

# Trot Out the Toddler



A JFA UPDATE FROM MARY BIEGLER



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Dear Family and Friends,

Three years ago I was at the University of Texas at Dallas standing next to the Justice For All exhibit and asking people if they had time to share their thoughts about abortion. One young woman, I'll call "Anita," stopped and began sharing that she thought abortion should be legal for almost any reason through all nine months of pregnancy. She did agree with me that sex-selective abortion should not be legal. She shared that she was from India where such abortions are very common.

I asked her which circumstances surrounding unplanned pregnancy concerned her most and led her to believe abortion should generally be legal. Anita paused and thought for a moment. Then she said that she was most concerned about women who are too young or too poor to have a child.

These are just two out of a long list of justifications for abortion that you are likely familiar with: "It's her choice, she's too poor, she was raped, the foster care system is broken, there are already thousands of suffering children in the world..." These are what we call off-topic justifications for abortion because they don't answer the central question of the abortion issue, "What is the unborn?" Until we come to a conclusion on whether or not the unborn are human beings like you and me, we won't be able to determine whether abortion is morally right or wrong.

Do the circumstances listed above matter? *Of course* they do. However, not a single one of those circumstances would justify killing a toddler because the toddler is a human being. So the question is, *is* the unborn a human being like the toddler? If so, we should protect him as well.

To help Anita understand the importance of this one central question for herself, I used a simple tool my colleagues and I use in virtually every conversation about abortion. Our friend Scott Klusendorf of the Life Training Institute calls it, "Trot Out the Toddler," and it includes four steps: Agree, Apply, Ask Why, and Ah!

As you'll remember, Anita believed abortion should be legal for young girls and women in poverty. The first step is to *agree* with something she said...

**Mary:** That would be so hard. I can't imagine what it would be like to be really young and poor, and then find out I was pregnant.

Step two is to *apply* Anita's justification for abortion to a toddler...



Wayne State College, 2022

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JUSTICE FOR ALL - TRAINING THOUSANDS TO MAKE ABORTION UNTHINKABLE FOR MILLIONS, ONE PERSON AT A TIME

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**Mary:** I'm going to ask you a question that might sound strange. Imagine there is a young girl who is pregnant. She is 17-years-old. She decides to keep her baby because her boyfriend promises that he will support her no matter what, but then a couple years later he dumps her and she's left to raise her baby all alone. Can she kill her toddler because of her circumstances?

**Anita:** Of course not!

Step three is to *ask why*...

**Mary:** I totally agree. But why can't she kill her toddler?

**Anita:** Because that's a human child...you can't kill humans.

And finally the *Ab!* step. This is like a lightbulb moment for the pro-choice person. This is where I helped Anita understand why we have to answer the question "What is the unborn?" before we can come to a conclusion about the morality or legality of abortion.

**Mary:** You're absolutely right. So do you think we could agree that *if* the unborn is human like that toddler, then we should protect him in the same way we would protect the toddler?

**Anita:** Yes, *if* it is human, I could agree with that.

If I had tried to convince Anita that being young and poor doesn't justify abortion by saying something like "The woman's suffering doesn't give her the right to kill her child," I likely would have lost her right then. Trotting Out the Toddler prevented that from happening because it showed her that I *do* genuinely care about the circumstances she mentioned while also stressing the importance of answering the question "What is the unborn?"

This led to a deeper conversation about whether the unborn is biologically human and whether or not they deserve equal rights. Less than ten minutes into our discussion, Anita told me that abortion *is* wrong and should not be legal.

Something I've learned from conversations like this one is that most pro-choice advocates don't think killing human beings is justified. In most cases, they just don't see the unborn as a valuable human being like you and me. They believe abortion simply prevents a child from coming into existence, possibly an existence of suffering, which then prevents the woman from further suffering. Pro-life advocates agree that we want to prevent people from living in suffering. We just disagree on how to best accomplish that. We know the unborn *is* a valuable human being, and we realize that abortion is not the solution to suffering because it takes an already living child out of existence by killing him.

Many women experiencing unintended pregnancies have been told that their babies aren't human or even that they're not living yet. If either of those things is true then getting an abortion is equivalent to a woman having a surgery to remove a tumor and restricting that would be an infringement on her bodily rights. If those statements are not true, then the woman is allowing a lethal act of violence against a helpless victim who is her own child. *That* is why answering the question "What is the unborn?" is so crucial.

If the pro-choice person answers that question correctly they are confronted with the reality of what abortion does to more than 2,500 children daily in the U.S. They are faced with the disturbing and heartbreaking consequences that their own view supports and hopefully, by the grace of God, they will have a change of heart just like Anita.

For the unborn and their parents,

Mary Biegler