

Confidence Creates Conversations

Impact Report



March 2016

Training thousands to make abortion unthinkable for millions...

Imagine how many lives would be saved and how many hearts would be changed if all of the people who have pro-life views would regularly talk about abortion with their pro-choice friends. Often, pro-life advocates don't raise the topic, and when it's presented to them on a silver platter, they don't dare speak up.

That is why Justice For All's training program is so vital. In this Impact Report, JFA trainer Jeremy Gorr and one recent JFA volunteer, Andrew, reflect on Andrew's experience with JFA. Along the way, they illustrate how confidence is built little by little, through the right kinds of activities.

Thank you for partnering with JFA to serve pro-life advocates like Andrew and help them gain the confidence to become the sort of powerful pro-life advocate we imagined above, able to create conversations that change hearts and save lives.

...one person at a time.

Like so many of us, Andrew did not often have conversations about abortion. He was pro-life, but he lacked confidence. Then he participated in the Justice For All (JFA) training program last fall. His college pastor, Chris Haynes, and their church, Trinity Baptist Church in Norman, Oklahoma, have a very purposeful emphasis on "the equipping of the saints for the work of service" (Eph. 4:12), so this was one of many times that they have invited JFA to help train their students. Later, Andrew said,

Before the JFA conference, I was hesitant to raise the topic of abortion with my peers. While this was due mainly to my lack of knowledge about abortion, I also felt uncomfortable raising the subject due to my lack of experience in conversing about the topic with someone from another worldview.

I've heard these same hesitations often. Many people say that there is no way the average person is capable of engaging in productive dialogue with pro-choice advocates. Andrew's JFA experience proved the opposite. JFA training helped Andrew develop (1) confidence in his own pro-life convictions, (2) confidence to begin creating dialogue, and (3) confidence to create further conversations in his daily life.

The first dose of confidence came for Andrew during the interactive seminar (Seat Work) portion of the training program. In a mentor group led by Rebecca Haschke and me, Andrew and other students said they felt apprehensive about coming to our outreach event at the University of Oklahoma (OU) the following week. As these students learned why common pro-choice arguments fail and practiced sharing the evidence which supports the pro-life position, however, their confidence grew. Andrew reflected,

JFA not only has given me the tools I need to reach out to my peers, but also has helped me firm up my position on abortion as well as my reasoning behind my stance.



Before the JFA conference, I was hesitant to raise the topic of abortion with my peers. — Andrew (right)

Even with this confidence, though, Andrew wondered if he personally could take these ideas and produce a good conversation with them. Here's how our outreach event at OU (Feet Work) enabled him to do just that. At the beginning of the outreach event, Andrew got a second dose of confidence as he listened in to conversations that JFA staff members were having with pro-choice students. The next day, he took the critical step of starting not just one, but many conversations. He was surprised by what he learned:

During the time I spent in outreach with JFA, I had several opportunities to dialogue with other

college students about their beliefs about abortion. Through these interactions, I learned not to categorize someone too quickly. To my surprise, many people who initially stated that they supported abortion were less supportive after receiving information. Most of the people I spoke to were not the die-hard leftists I had thought they would be. On the other hand, several people who thought abortion should be illegal turned out to support early abortions! Through outreach with JFA, I discovered that you really don't know where someone stands on an issue until you ask specific questions.



Through these interactions, I learned not to categorize someone too quickly... you really don't know where someone stands on an issue until you ask specific questions. — Andrew (left)

Andrew gained an understanding of pro-choice advocates and of himself through outreach that he could not have gained otherwise. That's why JFA has found Seat Work and Feet Work to be such a powerful combination. Seat Work provides the tools for creating good conversations, but Feet Work gives a real-life opportunity to practice using those tools, to get rid of false caricatures of the people we're trying to reach, and to explore ways to grow in dialogue skills.

Andrew found that creating conversations during Feet Work gave him a third dose of confidence so that it was natural for him to continue creating dialogue about abortion after the JFA events (Repeat Work):

The [seminar] and outreach JFA allowed me to take part in have prepared me for several discussions since their visit to campus. In dialogues with fellow students, finding common ground has been very important as have techniques such as "trotting out the toddler." I am thankful for the opportunity I had to volunteer with JFA and to develop my convictions and my ability to share them.

Andrew initially had the same hesitance to have conversations that most people have. His biggest hurdle was his first conversation. Once that hurdle was past, creating more conversations did not seem so daunting. Andrew's story demonstrates that gaining knowledge at a JFA seminar and taking a first dialogue step at a JFA outreach event can produce bold action on behalf of the unborn.

Are you someone who wants to be prepared for these kinds of conversations, but you're hesitant like Andrew was? Do you know someone in the same boat? You can gain confidence like Andrew did by participating in JFA's training program, including a Feet Work event. You can find upcoming opportunities on the JFA Event Calendar (www.jfaweb.org/calendar).

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We thank God that he used Justice For All, in partnership with Andrew's very supportive college pastor and church, to help Andrew gain the confidence to be able to regularly and graciously share his views about abortion with his peers. Thank you for supporting the mission of JFA so that we can offer Seat Work and Feet Work experiences to others who simply lack the confidence to start the conversation. Through thousands of bold advocates like Andrew, we can truly make abortion unthinkable for millions – one conversation at a time.

- Jeremy Gorr, for the JFA Team

Gain Confidence to Create Conversations on a JFA Mission Trip!

www.jfaweb.org/mission-trips

