



What is Rachel's Vineyard?

Rachel's Vineyard weekends for healing after abortion are offered throughout the year in locations across the United States and Canada, with additional sites around the world. Rachel's Vineyard is a ministry of Priests for Life

The program is an opportunity to examine your abortion experience, identify the ways that the loss has impacted you in the past and present, and helps to acknowledge any unresolved feelings that many individuals struggle with after abortion. Because of the emotional numbness and secrecy that often surrounds an abortion experience, conflicting emotions both during and after the event may remain unresolved. These buried feelings can surface later and may be symptoms of post-abortion trauma.

Married couples, mothers, fathers, grandparents and siblings of aborted children, as well as persons who have been involved in the abortion industry have come to Rachel's Vineyard in search of peace and inner healing. The weekend is a lot of work but yields a fruitful harvest for all who are willing to labor there. To learn more, please read about our [weekend retreats](#). Also, please see [comments](#) from people who have attended the weekends, as well as our [explanation](#) of the name "Rachel's Vineyard."

History of Rachel's Vineyard

[Theresa Karminski Burke, Ph.D.](#), started one of the first therapeutic support groups for post-aborted women in 1986 after founding The Center for Post Abortion Healing.

In 1994, Rachel's Vineyard: A Psychological and Spiritual Journey for Post Abortion Healing was first published. It was a unique support group model for counselors, offering a very concrete, emotional experience for women who were grieving the loss of their aborted children. In 1995, Theresa adapted and expanded the curriculum into a format for weekend retreats. Soon individuals seeking healing began to travel from other states to experience this very effective healing process.

Without a budget, office or advertising, Rachel's Vineyard became a grassroots national outreach. By word of mouth only, the retreats began to spread across the country because of the retreat's dramatic effectiveness. By 2012, Rachel's Vineyard was able to develop over 375 sites and touch more than 70 countries.

Currently, with changing global economies, global structure, the advent of COVID-19, and ongoing unrest in countries like Haiti, the Middle East, Nigeria, and Cameroon, it is hard to determine, with accuracy, the current number of sites and locations in the US and Internationally. Moreover, not all sites and locations report data to Rachel's Vineyard headquarters for safety and confidentiality reasons.

Rachel's Vineyard is still the leading post-abortive retreat program around the world and is offered in 33+ languages. We are in more than 50 countries and have over 200 established sites that [consistently](#) report back to headquarters. This means at **least** 400 retreats are offered each year, globally. Additionally, we continue to see growth in new site development.

Theresa Karminski Burke, Ph.D., has lectured and trained professionals nationally on the subject of Post Abortion Healing. Rachel's Vineyard Ministries offers an annual Leadership Training Conference specifically designed for those who currently use the Rachel's Vineyard program. She also trains retreat teams in the method and process.

The Rachel's Vineyard healing models are used by mental health professionals, post abortion ministries, crisis pregnancy centers, pastoral care and faith based outreach programs.

Who funds Rachel's Vineyard?

Rachel's Vineyard Ministries is an outreach run by Kevin and Theresa Burke. Theresa is the author of the Rachel's Vineyard Retreat Manual and support group models and the founding director of Rachel's Vineyard. In 2003, Rachel's Vineyard became a ministry of Priests for Life and its board was structured accordingly. However, Rachel's Vineyard is its own Non-Profit 501 C(3) organization, which is funded by private grants, individual donations, and the assistance of Priests for Life. The Burkes presently operate as a training resource for any group who wishes to offer this beautiful program for spiritual and emotional healing after abortion. [If you would like to make a [donation](#) towards our work, we would be most appreciative.]

Each Rachel's Vineyard site is independently operated by a sponsoring organization. Some Rachel's Vineyard retreats are hosted by church-based ministries, counseling outreach programs, Project Rachel offices or Respect Life groups, and crisis pregnancy centers. It is offered in both Catholic and Interdenominational settings.

Rachel's Vineyard also provides [resources](#) for those in post abortion ministry. In addition to the Rachel's Vineyard weekend manuals and support group model, Theresa Burke, Ph.D., is the author of [Forbiddin Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion](#), with David Reardon, the nation's leading post-abortion researcher. Forbiddin Grief is an extensive study and analysis of the trauma experienced by thousands of women, men and couples she has helped after their abortions.

What does the name Rachel's Vineyard mean?

The name "Rachel" refers to an old testament figure who was written about in the book of Jeremiah. The exact biblical quote is this:

*Thus says the Lord:
In Ramah is heard the sound of moaning, of bitter weeping!
Rachel mourns her children,
she refuses to be consoled because her children are no more.
Thus says the Lord:
Cease your cries of mourning, wipe the tears from your eyes.
The sorrow you have shown shall have its reward, says the Lord.
There is hope for your future!*

Why a vineyard?

There are many images and symbolisms attached to a vineyard. It is a place where grapes are grown, pruned, lifted up and cleansed so they can bear a more bountiful harvest. A vineyard is a place of labor for the making of sweet wine. Perhaps the most significant association with vine comes from the powerful and moving words of Jesus found in Chapter 15 of the Gospel of John:

*Remain united in me,
and I will remain united to you.
A branch cannot bear fruit by itself;
it can do so only if it remains in the vine.
In the same way, you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches
Whoever remains in me, and I in him,
will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me.*

Rachel's Vineyard takes this scripture to heart as the Weekend Retreat is a spiritual and emotional healing process. In trying to understand the mystery of death, we look to God in times of personal distress, trauma, and the loss of human life.

The death caused by abortion leads to anguish and intense yearning for someone who cannot be retrieved. We weep. We recall regrets, our role in what has happened and the child we will miss. It is these painful moments of loss that we search for meaning--some greater power beyond ourselves and the reality of something more perfect than our infinitely frail humanity. At funerals and memorials we seek to place our loved ones within the sovereign embrace of the Creator. We see the images in many biblical passages where God speaks of restoring the barren vineyards to their fullness. The following scripture reflects the same journey you will travel in Rachel's Vineyard:

*Therefore, I am now going to allure her;
I will lead her into the desert
and speak tenderly to her.*

*There I will give her back her vineyards,
and transform her Valley of Troubles
into a Door of Hope*

--Hosea 2:16-17

*There she will sing with joy
as in days long ago in her youth,
after I had freed her from captivity.*

*Then you will lie down in peace and safety, unafraid;
And I will bind you to me forever
with chains of righteousness and justice, love and mercy.*

*I will betroth you to me in faithfulness and love,
and you will really know me then as you never have before.*

--Hosea 2:21-22

Do not continue to live in the shame, fear or numbness - call our toll-free national hotlines: Rachel's Vineyard: 877 HOPE 4 ME (877-467-3463)

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