



Newsletter Collection

Trot Out the Toddler

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What Do I Teach?

Part I: One Central Question Helps Change a Mind

JOANNA WAGNER'S MONTHLY UPDATE

MARCH 2013



Dear Friend,

She started out defending abortion because of the plight of those in poverty. In just minutes, she said, "We really need to resolve the question of what the unborn is." From there, I was able to help her find an answer. What caused the change?

I noticed "Jamie," a confident young student at the University of North Texas, when she rode her bike up to the edge of the Justice For All Exhibit. It took a few moments for me to decide if I would approach her. I'm so glad I did.

I asked Jamie what she thought about abortion. She told me openly, "Well, don't get me wrong, I don't like abortion. It just seems like difficult circumstances make it necessary. I'd say I'm pro-choice."

"What sorts of circumstances concern you the most?" I asked. She replied, "There are so many things. What about poverty? How can we force women who have no money and no resources to have kids? And how can we force those kids into such horrible lives?"

Jamie was raising an important point, but I knew that the fact of poverty *itself* wouldn't help us discover whether abortion is a good *solution* to poverty. The conversation that followed illustrated perfectly one of the things we teach JFA volunteers: With abortion, there's one central question we need to answer before moving on to other questions. I follow four steps to help people discover for themselves how central this question is. We call this process *Trot Out a Toddler*.

Step 1: AGREE *where possible.*

Joanna: "Jamie, I agree with you that many women have so little money and so few resources that it is difficult for them to be mothers. We need to be more concerned about those in poverty."

Step 2: APPLY *the situation to a two-year-old.*

Joanna: "But Jamie, imagine a woman who is living in extreme poverty and who absolutely cannot rear a child. She doesn't even have enough money to feed herself. Imagine that this woman has a two-year-old. Should she be able to kill that two-year-old because their lives are so difficult?"

Jamie: "Of course not. She cannot kill a two-year-old!"

Joanna: "I agree. Of course she cannot kill her two-year-old. And I know that question sounds a little odd on its face..."

Step 3: ASK WHY *the mother cannot kill the two-year-old.*

Joanna: "... But let me ask you this: Why is it not okay to kill the two-year-old?"

Jamie: "Well, it's not okay to kill the two-year-old because the two-year-old is a human being."

Step 4: AH! *(The light-bulb moment: Discovering the central question, "What is the unborn?")*

Joanna: "I agree. So it sounds like we don't need to resolve the question of whether poverty matters. We agree that it certainly does. Rather, the question we need to resolve is, 'What is the unborn?' If the unborn is human like the two-year-old, then we can't kill the unborn even because of poverty, right?"



At Arizona State University (ASU) last month, I discussed the central question "What is the unborn?" with students like this young woman. See more snapshots of ASU conversations on the reverse.



JUSTICE FOR ALL TRAINS THOUSANDS TO MAKE ABORTION UNTHINKABLE FOR MILLIONS, ONE PERSON AT A TIME.

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Jamie looked at me and I could tell she was thinking hard. She replied,

Jamie: “That makes a lot of sense. I don’t know that much about when we become human, but it seems like that *is* the question we have to answer.”

Most people will agree that abortion kills something, but whether or not we can kill a living thing depends first on *what* it is. Some pro-choice arguments address this question, “What is it?” and *argue* that the unborn is not a valuable human being. But others, like Jamie’s, ignore the unborn completely. Although arguments like hers raise important concerns, they *assume* that the unborn is not valuable. The four-step *Trot Out a Toddler* process helped Jamie realize that she needed to focus on the central question, “What is the unborn?”

Jamie and I continued our conversation for a few more minutes, discussing the evidence for the biological humanity of the unborn. We also discussed why we can have confidence that the unborn human has the same basic human rights that you and I have. Toward the end of the conversation, I was excited to see the progress we had made:

Jamie: “You know, a lot of my friends are the ones protesting over there. [A number of pro-choice students had gathered with drums and signs to protest during the outreach.] But, I actually grew up in a Christian home, and my parents are pro-life. I don’t see eye-to-eye with my parents about a lot of things – for instance, I’m a lesbian – but I think I can agree with them about this issue. **I think I can call myself pro-life now.** I thought, by the way my friends talked, that you all were gonna shove anti-gay, anti-woman rhetoric at me. But I actually enjoyed this conversation. I really appreciate the way you all are creating dialogue.”

I thanked her, and then she said something I’ll never forget:

Jamie: “I have a lot of friends who have had abortions. And Joanna, you can see the change in them after the procedure. **They carry an undeniable emptiness, as if they’ve truly lost a person.**”

And with that, she had to go to class.

Jamie’s barriers to being against abortion had been mainly social and cultural. She didn’t want to be identified with certain politically conservative views or certain “pro-life” people. The *Trot Out a Toddler* process was essential in our conversation because it helped her focus on the central question “What is the unborn?” Although this tool didn’t make the pro-life case for me, it helped Jamie and I agree about the question we needed to answer. It was just a short step from that point of agreement to Jamie’s moment of realizing that abortion is wrong because it kills a valuable human being.



Joanna

Joanna’s JFA Events: March 2013

March 6: Seminar – Georgia Tech Students for Life Club members (Atlanta, GA)

March 7: Seminar – Our Lady of Mercy High School students (Fayetteville, GA)

March 8: Seminar – Fellowship Christian High School students (Roswell, GA)

March 9-10: Seminars – Atlanta community members (Atlanta, GA)

March 11-13: Outreach Days – Georgia Tech University (Atlanta, GA)

Let's Talk about the Same Thing

Refocusing the conversation on the question, "What is the unborn?"



CHERYL KAYE WISNER'S MONTHLY UPDATE



FEBRUARY 2015

Dear Family and Friends,

I hear a lot of justifications for abortion. Sometimes I think, "Yes! This is exactly what we need to talk about in order to resolve our main difference on this issue!" Other times I think, "No! This is not going to help solve our core disagreement about abortion!"

What do I mean? I'll explain by adapting a story from Greg Koukl at Stand to Reason (www.str.org). As many of you know, I come from a large family. The number of nieces and nephews I have is growing, and because of this, when my family has dinner together, the number of dishes in the sink is exponentially greater than in previous years.

Let's imagine that I'm at the sink cleaning the dishes when my nephew comes up from behind me and asks, "Aunt CK, can I kill this?" My back is towards him, so of course the first question out of my mouth is, "What is it?" If I turn around and see his hands outstretched and holding a bug, my reaction will be much different than if I turn around and see him with one of his cousins in a headlock. I may be okay with him killing a bug, but I would not be okay with him killing another human being. In fact, I would probably suggest that it's time for counseling.

When it comes to the topic of abortion, most people will agree that abortion kills something, but what is being killed? Is abortion just a "surgical procedure to remove cells", or does it kill a human being? You see, we can't answer this question, "Can I kill this?" until we know what "it" is.

We can't answer this question, "Can I kill this?" until we know what "it" is.

If someone tries to explain why abortion should remain legal by arguing that the unborn is *not* a valuable human being, at least we're "on topic." In other words, we're focused on the central question, "What is the unborn?" and we can discuss whether or not the unborn is the same kind of thing as you and I. If it is the same kind of thing, it should therefore be treated equally to the rest of us.

Some of the other reasons people give for their pro-choice views, however, do not address that central question at all. Instead, these reasons assume that the unborn is not a valuable human being and that circumstances determine whether or not abortion is right or wrong.

When someone brings up a justification for abortion that does not address the question, "What is the unborn?" it is important to help him see that we must answer this question before we can move forward in our conversation. We must discuss what the unborn is because this is where our core disagreement lies. One conversational tool that helps



In February, I taught students in Arizona how to refocus a conversation about abortion onto the central question of "What is the unborn? The next week, these students participated in an outreach event at ASU. Not only was the weather gorgeous, but we met some wonderful people and had thought-provoking conversations.



JUSTICE FOR ALL TRAINS THOUSANDS TO MAKE ABORTION UNTHINKABLE FOR MILLIONS, ONE PERSON AT A TIME.

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people understand this more clearly is called “Trot Out the Toddler (TOTT)” from Scott Klusendorf of The Life Training Institute (www.prolifetraining.com).

For example, earlier this month when “Rick”, a student at Arizona State University (ASU), claimed we need abortion because of overpopulation, I addressed this by using the four steps of TOTT that we teach in our *Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue* seminar: Agree, Apply, Ask Why, and Ah! Here is how I “Trotted Out the Toddler” in our conversation:

Rick: I just think that the world is overpopulated and that we need abortion to keep our population under control.

Me: I would agree that there are some parts of the world, like some cities in China, that are extremely overpopulated. Can we agree that we want people to be in healthy environments and have enough resources? [*Acknowledge some aspect of Rick’s concern with which I can agree.*]

Rick: Of course.

Me: So we are definitely on the same page about that. Let me ask you a question that doesn’t have to do with abortion. This example should also be something that is really clear to the both of us and I think it will help us in this conversation.

Rick: Okay.

Me: Let’s say that there is an orphanage of a thousand two-year-olds in one of those densely populated areas of China. The orphans don’t really have a healthy environment and resources are limited. Would you say that it would be right to kill these orphaned two-year-olds because of overpopulation? [*Apply the situation raised to a toddler.*]

Rick: No way!

Me: I agree with you. Why do you think it’s so clear that we can’t we kill a thousand two-year-olds? [*Ask, “Why?” until Rick reveals that it’s wrong to kill two-year-olds because they are human beings.*]

Rick: That’s mass murder! They are human beings.

Me: Ah! So, would you agree then, that **if** the unborn is a human being like a two-year-old, **then** it would be wrong to kill him even if the world is overpopulated? [*The “Ah!” step of a conversation helps Rick see for himself that we must first address this question of “What is the unborn?” before we can move on in the conversation.*]

Rick: I see what you are saying, but I don’t think the unborn is like a two-year-old.

Me: I see. Do you agree, though, that that’s the central question we need to resolve?

Rick: Sure.

And, suddenly, we were back on the topic of “What is the unborn?” Now the conversation could move forward and we could discuss more about our core disagreement. “Trot Out the Toddler” is one of my favorite conversational tools to both teach and use in dialogue. It is very helpful for ensuring that both I and the person I am talking with recognize what things we agree on, as well as what things still need to be discussed.

The way I’ve communicated this concept here has been heavily influenced by Justice For All’s *Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue* seminar. If you are able, I would love for you to attend a seminar and learn more!

Love in Jesus,





Toddlers Win Them Over



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Catherine Wurts

JFA Newsletter

August 2010

Don't Debate - Dialogue!

From Pasadena City College,
Pasadena, California, May 2010



Raymond skateboarded up to the Exhibit and joined the conversation I was having with his two friends. Realizing I'm pro-life, he became defensive and condescending. But "trotting out the toddler" helped win him over.

Raymond (R): Women should have the right to choose to do with their own bodies what they want to! Especially women who are poor and can't afford to raise kids - they need the right to abort.

Catherine (C): I appreciate your concern for women's rights and for poor women.

At this, Raymond's defenses came down a bit and he sat down with us.

C: But aren't some choices wrong? Being a woman doesn't give me the right to

(See "Dialogue" on page 2)

Dear family and friends,

At JFA, we love giving pro-life advocates easy-to-remember tools for keeping conversations about abortion focused and gracious. One of our favorites is "trotting out a toddler" (Scott Klusendorf, Life Training Institute: www.prolifetraining.com).

Abortion is a very emotionally and psychologically complex issue for many people. But morally? It's very simple: a lot of the noise surrounding abortion really boils down to just one question: "What is the unborn?"

This is because if abortion does *not* kill a human being, no justification for abortion is necessary. But if it *does* kill a human being, no justification for abortion is adequate.

I have found it very helpful in conversations to take Scott's advice and trot out a toddler to show that this is the case.

There are four basic steps to trotting out a toddler:

- 1. Agree** - Find areas of genuine agreement, without compromising your position.
- 2. Apply** - Use their argument for abortion to justify killing a hypothetical two-year-old child.
- 3. Ask Why** - When they reject this justification for killing a born child, ask them why. With few exceptions, they will respond that the argument doesn't justify killing a born child, because the born child is a human being.
- 4. Ah!** - The light bulb moment. (note: this is not an "A-ha! Gotcha!" moment - that would be prideful) Example: "Ah! Then the issue isn't poverty, but 'what is the unborn', right? If the unborn are human beings, then shouldn't we protect
(See "Toddler" on page 2)

(cont'd. from "Dialogue" on page 1)

kill a child if I can't afford him, does it?

R: But if you guys don't even care about *born* kids who are abused or living in poverty, then it's inconsistent for you to care so much about unborn children!

C: Oh, absolutely!

R: Wait, what?

C: You're right - *if* we didn't care about born children who suffer, and only cared about unborn kids, that would be hypocritical. I agree!

R: Oh, okay. So then, why are you out here doing this?

C: Well, it's because we *do* care about born children. The people on our team support and care for born children in lots of different ways. But wouldn't it be inconsistent for us to advocate for the rights of born children, while *ignoring* the plight of unborn children?

R: Yeah, I guess that makes sense. I'll give you that.

C: So, we agree on preventing children from being in poverty - that's not the issue. The question is: does abortion prevent a child from living in poverty, or does it kill a child currently living in poverty - in his mothers' womb? What is the unborn?

(Continued from "Toddler" on page 1)

them like we do two-year olds?"

In the *Dialogue* box to the left, you'll read how this tool helped Raymond at Pasadena City College gain some important clarification about abortion last May when we went to his campus.

Note also how finding common ground with Raymond changed this potentially confrontational situation into a mutually respectful dialogue.

Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support!

In Christ,



Catherine Wurts



JFA 2010 May Mission Trip participants finish day one at Pasadena City College!

Please pray for my upcoming events:

Aug 6-8 [Midwest Catholic Family Conference](#), Wichita, KS

Aug 24, [7-9pm Mini-training event](#) at St. Cornelius Parish, Long Beach, CA

Sep 10-16 ["Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue"](#) high-school and community seminars in Lincoln, NE, and Exhibit outreach at University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Sep 25-Oct 5 "Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue" high-school, community and Focus Leadership Institute seminars in Colorado and Exhibit outreach at University of Northern Colorado - Greeley



Rebecca's Reflections



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November 2016

When Compassion Kills

This past June, I sat on Wichita State University's campus next to a poll table with the question, "Should Abortion Remain Legal?" I encouraged a young woman, Michelle, to share her opinion as she walked past. She responded,

Abortion needs to be legal for women who are not able to care for or provide a good life for the child. So many children live in broken homes, are abused, and experience neglect. Abortion is a better option in this situation because it prevents a child from ever having to live through these experiences.

I didn't agree with her conclusion—that abortion should remain legal—and yet, there was something about Michelle's explanation with which I could agree. There was also something about her demeanor that stood out to me. I made a mental note of both, knowing I would bring them up later in the conversation.

Since we had begun talking only a few minutes earlier, instead of jumping to conclusions about her beliefs, I decided to ask a few more questions to fully discover her position regarding the legality of abortion.

About 15 minutes later I turned the conversation back to her concerns about children living in difficult circumstances—and whether or not abortion is an acceptable way to prevent future abuse, neglect, and broken homes. The conversation went something like this:

Me: Michelle, earlier in our conversation you mentioned that you believe abortion is necessary, especially in situations where a woman wouldn't be able to adequately care for the child.

Michelle: [nodding her head] Yes.

Me: I want to acknowledge something about you that I appreciate. From our conversation so far, I can see that you truly care about women *and* you care about children. You desire good for them. It is refreshing to meet students on campus who are not apathetic but instead have compassion.

Michelle: [smiling] Thank you.

Me: You're welcome. I, too, desire for women and children to live prosperous lives, to be loved, and to

live in situations free from abuse, poverty, and neglect. We have that in common.

Do you mind if I ask you a question that is not about the unborn? I will come back and reference them in a moment, though.

Michelle: No, I don't mind. Go ahead.

Me: Let's imagine that there is a woman in a difficult situation who isn't able to care for her child. This woman's child is two years old. Her husband had always been the breadwinner for the family, and she had stayed at home to care for her child. Sadly, he died in an accident and didn't have life insurance. Now she isn't able to find work, and she doesn't have help from family or friends.

Now, I'm going to ask a question that may sound a little crazy, but we're likely to agree about the answer: If this woman isn't able to provide for her child, should she have the right to kill her two-year-old as a solution to their problem?

Michelle: No, of course not.

Me: I agree. This next question may also seem extreme, so please bear with me for a moment: Why? Why can't she kill her two-year-old child?

Michelle: Well, of course because you can't kill children! They are human beings. [Michelle immediately recognized one can't kill the two-year-old because he is a human being. Many people say that you can't kill the two-year old because "it's wrong" or "it's illegal." For this



type of person, it takes longer than it took for Michelle to get to the more fundamental reason that you can't kill the two-year-old — "because he is a human."]

Me: Once again, we're on the same page. Let's think about that for a moment, though. We agree that *not being able to care for a child* is not a good reason to kill the child. And we agree that it would be wrong to kill the two-year-old because he is a *human being*. So, can we agree that if the unborn is a human being like the two-year-old, we would have to protect the unborn like we would protect the two-year-old?

Michelle: [silent pause] Wow, I haven't ever looked at it that way before.

It was clear from her change in demeanor that Michelle was connecting the dots between her view that the unborn was human and how we should treat the unborn. But it appeared to me that she now saw her view in conflict with her concern for the condition in which these women and children would be living, so I addressed that.

Me: Michelle, as I mentioned earlier, you seem to have a strong desire to show people compassion. Your personality and demeanor make that obvious. I see this desire as a good thing. I admire people who are compassionate. It may be helpful, though, for us to discuss *compassion* a little more. When you see people in pain or suffering, do you desire to help them and relieve them from experiencing this suffering or pain?

Michelle: Yes, yes, of course.

Me: That's a natural and good response, but we have to make sure that our methods of relief are truly compassionate. Can we agree that it isn't always compassionate to encourage a friend to do *anything* she can think of to remove a difficulty, pain, or struggle from her life? For instance, let's use the example of the mother with the two-year-old again. Can we agree that, even if killing her two-year-old would prevent her from living in poverty and prevent her child from living a hard life, it wouldn't be compassionate to encourage her to kill her child? In order to be compassionate, we need to seek solutions that uphold the dignity of both the mother and the child, even if we can't eliminate all of their pain and suffering.

During the past seven years I have had conversations with hundreds of students with pro-choice leanings. When I have taken the time to truly understand their positions regarding the legality of abortion and *why* they support these views, many times I've found that they hold their beliefs because they care about women. It is not because they dislike or hate the unborn. Often they have a deep care for children, too. They, however, like Michelle, come into the conversation believing that abortion is compassionate. Thank you for making it possible for me to propose a *different* kind of compassion to these students and to Michelle. Please say a prayer for Michelle, that the information she learned from our conversation will continue to bear fruit in her heart and mind.

Rebecca J. Haschke

Because your support helps make stories like this possible, I just want to say...

Thank You

Dear Justice For All Supporter,
I've always been pro-life, but how in the world do I share that message in a culture that isn't?... an impossible task!

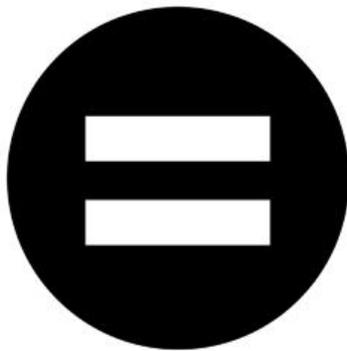
After attending a JFA seminar, the impossible finally feels attainable. I have practical, simple tools to engage someone in a productive dialogue on abortion. Thank you so much for providing support to make that possible! God is good!
-Michael

An Impossible Task!

This past June my roommate Catherine and I had the joy of hosting a seminar. It was the first seminar to take place in our own home! The invitation list was limited because of space, but we crammed 13 participants into our living room using a little creativity and the skills we learned from playing Tetris as children.

After the seminar, participants were given the option to write a "Thank You" to the financial supporters who had made the event possible. Today you are receiving a "Thank You" (to the left) written by a seminarian, Michael, who wrote that you have helped prepare him for what he had previously considered "an impossible task."

See More Stories of Impact: www.jfaweb.org/Impact



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

To help:

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