



*Newsletter Collection*

**Living Human Organism**

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# Ten Seconds Can Change Minds



JFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY LETTER

JULY 2015

Dear Friend,

It was 1:40 AM. A carload of young women pulled up alongside my 1993 Honda at a stoplight and asked me to roll down my window. With expletives flying, one blonde asked me to explain my pro-life bumper sticker. I had only about ten seconds. I fumbled around for a response, and the light turned green. They turned left, shouting ridicule out the window. I felt ashamed. I hadn't been ready.

I didn't let it get me down (at least not for long). Instead, I decided I would never let a ten-second opportunity like that pass me by again. A late-night brainstorming session certainly produced a number of responses which don't look very good to me now, but one response I wrote that night has endured as particularly useful. We call it the "10-Second Pro-Life Apologist":

*If the unborn is growing, it must be alive.*

*If it has human parents, it must be human.*

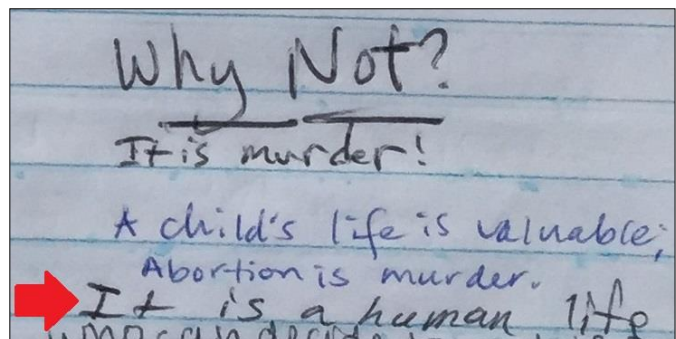
*And living humans, or human beings like you and me, are valuable, aren't they?*

The incident at the stoplight happened 13 years ago, and we've been teaching this sound bite regularly since about that time. Recently, three members of the JFA outreach community have shared fascinating stories of the impact of this tool.

**Jeremy Gorr**, JFA trainer based in Austin, Texas, interacted with a student named Lance at JFA's "Should Abortion Remain Legal?" poll table at the University of Oklahoma in March. After deftly helping Lance clarify for himself that "What is the unborn?" was the central issue he needed to resolve, Jeremy proceeded to discuss biology with dramatic results:

I helped Lance reflect on the fact that, if the unborn is growing, it must be alive. I also pointed out that, if it has human parents, it must be human. Through our discussion, he realized that abortion indeed kills a unique human, so he picked up the "No" pad and signed his name! For his reason he wrote, "It is a human life."

I'm a relentless advocate of storytelling, and I strongly encourage every JFA trainer to spice up the short JFA seminar lectures with stories from the trainer's own wealth of experience. It was a lot of fun, then, to sit at a seminar in Oklahoma in March and



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watch as JFA trainer **CK Wisner** shared a story that perfectly complemented her teaching of the biological evidence for the humanity of the unborn:

The first outreach event in which I participated with Justice For All (JFA) was at the University of Kansas (KU). I felt prepared to have conversations with pro-choice advocates about abortion because I had been taught many good tools through JFA's *Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue* seminar. However, there was one topic that I was very nervous about defending – the biological humanity of the unborn child. I had always been weak in science, and I am not scientifically minded.

Much to my horror, one of the first KU students with whom I talked started the conversation by saying, “Well, I’m a biology major, and I don’t think we can know when life begins.” There was one thing I knew to say, something I had learned in the JFA seminar: [the “10-Second Pro-Life Apologist”]. Immediately, the young biology major looked at me and said, “You’re right. The unborn is a human being.”

Note also the quick turnaround reported by a St. Mary’s Catholic High School student named **Kathryn** after she and her friend Erica interacted with a young man at Arizona State University in February:

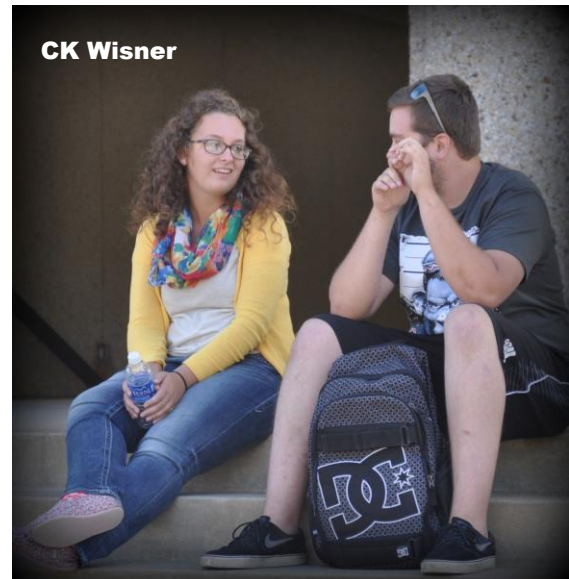
I came across another man named Curtis. Curtis is married and is pro-life. However, Curtis believed that life began at the fourth week. Erica told Curtis that if it has human parents, it must be human. She said this while pointing at the first stage. It was obvious that Curtis understood what we were saying. He then believed that it started at the moment of conception.

For some, reflecting with us for ten seconds produces an immediate change of mind about abortion. For others, the first two sentences of the “10-Second Pro-Life Apologist” help us lay a foundation of common ground about biology so that we can proceed to the topic of value, the focus of the third sentence.

Our typical new volunteer feels a bit shaky about defending the unborn even to herself, let alone to a pro-choice advocate. She needs handholds for starting conversations and for making them productive. Having the essentials in simple, easy-to-remember sound bites gives her confidence.

I myself experienced this same boost in confidence during the year that followed my late-night brainstorming session. I remember discussing abortion with two American women in Cusco, Peru. I also remember volunteering at a JFA Exhibit event at UCLA where an International Socialist Party activist challenged me to give him “one good reason to be against abortion.” In both conversations, I didn’t hesitate. I shared the “10-Second Pro-Life Apologist” as a foundation for further dialogue.

We’re excited to activate pro-life advocates with helpful dialogue tools like the “10-Second Pro-Life Apologist.” Let’s pray that many more will use tools like these to create *conversations* that last much longer than ten seconds and *changes of heart* that last a lifetime.



Making abortion unthinkable,

Steve Wagner  
Executive Director, JFA

# What Do I Teach?

## Part II: What Is the Unborn?

JOANNA WAGNER'S MONTHLY UPDATE

APRIL 2013



Dear Friend,

In February I was standing by the *Should Abortion Remain Legal?* poll table at Arizona State University when I saw “Janine” and “Amy” walking toward me. They were obviously friends, and both seemed eager to sign the poll, but they were headed for opposite sides – Janine for the “Yes” and Amy for the “No.”

They looked at each other, and then at me, and then back at each other. “This should be interesting,” I thought. Janine didn’t even have time to sign the “Yes” side before Amy exclaimed,

**Amy:** Really!?! You’re for abortion? But it’s a baby!

**Janine:** I don’t *like* abortion, but I think it’s a woman’s choice. No one knows when life begins anyway.

**Amy:** Of course it’s a baby! You’re seriously okay with that?

At this point, I could tell I was witnessing the beginning of a fiery argument. Janine and Amy were standing right next to me, so I joined the conversation.

**Joanna:** [lightheartedly] Let’s hold up for just a second ladies. It sounds like you both have important things to say. Perhaps it would help you to get on the same page if we all take a look at what we’re talking about for a second.

I had a copy of the JFA Exhibit brochure with me and opened it to the first page which shows pictures of human development. Both Janine and Amy were very interested, admitting that neither knew much about fetal development. I asked them:

**Joanna:** When do you think we become human, biologically? We can talk about human rights and value in a moment. For now, let’s just talk about biology.

Amy quickly pointed to the embryo at four weeks.

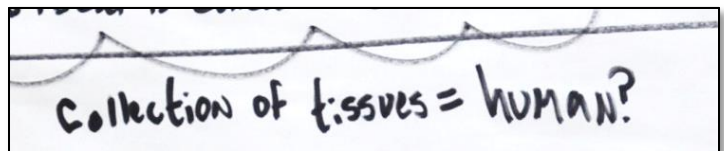
**Amy:** That’s when we become human, when we have a heartbeat.

**Joanna:** And what do you think, Janine?

**Janine:** Well, I guess I don’t really know... I didn’t know that we had a heartbeat that early, but it seems like abortion is okay until a baby is way more developed.



Above, I help mediate a conversation between Janine and Amy at our *Should Abortion Remain Legal?* poll table. Below, a quote from one of our free speech boards reveals the importance of discussing whether the unborn is an organism.



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The conversation continued. It was unique in that it gave me an opportunity to mediate a dialogue between two friends – a dialogue that could’ve easily been a fight under different circumstances. But this conversation was actually quite common in another way. As different as their positions were on abortion, Janine and Amy were both confused about biology. In nearly every conversation I have about abortion, it is important to clarify when a *living human organism* comes into being. To do this, I follow the same train of thought that we teach to volunteers in our *Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue* seminar:



This conversation gave high school students I mentored (left) the opportunity to learn by watching me dialogue with a Georgia Tech student who held an opposing view.

From fertilization, the unborn exhibits the three characteristics of living things: It is growing through cellular reproduction, reacting to stimuli, and metabolizing food for energy. So, it’s at least a *living* thing.

But what kind of living thing is it? It has human parents, and it has a distinctly human DNA “fingerprint.” So, it is at least *living human* tissue.

But is the unborn merely tissue? Just after fertilization, it’s not much bigger than sperm or egg. But sperm and egg are functional *parts* of male and female organisms. When they come together, each ceases to exist, and a new unique human entity comes into existence. Unlike sperm or egg, the unborn is a *whole* organism with its own functional parts. After fertilization, nothing is added except for adequate nutrition and a proper environment. So, if you and I are organisms, then we must have been organisms at fertilization. Therefore, the unborn is a *living human organism*.

### Only Have Ten Seconds?

As I inched my way up the crowded aisle of a *Metra* train in Chicago last spring, I felt a vibration in my purse. I was receiving a text message. I finally found a place to sit and reached in my purse to see who was contacting me.

It was a good friend from California. Her text simply said, “Could you tell me why you’re pro-life in just a few words?” There I was, trying to figure out how I could express my convictions on this serious topic in the form of a text message. I couldn’t call her – the train was too loud for that.

I found out later that she was researching abortion for a class on current moral issues, but at the time, I didn’t know why she was asking. “Perhaps it’s urgent,” I thought.

Thankfully, I had practiced for such an occasion. I wrote back to her:

**If the unborn is *growing*, isn’t it *alive*?  
And if it has *human parents*, isn’t it *human*?  
And *living humans*, or human beings like you and me, are *valuable*, aren’t they?**

My brother Steve penned this series of short questions, *The 10-Second Pro-Life Apologist*, in response to a similar ten-seconds-to-respond episode while waiting at a stoplight in 2002. It’s a helpful starting point in nearly every conversation I have about biology. I hope it helps you, too!

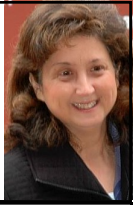
After we discussed these points, both Janine and Amy shifted in their view of the unborn – they agreed that the unborn is a living human organism from fertilization. We were then able to move on to discuss whether all living human organisms have an equal right to life. But this next step was only worthwhile because we first agreed on biology. Janine and Amy left for class equipped with a common understanding of the biological humanity of the unborn. They had begun the conversation by arguing, but now these friends had a solid foundation for discussing their remaining disagreements about abortion.

Thank you very much for your prayers and financial support which enable me to help people like Amy and Janine. Please pray for health, safety, and endurance as I prepare for training events in Tucson, Arizona and Fort Collins, Colorado this month!

*Joanna*



# *Time Travel, Dishwashing, and Biology*



Tammy Cook's Monthly Update

January 2015

Our son Brandon, who is now an adult, has always been fascinated by the concept of time travel. So, over the years our family has seen several movies and TV shows based on that premise. They were pure science fiction, of course, but still fun to watch.

So please indulge me and imagine that I've traveled back in time for a moment to a time when my children were young. And just to be clear, this story is purely fictional. It never happened.

Imagine with me that I'm standing at the kitchen sink washing dishes and my seven-year-old son comes up behind me and says, "Mommy, can I kill this?" I'm unable to turn around to see what he's referring to, so what do you think the first words out of my mouth are going to be? That's right. "What is it?"

If he has a cockroach in a jar, I would probably let out a scream and emphatically say, "Yes!! Go get your daddy and let him teach you what to do." If he has the neighborhood kitty, I would ask his daddy to come to the kitchen right away, and we would sit down with our son to have a serious talk about why we can't kill pets. Now if he has his 5-year-old brother in a headlock ... well, let's just say we would need some family counseling, to say the least.



*We must establish what something is before we can determine if we can kill it, right?*

Okay, I have now time-traveled back to present day. This part is *not* fictional. It really happened, just a few months ago, in fact.

I'm on the University of Oklahoma (OU) campus talking with an OU student, Sylvia. She has identified herself as pro-choice. She says she wouldn't have an abortion but she thinks other women should have the right to choose. I tell her the fictional story that I just told you about washing dishes. I ask what she thinks my response would be to my son if he were to ask, "Mommy, can I kill this?" She responds:

**Sylvia:** [pauses] You would say, "What is it?"

**Tammy:** Right. We have to determine what something is before we can determine if we can kill it. When do you think we become biological human beings?

**Sylvia:** Birth.

*[The JFA Exhibit Brochure is comprised of 12 panels. I point to Panel 2 of our brochure that depicts 15 stages of human life, before and after birth, and ask her this question.]*

**Tammy:** Do you think the toddler is a whole human organism?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Tammy:** If the toddler is a whole human organism *now*, and all that was added from fertilization until the toddler stage was nutrition and a proper environment ... Wouldn't that mean that the unborn *at fertilization* would have to have been a whole human organism as well?

**Sylvia:** [Takes a long pause to think about it.] Yes, I guess you're right.

**Tammy:** Okay! Now that we agree about that, let's set aside abortion in the cases of rape and health of the mother for a moment, as important as they are, and focus on the reasons for a majority of abortions.\*

I showed her the Justice Quiz on Panel 12 of the JFA Brochure and asked her if a woman should be allowed to have an abortion for any of those reasons. Here's what Panel 12 asks the viewer:

### **Justice Quiz**

*Should a baby die for us to:*

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| ◆ Save money?                     | ◆ Save a relationship?                            |
| ◆ Preserve career/life plans?     | ◆ Avoid a relationship with the baby's relatives? |
| ◆ Avoid embarrassment?            | ◆ Avoid the pain of adoption?                     |
| ◆ Eliminate undesirable genes?    | ◆ Select the gender of the child?                 |
| ◆ Escape parental responsibility? | ◆ Limit family size?                              |
| ◆ Advance medical research?       | ◆ Earn Income?                                    |

Sylvia thought about it and then said no. I "Trotted out a Toddler" to make sure we were on the same page. (You can learn the skill of "Trotting out a Toddler" by attending a JFA seminar.) She said:

**Sylvia:** A woman can't kill a toddler for any of the reasons in the Justice Quiz.

**Tammy:** Do you still believe that a woman should be allowed to choose abortion for any reason?

**Sylvia:** (Pause) No.... because now I realize that the unborn is a human being like the toddler.

**Tammy:** Should women be allowed to choose abortion, even if they're in a tough situation?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Tammy:** Does that mean you now believe that abortion is wrong, no matter what the reason?

**Sylvia:** Yes.

We smiled at each other realizing how much her view had changed in just 20 minutes. Sylvia and I chatted for a few more minutes and I learned she is studying Social Work. She said that during our conversation she realized that she should value and care for *unborn* babies just as much as she values and cares for *born* babies. She hopes to reflect on how to use her degree to not only help born children in unfortunate circumstances, but also help unborn children whose parents are in unfortunate circumstances, as well. At the end of our conversation, she said:

**Sylvia:** This has been an eye-opening conversation and I greatly appreciate you helping me think through this issue. Thank you!

Did you notice that instead of telling Sylvia that her view about abortion was wrong that I, instead, helped her to discover the truth for herself through using questions and visual aids? I hope *you* can attend a JFA seminar soon to learn to help other people like Sylvia to discover the truth about abortion.

Thank you for your ongoing support which allows us to train thousands to make abortion unthinkable for millions, one person at a time.

In Christ,

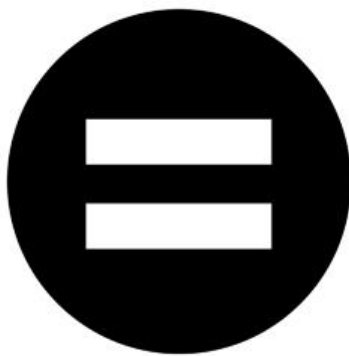


+JMJ

\* Source: "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives" [[www.guttmacher.org/pubs/psrh/full/3711005.pdf](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/psrh/full/3711005.pdf)]



See More Stories of Impact: [www.jfaweb.org/Impact](http://www.jfaweb.org/Impact)



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