

My family name is Michener. From time to time, students will squint at my nametag and ask, “How do you pronounce that?” I like to explain that it sounds like *commissioner* without the “co,” or it sounds like *missionary* without the “y.” This explanation has always seemed appropriate to me because I feel that God is my commissioner and I am his missionary.

During recent events in Oklahoma and Arizona, I became more aware of how my traditional role as a missionary functions another way. I realized that even as a missionary, I also function as a commissioner myself, that I make missionaries by challenging others to share the truth about abortion.

Arturo is a Mexican father who participated in the JFA training program at Arizona State University along with his teenage daughter. He has dark hair and eyes, and he speaks with a slow and rhythmic, heavy Hispanic accent. Imagine Inigo Montoya from *The Princess Bride* saying, “Ello. My name is Arturo Montoya,” and you will be hearing the voice of Arturo.

I called Arturo a few days after training and caught him driving in Mexico. He said, “John, I took two packets of curriculum. One was for me,



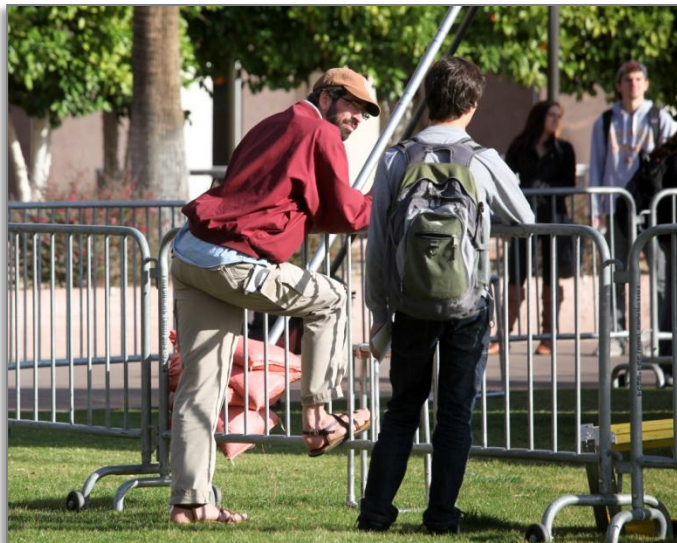
but I just gave the other one to my family in Mexico. I’m encouraging them to learn to talk about abortion.” Arturo had accepted my commission to share the truth with others.

“Gabrielle” stood alone under a small tree—all the trees are small in the deserts of Arizona. She had been staring at the Justice For All Exhibit for several minutes before I made my way over to her.

“I don’t know what I think,” she said. “It’s so hard.”

I listened a long time so I could see her perspective. I asked a lot of simple *what* and *why* questions to make sure I fully understood her view. Once I understood that she was uncomfortable with abortion, but wanted to keep it legal and not tell other people what to do, I began humbly to ask more thought-provoking questions about her view. Why are you uncomfortable with abortion? Why would you personally not make that choice? The discussion continued, and Gabrielle passed several significant milestones along the way.

First, she admitted that she could never personally choose abortion. Then she admitted that it would be morally wrong for her. Finally, she admitted that if it was wrong for her, it must also be wrong for anyone to make that choice.



In fifteen minutes she changed from being confused and unsure, to confident that abortion was wrong for everyone. Then, I commissioned her: “Gabrielle, will you take two of these brochures? One is for your personal library, but will you share this second brochure with a friend today and speak for these children who have no voice?” She accepted the challenge. In that moment we made a missionary.



LOST

Have you ever lost one of your kids at the mall? Have you ever lost a parent at the mall? It can be scary for sure, but imagine losing God’s son!

Mary and Joseph lost track of Jesus in Jerusalem during the Passover Festival. Luke 2:46 tells us, “Three days later they found Jesus in the temple court. He was sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.”

Many pro-life advocates think that they are called to argue and win debates. At Justice For All, our training program teaches volunteers to be more effective by changing the debate into a dialogue. Here’s what two recent participants in our training program had to say.

“Wow—this was nothing like I thought it would be! I thought it would be a bunch of arguments, not conversation. Much more effective!”
 -Paul Crone, Edmond, OK

“Loved it! I especially appreciated the emphasis on humility and listening. It is so easy for me to be very black and white on this issue, so the aspect of listening and asking questions was a lifesaver for me.”
 -Raleah Murphey, Guthrie, OK

Listening and asking questions. Still the best way to teach. Still the best way to learn. Thanks for sending me to listen and ask questions in conversations with the “lost.”

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Event details often change due to scheduling conflicts and changing needs of our education partners. Please note several changes on our spring calendar. Colorado events have moved later in April. Lawton, Oklahoma events have shifted a few days, and we have added events in Bryan and San Antonio, Texas. See an online schedule here:

www.jfaweb.org/Spring_2013_Schedule.

-John Michener

