens include commonly addressed topics such as anatomy and physiology, puberty, and reproductive health care. The curricula also address topics such as gender identity, intimacy, and healthy relationships. The interactive program goes beyond sharing information and provides youth with opportunities to practice scenarios where they must use critical thinking skills and apply the information that they are learning.

Overall, the program strives to make the faith community a safe and supportive place where teens can learn about sexuality and ask questions. *Our Whole Lives* involves parents and guardians throughout the program, reinforcing their role as the primary sexuality educator of their children. *Our Whole Lives* also addresses issues of sexual orientation and gender identity and strives to be sensitive and inclusive as well as medically accurate.

The Winning Plays

Amy Johnson, *Our Whole Lives* Coordinator for the United Church of Christ, shared that "*Our Whole Lives* is living out our vision of justice by empowering people. It's about promoting healthy sexuality, and young people knowing what their values are, knowing how to make decisions, and how intimacy, identity and feelings come into play. We discuss everything from using social media to how to break up from unhealthy relationships and prevent bullying. We want them to take care of this part of their life, their sexuality, just like they take care of the rest."

Learn More

United Church Of Christ
Our Whole Lives
<http://www.ucc.org/owl>

