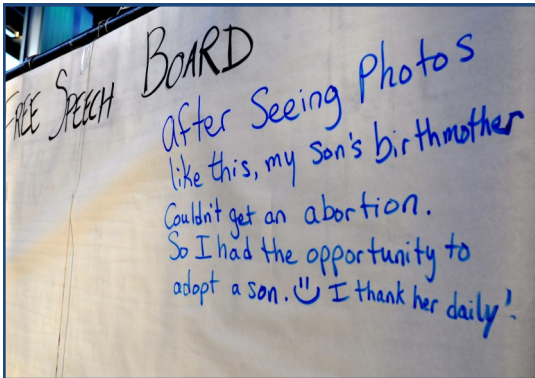
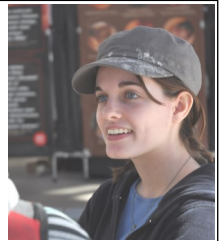


Putting a Face on Abortion

The Why and How of Graphic Images

Holly Meath's Monthly Newsletter • April 2014



An encouraging message that showed up on our free speech board at the beginning of the second day of outreach at ASU

Dear Friends,

My favorite place to position myself at our outreaches is right in front of the 18-foot exhibit featuring images of fetal development and the results of abortion. I like to watch the variety of reactions from the people as they walk by, and to try new ways to bring them in to talk. There's simply no way we can talk to everyone who walks by, however, and that has bothered me at times because I know how crucial it is to have gracious dialogue available to accompany these stark truths. But a few experiences at Arizona State University (ASU) in February served to remind me that the pictures can also help people on their own.

One of my first conversations at ASU was with a Chinese student named Ling-Fey. He gaped at the exhibit and said multiple times in broken English, "I never think about before, but I see this is really shocking." He did much of the talking in that conversation, telling me that seeing these images was really making him think. Ling-Fey knew that people needed to protect children, and complained about current culture, saying that "people don't think, they just do. They need to *see* (gesturing at an image of an aborted child) and *think!*" I couldn't agree with him more. I equipped him with one of our brochures which contains all the material from the exhibit. His favorite part was a diagram of human development from fertilization all the way to old age. I explained how, biologically, human life began right at fertilization. He was awed at this visual aid, repeating that it was "beautiful." Before leaving, he told me excitedly that he wanted to go show people and tell them that "there is life at one cell!"



The JFA Exhibit in its largest form



Jordan (blond on right) engaging students at ASU

Later that day I overheard a little of a conversation that Jordan, a high school student I was mentoring, was having with a middle-aged, nominally Catholic woman. She stared at the exhibit with a hand over her mouth, saying "I didn't really know what to think, but, seeing this...!" and shook her head in awe. Debriefing that conversation with Jordan, he told me, "I didn't even have to say much, the pictures spoke for themselves."

Emmett Till: The Case for Graphic Visuals

Not all campuses are as receptive to the use of graphic images as ASU seemed to be. At the beginning of March we set up the same-sized JFA Exhibit at the University of Georgia. Many students there challenged me to give an answer for why we think graphic images could possibly be helpful.

In response, I frequently appealed to a historical precedent for our use of graphic images—the murder of Emmett Till. I encourage you to study this event in more detail if you are not familiar with it. Briefly, Till was an African-American teenager in 1955 who was accused of flirting with a white woman in the small town of Money, Mississippi. He was subsequently kidnapped and killed by white men, who beat him so horrifically that he was hardly identifiable. Despite his gruesome disfigurement, his mother chose to hold an open-casket funeral, because, she said, “I want the whole world to see what they did to my boy.” Pictures of Till in the casket were printed in the national publication Jet Magazine, and people across the country were able to finally put a face to what the word “racism” really meant. Some historians cite these images as a catalyst for the civil rights movement. If pictures have that kind of power, I told students in Georgia, shouldn't we use them to bring attention to injustice?



Emmett Till shortly before his death

How You Can Use These Images

I want to equip you to make use of what I have found to be the most helpful images from the Justice For All Exhibit. These can be found on the next page.

Warning: These include a very graphic, disturbing image of the result of abortion.

Left side: This is the map of human development that Ling-Fey found so helpful. Show this to friends and ask where along this process they think we become human. Wherever they would draw the line, ask them why they place it there. Then you can explain that from fertilization, the unborn is biologically a new, whole member of the human species. You are the same human organism now as you were at fertilization.

Right side: When possible, it is common courtesy to warn people before showing them a graphic visual. If they are willing to see it, show them the image of a first-trimester abortion which is the most common abortion procedure right now. Point out the reasons people give for having abortions listed below the picture, and ask which they think are good reasons and which are bad reasons. For anything they think is a good reason, ask if that situation would justify killing a born child. If it doesn't, then why would it justify killing the unborn if they are just as human as born children?

These visual tools can make an impact on their own, and they can also be a helpful segway into a good dialogue that can help you and the other person explore truths about abortion. Give it a try! Contact me if you'd like to discuss specific strategies for this type of conversation beforehand, or to describe what happened in your conversation. I'd love to hear from you!

Blessings,

Holly V. Meath

Holly Meath



Justice For All trains thousands to make abortion unthinkable for millions, one person at a time.

About JFA: www.jfaweb.org

Email: Holly.Meath@jfaweb.org

Office: 316-683-6426



Justice For All Exhibit: Side 1, Panel 2



Justice For All Exhibit: Side 3, Panel 1



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