

To practice the "seat work" of Justice For All's 2009 Memorial weekend training in southern California, a "feet work" survey event was undertaken at Moonlight Beach, just north of San Diego. Sarah Dufresne, a high school junior from Ventura County, participated and reflected on her experience.

Sarah Dufresne

CA Mission Camp Reflection

May 2009

I traveled down my familiar California freeways for three hours to San Diego back in May knowing that I was about to partake in something unlike anything I had ever experienced. I was tad bit intimidated by the challenge of dialoguing about abortion with people I didn't even know.

I pondered how, as high school student, I could be effective in conveying truth to those who were a)strangers, b)older, c)probably misled and d)most likely apathetic! I did feel though that the Lord was leading me to better equip my mind and heart to discuss the issue of abortion.

The Moonlight Beach survey provided me with an opportunity to witness the sharing of truth about abortion. Clipboard in hand, Catherine and I were scanning the beach for people to survey.

How could I as a high school student be effective in conveying truth to those who were strangers, older, probably misled and most likely apathetic!

One conversation sticks out in my mind. We passed a couple who promptly asked us what we were doing. This was the first instance of the curiosity that would continue throughout our conversation. We proceeded to tell them about what we were doing and they both agreed to answer a survey- the wife had hers and the husband had his.

Both felt that abortion was wrong and were seemingly very pro-life...this was encouraging. They agreed view the graphic photos and seemed interested. Throughout the survey their teenage daughter, a girl my age, listened and piped in a few insightful comments about abortion.

If I remember correctly, she thought it strange that a girl in California could not take medication at school without parental consent, yet that same girl could have an abortion with no parental knowledge or consent whatsoever.

Prior to taking the survey, the couple said that they agreed on most things about abortion except for the fact that husband didn't think that abortion should be illegal. When this point came up during our discussion he said "I don't think we can go as far as making abortion illegal."

His wife looked at him with a sort of disgusted look on her face as she appeared to being considering his legitimacy! She didn't see how her husband



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could stand behind a position that basically said: Murder is wrong but 'we can't go as far as' making it illegal. It was evident that the two had discussed the issue before and it appeared to me that the wife was trying to have her husband see is illogical position in front of us. A tiny bit of pressure never hurts.

The husband seemed to be wrestling with the statement he had just made. He and his wife, with Catherine and I presiding, began a brief dialogue. There they were, two Southern California girls on a beach, talking about abortion!

Catherine and I were merely the catalysts for the conversation between the man and woman. The man agreed that it was illogical but still seemed troubled with the thought of making abortion illegal. At the end of our conversation the topic of faith came into the picture. The man wanted to know if we were Christians and to this Catherine and I responded with a yes.

The curiosity that began our whole encounter was great as it also opened the door to talking briefly about God. We left the couple feeling as if our message was appreciated.

The curiosity is what struck me about our conversation. The man seemed to genuinely *want* to know where we were

coming from. In order for the conversation to be effective we wanted the couple to know that we were also interested in what they had to say. The curiosity should be mutual. In this case, we were able to clarify the truth about abortion for the couple. I believe that it was affirming for all of us.

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I truly feel blessed to have spent the weekend with JFA and returned to Ventura feeling better equipped to be a voice for the unborn. I pray that next May I will be able to attend the exhibit at UC Santa Barbara and be a volunteer and pray daily for conversations and opportunities to arise where I can lovingly share the truth about abortion.

In the mean time, my pro-life work/ministry lies with my fellow Saint Bonaventure High School students, friends and teachers as a new social justice campaign is being planned for the next academic year that will focus on abortion during the spring months.

Peace in the midst of it all.