

JFA Reflection  
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CA May 2006 Missions Trip  
June 2006

I woke up in the middle of the night a few days after leaving California and working with the JFA exhibit. I couldn't go back to sleep. It was 4:15am and I had gone to bed at 1:00am so I knew that I was not quite rested. For some reason I couldn't get myself to fall back asleep. Then it hit me. I remembered the night of reflection when we began naming all the people we talked to in need of prayers and I thought PRAY! Someone was in need of prayer at that time and I was awake. So I did; I began to pray and all the faces and conversations started flashing through my memory.

At the JFA training, I remember seeing all the people and thinking wow! This is going to be an amazing witness because we have so many people! But all my fears returned when I remembered all the arguments I had previously heard. The training was extremely well done and Matt helped me so much in organizing my thoughts when role playing.

My most memorable conversation was with a young lady who had been pregnant at a young age. She said she considered abortion but decided against it. She had a miscarriage and told me how happy she had been and still was. I think what she was trying to express was her relief in the removal of future difficulties, not happiness over the death of her child and when we talked about it together, I think she realized that too. But all of these things were not revealed until an hour into the conversation.

All along I had thought she was very pro choice. We discussed so many different points and she told me eventually that she thought she was pro choice but was now struggling with it. She was a new Christian and the combination of the display and our conversation made her wonder if, as a Christian, that was wrong of her.

From here on out she had so many questions. I answered as best I could and we gained a confidence in each other. She also started to tell me why she had a hard time letting go of her pro choice stance and what parts were the most difficult for her. I don't think she walked away a "changed person" or anything like that, but she was an amazing girl and I have great hope that her heart is changing.

What she gave to me was confidence for the rest of the week. I knew that most other conversations might not be so considerate or flow as positively as this. However, I saw first hand how the exhibit does influence and save lives! I couldn't despair no matter how much opposition I would see for the rest of the week. I was prepared to continue.

An experience that I could never forget took place at UCSB. I was definitely anticipating the protests and trying to prepare spiritually for the hardships. I sent out text messages to most people in my phone asking for prayers. When the protestors came I was almost excited.

I talked to who I would consider the most obnoxious person I ever met. His name was Brendan. I remember praying that he would walk away on account the conversation wasn't going anywhere. When he finally did I was so happy. I had to deal with a lot of people who just wanted to tell me that the exhibit wasn't the most loving way to make the impact we were searching for. Because of this I spent a lot of the day talking to pro life people simply helping them to understand the reasoning behind the display.

So many things were occurring that I was just thankful when the time came each day to go to mass and give it all to Our Lord, or sit with friends and pray the rosary. By day two, when the protestors returned, I had met most of them and was able to greet them all by name. I think most were surprised by this but it created the opportunity for great dialogue. Brendan returned and we discussed many things about faith, society and dignity of human beings especially women. I now have his email and continue to correspond with him on these topics!

I also have been corresponding with one other protestor, Christine, who had a very difficult day. I was so inspired by the willingness of these people to continue talking about the abortion with someone who doesn't have similar views.

Finally and most importantly, I had the opportunity to pray so much during this week. Prayer, I have always felt, is the most effective way to change the hearts of those in favor of abortion. And I still believe this! What JFA provided, was an opportunity to speak with people about abortion and never leave the importance of prayer behind.

JFA California was an amazing experience!!! I am so thankful to all of the JFA staff and volunteers!! God Bless.