

SOW-REAPP™ for an Unplanned Pregnancy

An unexpected or unplanned pregnancy can present itself as a time of crisis in a woman's life. There are many emotions that can flood your mind in the moment you first realize you are carrying a child. *Everything* is about to change. Considerations abound in your mind. It can all be overwhelming and that's okay. You don't have to *do* anything right now. Take a moment for yourself. Clear your mind. Just be.

Our culture is often not fair to women in general, but pregnancy presents even more challenges. To assist you in the exploration of this situation, we offer a two-stage process and method of discernment called SOW-REAPP (Silence, Openness, Waiting—Receive, Examine, Assimilate, Pray, Plan). SOW encourages guided self-examination, beginning with a time of silent reflection, and culminating with waiting for a response from both God and the others affected by this pregnancy. Through SOW-REAPP we'll look at how God has prepared you for this already: spiritually, intellectually, and in every aspect of who you are as a human person. He is with you in this moment and will help you discern the next right steps. When you have completed SOW, you can then move to the REAPP stage of the process (see back of this page) which encourages your embracing what gift God is giving you in this moment.

SILENCE

(S)ilence- Time to clear away the distractions of the world from our minds.

Frequently brought on by a time of crisis or a major turning point in their lives, many biblical figures and great saints took time to step back, take a deeper look at themselves, and honestly reflect on the future.

If you have not spent time reflecting on who you are, you cannot know where you are going, what your purpose is, or why it matters. In silence, you begin to see yourself as you really are. If you are honest, you will come to know your wants, needs, joys, sorrows, and the deepest longings of your own heart. You can come to terms with your brokenness and weakness in this moment, and be more clear about the gifts and virtues which are your strengths.

In silence, name what comes to mind. Note where you are at this moment (time and place). How/Why did you come to this place? Who are you as a person? What are your hopes, dreams, desires? Examine your conscience. What are your virtues and failings?

(O)penness-Vulnerability to the other.

With the increased self-awareness you discovered in silence, you can interact more honestly with others. You will never be more vulnerable. You now have a relationship with the child growing inside of you. This child's very being depends on you. There is nothing in the world more important than that at this moment in time. Ultimately, the deepest and most intimate relationship we can seek in life is the relationship with Jesus Christ. Christ has given himself to us as a child, as complete gift. Are we prepared to receive Him intimately and completely in a way that is

OPENNESS

WAITING

Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Communicative, and Emotional (SPICE).

Are you open to being this child's help and support? If not, are you open to help from those around you? How willing and able are you to be vulnerable and open to the work of the Spirit in this moment? You may be open in some areas and not in others. Consider any walls you have up in this moment.

(W)aiting- Preparation for an intimate encounter with the other.

Intimacy develops over time. Sacred Scripture is filled with times of waiting for the Lord to come to his people but sometimes he can also catch us off guard. His coming to you in this situation has been just such a moment. In a sense, he is leaving a child on your doorstep. You now have about nine months to know the fullness of his coming and to decide how best to care for this gift. When these moments occur in salvation history, they tend to be periods of purification and often include times of confession and penance, but also includes a letting go of grudges and of making peace with one's self. This may mean letting a part of yourself go and that can be painful. This time of waiting is a time to grow in hope and to have faith that God never takes something away without replacing it with something better.

What is the experience of purification like for you? Do you have a sense of being prepared to receive something or someone in a new way? What part of yourself will you need to let go in this time? What amazing new things might God have in store for you?

RECEIVE EXAMINE ASSIMILATE PRAY PLAN

Having completed the SOW stage with time committed to discernment, remember the topic or situation you decided to explore. You are now invited to begin the REAPP stage of the process. We know from the writings of the saints that receiving the other has much greater meaning when intentional time is given to reflect on the experience and enter a relationship with Jesus Christ more fully. The REAPP process builds on the teachings of the saints to help you grow in holiness.

(R)eceive- Openly encountering the other.

At this point in the process, we hope you are prepared to receive the gift of this pregnancy in a new way. There may be parts of yourself that God is asking you to give up in this moment but now is the time to consider the infinite goodness he has placed within you. He has given you the care and responsibility for new, eternal soul!

Take some time now and receive what that really means. We suggest the following scripture passages may be helpful for you:

[Phil 4:4-9](#)

[Eccl. 11:3-6](#)

[Gen 1:28](#)

[1Peter 4:7-11](#)

[Prov 17:6](#)

[Gen 16:1-16](#)

[Phil 2:1-18](#)

[Psalm 127:3-5](#)

[1Cor 13:4-13](#)

(E)xamine-Time to reflect on what is received.

Taking time to examine your relationship more deeply in light of what you have received is an important part of the process. While experience is a great teacher, her lessons are typically forgotten without time spent reflecting on the experience.

Place yourself in the presence of God. Be aware that He is with you now as he was in the midst of reading the scriptures. Even a painful experience can be a moment of grace where God is intimately with us. Remember the experience with gratitude. Ask the Holy Spirit to assist you in going more deeply in the examination of the experience. Remember your emotions during the experience. These can help to show us where we responded or were moved to respond to an experience and can help us to see more clearly the moment of encounter with God.

(A)ssimilate- Understanding and integration of one's own story with the story of salvation history.

In Christianity, the term *metanoia* is often used to express a life-changing moment. This involves an intentional turning away from one path in life and intentionally walking toward another.

This pregnancy is just such an opportunity for metanoia in your life. Are you ready to embrace the changes this will bring to your life and the lives of those around you? Name one change you intend to make in your life right now as you begin down that path.

(P)ray- Modeling and practice of prayer

Prayer helps you discern the next right step in the presence of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ and with the power of the Holy Spirit. Giving voice to the desires of your heart and mind in prayer may not come easily.

It is important to pray alone and in community. Prayer alone can be as simple as opening your heart and mind to God, while communal prayer tends to be more formal. Consider the many resources available to assist you with your prayer, including your parish priest and staff members, friends and family. You are always welcome to contact the Center for Family Life Formation for assistance with your prayer life.

(P)lan- Develop practical steps to change one's life in accord with this new experience.

No change in direction can take place unless you actually take steps to make that happen. The Gospels repeatedly tell us it is easy to begin a new path, but difficult to complete the journey. A good plan, grounded in prayer, discipline and accountability, is helpful in overcoming any obstacle in your life.

Take a few moments to consider the next steps you need to take as you consider this unplanned pregnancy.
