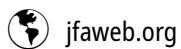




ABORTION: FROM DEBATE TO DIALOGUE

INTERACTIVE GUIDE

“Because One Person Can Change the World”



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- jfaweb.org/internships (Get more info.)
- jfaweb.org/free (Get/Share JFA email & resources.)
- jfaweb.org/request (Book a speaker/event.)
- jfaweb.org/donate (Help JFA train others.)

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

- www.jfaweb.org/notes

Links to Most JFA Resources, including EHD Phone App / What Is the Unborn? / What Is Abortion? / Considering Abortion / Healing After Abortion / Stories / Dialogue Examples

- www.jfaweb.org/facts (“What Are the Facts?”)
- www.jfaweb.org/invitation (Clickable Brochure)
- www.jfaweb.org/brochure (Copies of Brochure)

CREDITS

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The first version of this interactive guide was published in 2005 with regular revisions published since then. The present edition (3.5) produced in September 2023.

JFA’s current “Seat Work and Feet Work” training program draws its history back to at least 2003. The “Feet Work” portion of that program draws its history even further back—to approximately 1998.

We owe a great debt to numerous staff members, interns, volunteers, friends, and partner organizations who have contributed ideas, discussion, mentoring, expertise, practical service, financial support, and more to bring this material into its present form. Much of what we’ve learned, we’ve learned in community.

Due to space considerations in this guide, please see our “Credits” web page which outlines key people who helped shaped JFA’s materials. This page includes a full list of citations attempting to give credit where credit is due for unique contributions to this interactive guide and the lecture material meant to accompany it. Please see www.jfaweb.org/credits and consider supporting the organizations and individuals mentioned there.

Most importantly, we thank God, who deserves the credit for any good that comes through JFA team members, programs, social media posts, and materials.

Notes, Citations, Links: www.jfaweb.org/notes

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AN INVITATION TO A DIFFERENT KIND OF CONVERSATION

JUSTICE
FOR ALL

I don't remember precisely the words she used. I only remember that she was taking her worldview to its logical conclusion. The gist of it was this: *Because nothing has value, I don't have any value either.*

"I think you matter," I said. I was standing a few feet away behind our "free speech rail" (a crowd control barricade) at Arizona State University, and I was looking directly into her eyes. We had talked about the value of the unborn child, but now that we had turned to deeper questions about whether *anything* is valuable, I had an opportunity to speak in a way that was personally relevant to her.

This is not your typical debate about abortion. It's a *different kind of conversation*, marked by equal concern for every human being touched by unintended pregnancy and abortion.

There's *the woman and others around her* who are experiencing unintended pregnancy and the choice about abortion personally. We purposefully ask ourselves, "How would the statements I am making feel for someone dealing with this topic personally?" If we fail to keep this person in our field of vision throughout the conversation, our arguments, though otherwise persuasive, may fail to persuade.

There's *the unborn child*. Because this human being is forgotten by most of us most of the time, members of the Justice For All (JFA) community consciously set him in our field of vision through pictures and by challenging others to remember him in every step of the dialogue about abortion.

There's one other person to consider: *the person who disagrees with us about abortion (and/or other things)*. We might unintentionally think of this person only as "the potential convert" or "one of the millions who need to change their minds" or, simply, "*them*." This person is a human being, though, just like you and me. So, while we're advocating for unborn children, arguing they should be treated equally, we should be acting towards the person with whom we're speaking as if he or she is actually the same type of being, *a human being* who should be treated with respect and compassion.

That moment at the free speech rail is seared in my memory because I was able to go beyond theoretical points about the value of unborn children (which are nonetheless very important), and communicate directly to the deepest need of the human heart—the need each of us has to know that "God values and loves me."

It is our prayer at JFA that our interactive materials and workshop experiences will unlock for you a *different kind of conversation* like the one I described above. Our dialogue artists will train you to navigate abortion conversations with grace. We'll teach you how to discuss abortion in an intellectually robust way, but with particular sensitivity to relational dynamics in the conversation. We will equip you to change minds about abortion, and we pray the conversations you create in the coming days will help cause a massive shift in public opinion that, ultimately, causes a massive shift towards protecting unborn children in public policy the world over. In the process, we pray the training you receive from us will open doors to share with every person "the reason for the hope that is in you" (I Peter 3:15) and the profound answers God offers to the deepest needs of each heart.

Steve Wagner

Executive Director

September 2023



KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS

Seat Work & Feet Work

“Seat Work” (lectures, study, and interactive activities in a workshop environment) and “Feet Work” (outreach events where we talk to people who disagree with us) are both essential to training people to dialogue about abortion. Like train tracks, you can’t have one without the other. This approach uniquely prepares advocates to engage their everyday sphere of influence (“Repeat Work”). See www.jfaweb.org/seat-work-feet-work for more.

Mentors, Participants, and Volunteers

Our experienced dialogue team has collectively spent thousands of hours with pro-choice advocates. Their first priority in any JFA training event is to mentor you through both the Seat Work and Feet Work segments. Generally, they are also available in a limited way after the outreach to help with questions. During the Seat Work, we refer to you as a Participant, and if you sign a Volunteer Agreement and join us for outreach, we refer to you as a Volunteer.

Analyze, Imitate, Improvise

Jazz musicians learn to create their own music largely by following a disciplined, not-so-mysterious process. They first hear and try to understand a piece of music (**Analyze**). Then they try to play what they have heard (**Imitate**). Finally, once they have the music “under their fingers,” they put this material together in new ways in their own original compositions (**Improvise**). To learn to have conversations about abortion, you can follow the same process. First, **Analyze** a concept or dialogue tool by listening to an experienced trainer explain it. Then **Imitate** that idea by reading a script with a partner. Finally, **Improvise** your own free-flowing conversation, expressing the same ideas through your own voice and personality. The **Improvise** step helps you test yourself and see if you understood the concept. If you get stuck, you can always look back at the **Imitate** scripts for help.

Pro-Life & Pro-Choice

People use the terms “Pro-Life” and “Pro-Choice” in various ways, but this material uses the following definitions:

- **Pro-Life Advocate:** A person who believes that in general abortion should not be legal
- **Pro-Choice Advocate:** A person who believes that in general abortion should be legal.

Note that we use the term “pro-choice” instead of “pro-abortion.” We don’t want to put unnecessary stumbling blocks into the conversation, so we call people by the terms and categories they use for themselves. You and a partner will alternately play each role in the different activities. If you don’t know what a real pro-choice advocate would say, your mentor can help. When possible, use JFA’s “Invitation” Brochure to aid your dialogue. If you get stumped, see your mentor or see www.jfaweb.org/love3/notes for more resources.

Fetus, Embryo, Unborn, Preborn

We generally use the term “unborn” to refer to unborn children, believing it to be the most neutral of the terms which also includes all unborn children from fertilization until birth. “Embryo” is a stage of development covering from zero to eight weeks, and “Fetus” is a stage of development covering nine weeks until birth (post-fertilization age). Some of our team members prefer to use the term “preborn,” believing it to be neutral and more expressive of the idea that if nature is allowed to take its course, these beings will be born (i.e. their being “unborn” is not a foregone conclusion). The key with any term we choose is this: we want to use accurate terms but we want to do so without giving the appearance of attempting to bias the conversation through mere rhetoric. Be sensitive, then, to how any term might be creating a stumbling block, and be willing to change your terms for the sake of the person with whom you’re speaking. Generally, we also wait to refer to the unborn as a “child” until we have demonstrated in the conversation that the unborn is a human being.



ROADMAP FOR THE CONVERSATION

Introduction: How can we actively love every human being involved in unwanted pregnancy?

Three Essential Skills: Start a conversation and keep it productive using three skills: ask questions with an open heart, listen to understand, and find common ground when possible. Make these skills a habit!

Can Images Help? Learn to use abortion images appropriately and sensitively in order to help people face the reality of abortion and consider the facts about unborn children. Learn to use JFA's "Invitation to Dialogue" Brochure.

One Central Question: *Trot Out the Toddler* to help people focus on the question, "What is the unborn?"

Biology: Make your case from science that the unborn is a *Living Human Organism*.

Equal Rights: Show that the basic human rights we believe we have equally make sense if there is actually something the same about us, and the thing that's the same isn't our form or function. It's our human nature.

If human nature offers the best explanation of our human rights, then the unborn should be treated equally.

The unborn are very different from us, but look how they are the same. They have the same human nature.

Question of Rape

Relational Challenge: *Do you care about the woman who has been assaulted?*

Intellectual Challenge: *Should abortion be legal in this case?*

Bodily Rights: Affirm a woman's basic right to her body, and then learn to respond to the claim that even though the unborn child is a human being with equal rights, the woman's bodily rights mean abortion should be legal.

Caring for Those Considering Abortion or Struggling with a Past Abortion

Listen, ask questions, and acknowledge. / Connect to resources. / Be persistent and pray.

Common Questions: Answer questions about "life of the mother" cases, back-alley abortion, and being "personally opposed but thinking one cannot tell others what to do by making abortion illegal."

What's Next? Start one conversation. See www.jfaweb.org/love3/notes for help.

Your Reflections, Notes, and Questions



CAN IMAGES HELP?

Analyze

Graphic Images: Learn to Share the Emmett Till Story

Here are a few basic details to help you tell the Emmett Till story:

- Emmett Till, a black boy from Chicago, was 14 when he visited his uncle and cousins in Money, Mississippi for a two-week trip in the summer of 1955.
- On Wednesday, Emmett bought a piece of gum from the white woman behind a grocery store counter (Bryants' Grocery in Money, MS). While talking with his friends outside, he whistled (many times this was a side effect of a stuttering problem he had); at about the same time the white woman walked toward her car. The boys ran off, fearing that she was going to get a gun.
- Emmett was taken from his uncle's home at 2 a.m. on Sunday morning. His body was found in a river a few days later, tied to a cotton gin fan with barbed wire. He was hardly recognizable, and it was clear that he had been beaten severely and shot through the head.
- His mother held an open casket funeral saying, "I want the world to see what they did to my boy."
- Pictures of the mutilated body were published in JET Magazine, and the story provided a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement.
- Learn More about the Emmett Till Story: www.jfaweb.org/emmett-till

Images of Human Development: Milestones

A few of the most important human development milestones (all ages are post-fertilization and approximate):

Fertilization (Zero Days): Also called *Conception*, this process of approximately 24 hours begins with the sperm entering the oocyte (egg) and ends with the first mitotic division into a two-cell zygote. Some sources refer to the one-celled organism during this 24-hour period as a Zygote, and some refer to the two-celled organism also as a Zygote. Although there is some debate among scientists and philosophers about when in this 24-hour period a living human organism begins, almost all with expertise in these matters agree that at the first mitotic division to a two-celled Zygote, a new human organism exists. See the web link below for a more detailed description of the process of fertilization and what it means.

Heart Begins Beating (22 Days): See the heart beating in Week 4 at EHD (www.ehd.org; see also EHD app).

Organ Formation Completed (49 Days / End of Week 8 / Beginning of Week 9): There is only development from Week 9. Prior to this point, the unborn is generally referred to as an Embryo (or Zygote, see above), and after this point, the unborn is generally referred to as a Fetus. For more on these terms, see p. 4.

Viability (Middle of Month 5 / Roughly Week 22): Able to live outside the womb (with medical technology)

Lung Development Sufficient for Birth Without Significant Risks (Week 32)

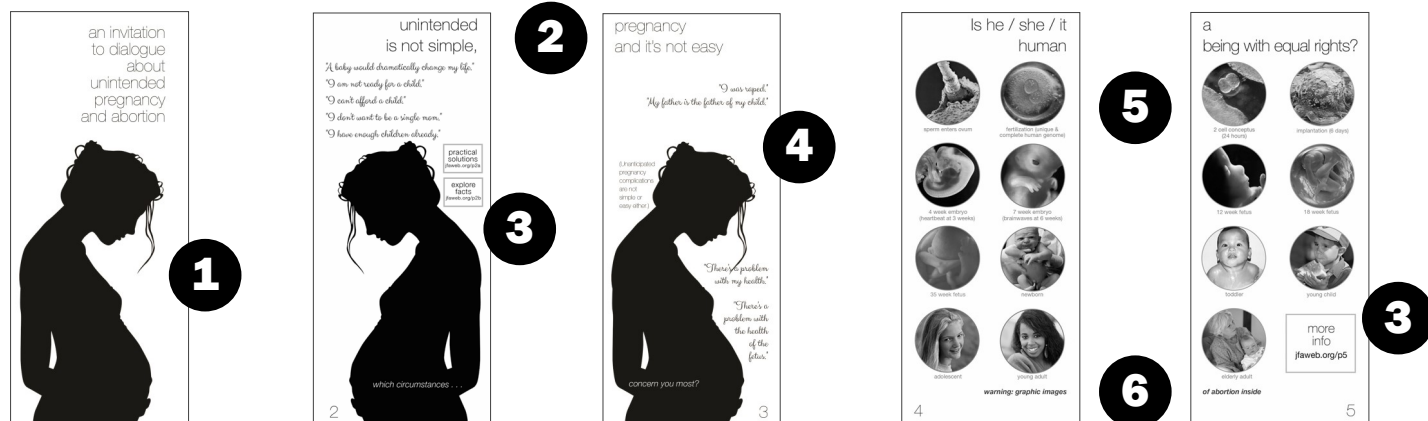
See www.jfaweb.org/human-development for more milestones, more details, definitions of key terms, and documentation of all human development claims made on JFA dialogue tools.

Graphic Images: Can't We All Agree...?

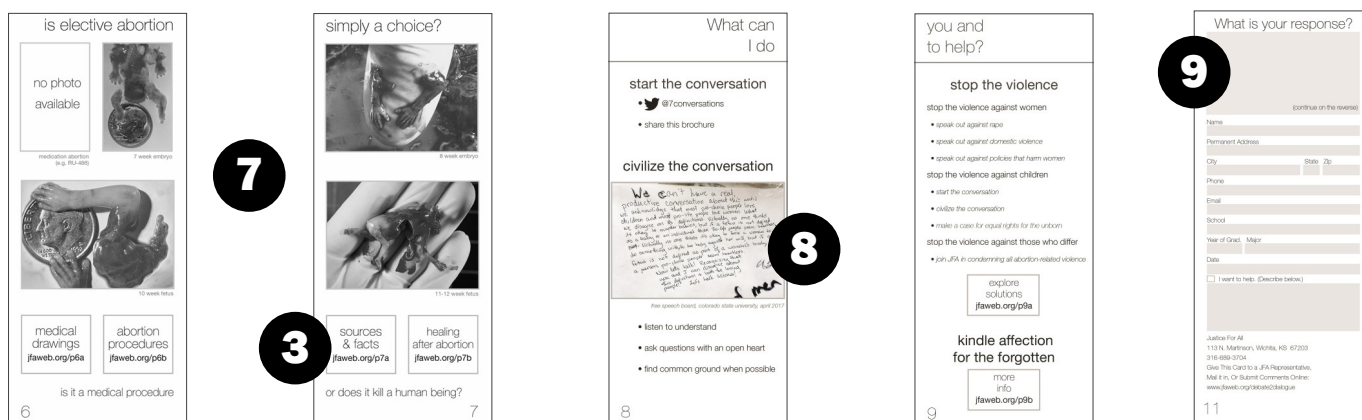
Whatever any of us believe about the public use of abortion images (ask a mentor for more discussion on this), can't we all agree the private use of abortion images with a warning and consent of the viewer can be very helpful to one-to-one conversations? See www.jfaweb.org/graphic-images for more on this.

CAN IMAGES HELP?

A LOOK INSIDE JFA'S DIALOGUE BROCHURE



- 1 The brochure starts with the woman, the primary concern of the pro-choice advocate. We can then build a bridge from the concern all of us share for the pregnant woman to the concern all of us should have for the unborn.
- 2 It's perhaps a simple thing to acknowledge the practical and emotional complexity involved in every unintended pregnancy, but it makes a big impression on the person who is wrestling with this topic for the first time.
- 3 Many pages in the brochure feature links to more information, including videos, sources, evidence, and facts. Download the pdf to your smartphone for easier access via clickable hyperlinks (www.jfaweb.org/invitation).
- 4 Instead of minimizing the circumstances of rape, incest, health of the mother, and health of the unborn child (because these reasons are behind a very small percentage of abortions), we devote an entire page to them.
- 5 Use Pages 4-5 to discuss the question, "What is the unborn?" Pictures are dated from fertilization, so add two weeks to correlate to "last menstrual period" (LMP) or "gestational age." (The four-week embryo correlates to a six-week pregnancy.) See www.jfaweb.org/human-development for more details about development.
- 6 Note the warning at the bottom of Pages 4-5. Lift Page 5 to reveal the graphic pictures on Pages 6-7 once you have the consent of the other person.
- 7 The graphic images of the results of abortion (Pages 6-7) were provided by the Center for Bioethical Reform, and you can find source documentation at www.jfaweb.org/p7a. Coins appear in the images for size reference.
- 8 This free speech board comment models one important component of good dialogue: giving the benefit of the doubt to both pro-choice and pro-life advocates.
- 9 Ask each person to share his or her response to the conversation. You can use the response card to continue the dialogue based on what the person writes!



Notes, Citations, Links: www.jfaweb.org/notes

Get Help from the JFA Team: jfa@jfaweb.org

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Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue – Interactive Guide (v.3.5)

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THREE ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Analyze

When Jesus was twelve years old, his parents took him to Jerusalem. Then they left without him. When they returned to Jerusalem, they found him in the temple. What was He doing? *Listening and asking questions.* We should do the same. (See Luke 2:46.)

When Peter argued for salvation in Jesus before the people in Jerusalem at Pentecost, he quoted Hebrew texts and based his argument on Jewish prophecy (see Acts 2:14-41). When Paul stood before the philosophers on Mars Hill, however, he didn't quote the Jewish prophets. He quoted the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers (see Acts 17:16-34). Why the difference? Both men were meeting their audience on *common ground*. They started with shared beliefs before making their case.

We also can master these *Three Essential Skills* illustrated by Jesus, Peter, and Paul:

Skill #1: Listen to Understand

Focus on the ideas the person is sharing, rather than just thinking of your next response. Listening shows we care about the other person. It builds trust and rapport. It helps others enjoy talking to us.

Skill #2: Ask Questions with an Open Heart

Don't assume you know what the other person thinks, feels, intends. Ask!

Type I – Gather Information / Ask for Clarification / What?

- Examples: “What do you believe?” & “What did you mean by...?”
- Note: A good starting point is to ask questions about which abortions a person believes should be legal, in terms of timing (“Up to what point in the development of the unborn do you think abortion should be legal?”) and circumstances (“Should abortion be legal in the circumstance of poverty?”).

Type II – Ask for Reasons or Evidence / Why?

- Example: “Why do you believe this?” & “How did you come to that conclusion?”

Type III – Gently Offer a Challenge (once you understand a person's view)

- Example: “If that's true, then wouldn't this other thing also have to be true?”

Skill #3: Find Common Ground when Possible

There are many things a pro-choice person believes with which we already agree, and there are many things we believe with which the pro-choice person already agrees. Ask questions to discover specific beliefs about which you can genuinely say, “I think you've made a good point” or “I agree with you about this.” Finding common ground is like putting fuel in a car. It helps the other person want to continue the conversation, so we try to find agreement whenever possible and point it out frequently. This also sheds light on what our true disagreements are and helps us discuss them more productively. We don't want the conversation to end with common ground, but it needs to begin with it and return to it regularly to “refuel.”

See the book *Common Ground Without Compromise* (by Stephen Wagner) for an explanation and tips for building common ground. To download the eBook for free, see www.commongroundbook.com. The book includes 25 questions you can ask in order to seek to find common ground. The “Improvise” activity on Page 11 includes seven examples of questions from the book that usually yield common ground.

Imitate

Pro-Life: What do you think about abortion? [*Type I: What*]

Pro-Choice: I'm pro-choice.

L: By "pro-choice," do you mean that you think abortion should be legal? [*Type I: What*]

C: Yes.

L: Do you think abortion should be legal through all nine months? [*Type I: What - Timing*]

C: No way. I'm against late-term abortion.

L: I am, too. I have some pictures here of the unborn at different stages of development [*"Invitation" Brochure, Pages 4-5*]. When you say you are "against late-term abortion" are you thinking that abortion should not be legal after a certain point?

C: [Pointing to the 18-week picture] I think after this point it should not be legal.

L: I agree that abortion should not be legal after that point. [*Common Ground*] Are you saying that you think abortion is okay before that point?

C: No, I think it's bad, but I just can't tell other people what to do.

L: So, let me see if I understand you. You think abortion is generally bad, but you think there's a point in pregnancy when it should not be legal, and that point is at approximately 18 weeks. [*Type I: What*]

C: I'm not totally sure what I think, but I think that's pretty close.

L: I think it's understandable if you're still thinking through your position on abortion. It seems like you're pretty open-minded.

C: I try to be.

L: What do you think about some of the circumstances in which women get abortions, such as the situation when a woman says she "doesn't feel mature enough"? [*Type I: What - Circumstances*]

C: Early or late in the pregnancy?

L: Good question. Let's just talk about abortions early in the pregnancy since you and I have agreed that abortion shouldn't be legal late in the pregnancy. What about the "I don't feel mature enough" circumstance when the unborn is 4 weeks from fertilization?

C: I don't think feeling immature is a good reason to have an abortion no matter if it's early or late.

L: What do you think about a woman aborting a female fetus just because she would prefer to have a male child? [*Common Ground*]

C: What? That happens?

L: It's common especially in India and other places where there's a strong preference for male children.

C: I'm totally against that.

L: I am, too. [*Common Ground*] What do you think about a woman having an abortion because she doesn't want to be a single mother? [*Type I: What – Circumstances*]

C: That's really understandable. I'd feel sorry for her, but it doesn't seem like a good reason for abortion.

L: I agree. I'd want to do everything I could to help, but I don't think it's a good reason either.

C: These are great questions. I haven't ever really taken the time to think through this. What are your thoughts about abortion?

L: Well, for one thing, I think abortion should not be legal even early in the pregnancy.

C: But what about a woman who's really poor? Shouldn't she be allowed to get an abortion? ...

COMMON GROUND

Analyze

In the past, pro-life and pro-choice advocates have made two mistakes regarding common ground. It is either the entire purpose of the discussion, or it is mostly absent. Instead, we should build common ground to begin a dialogue about truth. We should also retreat to common ground frequently, not to give up on finding truth, but to gain necessary footing so we can move forward to a new consensus on what is true. If the dialogue we are having is like a car taking us to the beach of truth, then common ground is the fuel. Your dialogue will have to access common ground from the outset if it is to move forward. You will need to stop and refuel at times, too. See www.commongroundbook.com to get a free eBook version of *Common Ground Without Compromise: 25 Questions to Create Dialogue on Abortion* by Steve Wagner.

Improvise

With a partner, choose Pro-Life or Pro-Choice. Imagine you are discussing abortion. The conversation is getting nowhere. One of you decides to try to make things more productive by asking one of the following common ground questions. Either side can start seeking agreement by asking these questions!

- What do you think about late-term abortion?
- Should abortion be used as a form of birth control?
- Would you like for abortion to be rare?
- What do you think about aborting a fetus simply because she is female?
- Would you prefer that there were fewer abortions?
- Do you believe it is sad and tragic when a woman dies from an abortion (legal or illegal)?
- Do you think women should be encouraged to consider adoption?
- Should men be prosecuted for killing their fetuses?

NOTES AND RESOURCES

- See www.jfaweb.org/love3/notes#1 for examples of basic dialogue skills in action.
- Stand to Reason has an excellent list of ten character qualities that can help you be a good ambassador for Christ: www.str.org/ambassadors-creed
- One way to think about the three essential skills is to “be relational first...then be intellectual.” (See www.jfaweb.org/sept-2023)
- Give people the benefit of the doubt. Instead of assuming the worst, assume the best.
- When you get stumped, don’t worry. Ask clarification questions in order to understand the view and why the person holds it. You can then think about what you’ve heard and even follow up with the person at a later time.

ONE CENTRAL QUESTION

Analyze

JFA's "Invitation" Brochure (pp. 4-5) reminds us to keep our conversations on topic. As Greg Koukl (www.str.org) notes: Before we can answer the question, "Can I kill this?" we must answer a prior question, "What is it?"

Many pro-choice statements simply assume the unborn is not a human being because they only justify abortion if the unborn is not a human being. Since that is precisely the question in dispute, then, pro-choice advocates must give reasons to believe the unborn is not a human being in order to justify abortion. So if your conversation is not focused on the question, "What is the unborn?" you may be wasting time. To refocus on this central question, do as Scott Klusendorf (www.prolifetraining.com) says: "Trot out the Toddler." Follow this four-step plan:

STEP 1: **AGREE** with any part of the person's concern that you can.

STEP 2: **APPLY** the person's concern to a two-year-old, and ask if it's okay to kill the two-year-old for that reason. We expect the person will reply, "No."

STEP 3: **ASK WHY** it's not okay to kill the two-year-old. It may take a few more questions to discover the reason: two-year-olds are human beings.

STEP 4: **AH!** Isn't that the issue then: *Is the unborn a human being like the two-year-old?*

See www.jfaweb.org/love3/notes#3 for real-life dialogue models you can read and imitate to learn this skill.

Imitate

Pro-Choice: But what about a woman who's really poor? Shouldn't she be allowed to get an abortion?

Pro-Life: I think you're right that some women are so poor that it's difficult for them to think about caring for a child. It's very sad. Can we agree that we should do our best to help them? [STEP 1: AGREE]

C: Sure. So, do you agree we shouldn't get in the way of their choice?

L: I agree we shouldn't get in the way of most choices. But I have a hunch that our disagreement isn't about poverty, but that it's really about something else. May I share an analogy that illustrates what I mean?

C: Sure.

L: Imagine there's a two-year-old here; his mother is very poor. Can we agree she should not be allowed to kill him? [STEP 2: APPLY]

C: Of course! Everyone agrees that's wrong.

L: Why can't she kill the toddler? [STEP 3: ASK WHY]

C: That's obvious. The toddler is a human being.

L: So if the unborn is a human being like the toddler, then wouldn't we have to protect him like we protect the toddler? [STEP 4: AH!]

C: Yes, *if*...but the unborn is totally different from the toddler.

L: I agree that the unborn is very different in certain ways, but aren't there ways that the unborn is also the same?

C: Maybe, but I just think you're leaving out the woman, and we know that *she* is a human being.

L: I agree we should never forget the woman, and we should always keep her in our field of concern. It seems that you and I agreed poverty is difficult and that we should do our best to help poor women. We also agreed people shouldn't be able to kill toddlers to solve poverty because toddlers are human beings. And now we're focused on the question, "Is the unborn a human being like these other human beings?" Can we agree that question is important? [STEP 4: AH!]

C: Sure. I just think it should be left up to the woman because no one can know when life begins...

Improvise, Set 1

Resources to Note: “What Are the Facts?” (www.jfaweb.org/facts); Pages 2-3 of the “Invitation” Brochure.

Pro-Choice: Start the dialogue by making each of the following statements.

Pro-Life: Quickly refocus the dialogue on the question “what is the unborn?” by trotting out a toddler (four steps).

1. Some women are too poor to care for a child.
2. If the woman doesn’t want to be a single parent, abortion is okay.
3. Some women feel too young to raise a child.
4. Abortion should be legal if the woman doesn’t want the child.
5. Kids born into bad situations are just going to suffer. Abortion should be legal to prevent suffering.

Improvise, Set 2

Resources to Note: “What Are the Facts?” (www.jfaweb.org/facts); Pages 2-3 of the “Invitation” Brochure.

Pro-Choice: State that you think abortion should be legal in one of the following circumstances.

Pro-Life: “Trot out the toddler” to acknowledge the concern but also refocus the conversation.

6. Abortion is okay if a woman feels the timing is wrong.
7. Some women feel they have enough children already.
8. There are too many kids in foster care already.
9. The mom can’t even care for her own basic needs.
10. The world is overpopulated.

Improvise, Set 3

Resources to Note: “What Are the Facts?” (www.jfaweb.org/facts); Pages 2-3 of the “Invitation” Brochure.

Pro-Choice: State that you think abortion should be legal in one of the following circumstances.

Pro-Life: “Trot out the toddler” to acknowledge the concern but also refocus the conversation.

11. Some women don’t want to interrupt college to have a child.
12. Kids with severe disabilities have a bad life, so abortion should be legal.
13. We can’t even care for the people who are here, not to mention all of the babies that would be born if abortion were illegal!
14. Sometimes the baby is going to die anyways soon after birth due to medical issues, so abortion should be legal.



BIOLOGY: LIVING HUMAN ORGANISM

Analyze

Is the Unborn a Living Human Organism?

To defend the idea that the unborn is a human being that matters, you must first clarify the scientific facts. Only then can you engage in moral reasoning. The purpose of this exercise is to help you clarify the scientific facts by showing that the unborn is a biological human being (a living, whole organism of the human species).

I use a simple sound bite to summarize my case. I call it the “10-Second Pro-Life Apologist”:

If the unborn is growing, isn’t it alive?

And if it has human parents, isn’t it human?

And living humans, or human beings like you and me, are valuable, aren’t they?

When I have more time, I make my case in three phases:

The unborn is living.

- Growth through cellular reproduction
- Reacting to stimuli
- Metabolizing food for energy

The unborn is human.

- Has human parents (living things reproduce after their own kind)
- Has a DNA fingerprint unique to the human species

The unborn is a whole organism.

- Integrating its body parts for the good of the whole
- Actively developing itself through the stages of human development
- If adults are organisms, and all that was added to them from fertilization was a proper environment and adequate nutrition, then the unborn at fertilization must have been an organism as well.

See www.jfaweb.org/love3/notes#3 for real-life dialogue models you can read and imitate to learn this skill.

Imitate

Note: JFA's "Invitation" Brochure (pp. 4-5) provides a helpful visual aid for this activity.

PART I

KEY QUESTION
+ 10-SECOND
SOUND BITE

Pro-Choice: No one knows when life begins.

Pro-Life: Do you mean that no one knows when biological life begins?

C: Huh?

L: Well, sometimes when people say that we don't know when life begins, they mean we don't know when *biological life* begins. In other words, is the unborn a human organism? Other times, people mean that we can't pinpoint when human organisms gain *basic human rights* like the right to life.

C: Well, I don't think we know when biological life begins.

L: If I could give you scientific evidence relating to that question, would that be helpful to you?

C: Sure, I'm open-minded.

L: *If the unborn is growing, it must be alive.*

If it has human parents, it must be human.

And living humans, or human beings like you and me, are valuable, aren't they?

PART II

LIVING,
HUMAN

C: Wait. You've said a lot there. Let's take these ideas one at a time.

L: Okay. The first characteristic I brought up about the unborn is that from fertilization, it's growing.

C: Oh, I agree that it's growing. But to me, it's just a ball of living cells or tissue.

L: So, we agree that it's alive in that sense at least. Can we agree that those living cells are human?

C: You mean, of the *human species*?

L: Yes. Thanks for clarifying.

C: I guess those cells would have to be of the human species. They have human DNA, right? And you pointed out earlier that they have human parents. It would have to be human tissue.

PART III

ORGANISM

L: So, I think we agree that the unborn, from fertilization, is at least living human tissue.

C: It's living human tissue, just like sperm and eggs. Do you think sperm and eggs should be protected?

L: No. I agree that the unborn at fertilization is similar in size to sperm and egg, but there's a big difference between sperm and egg on the one hand and the unborn on the other.

C: Well, I know that the unborn is just the combination of the sperm and egg.

L: I agree. And that's the significant thing. Sperm and egg are functional parts of male and female human organisms. But at fertilization, the sperm and egg cease to exist, and a new, unique organism comes into existence. So the unborn isn't a functional *part* – it's a *whole* organism in itself.

C: How do you know that?

L: Well, do you agree that you and I are organisms, and that from the time we were embryos at fertilization, all that has been added to us is adequate nutrition and a proper environment? [Point to pictures on Pages 4-5 of JFA's "Invitation" Brochure.]

C: I'm not sure I understand your point.

L: After fertilization, there was no injection of DNA or essential material, so if *you* and *I* are organisms now, wouldn't the embryo at fertilization also have to be an organism – a living human organism?

C: Well, even if the unborn is a living human organism, it's not a person...

Your Reflections, Notes, and Questions



EQUAL RIGHTS ARGUMENT

Analyze

If all of the people outside of the womb deserve equal treatment, then there must be something that every one of those people has equally that demands that we treat them equally. We must have some characteristic or property that is the same. But what is the same about us? What do we all have in common? We have different heights, weights, colors of skin, levels of intelligence, and abilities. Some of us are men, and some are women. If we believe in equal rights, though, something must be the same about us.

For some, the most straightforward property that is the same about us is our humanness or our human nature. That would explain why racism and sexism are wrong: both focus on a surface difference and ignore the fundamental similarity between blacks and whites, women and men. But if our humanness is what demands that we treat each other equally, then we should also treat the unborn equally, since the unborn is also human.

Others will offer a different explanation for equal rights. As Trent Horn has explained, though, when we test any explanation for equal rights other than “humanness,” it will either include too many or include too few. For example, if the basic ability to experience anything is the explanation of equal rights, then the unborn early in development would be excluded, true. But many animals would be included. If the basic ability to think in sentences is the explanation of equal rights, then the unborn would be excluded, true. But the newborn would be excluded as well. Some explanations, like self-awareness, may have more than one flaw.

A Simple Plan to Follow

Step 1. Lay Out the Equal Rights Mystery: “If we believe that we deserve equal treatment, and that there must be something the same about us to explain that, then what is the same?”

Step 2. Clarify: “Who would be *in* and who would be *out of* the equal rights community?” (for each explanation)

Step 3. Ask: “Does that make sense?”

The “Zoo Shooting” Story

You may find it helpful to illustrate the key points of this argument with the “Zoo Shooting” story, a thought experiment created by former JFA trainer Timothy Brahm. If a gunman goes into a zoo and shoots a cockroach, a possum, Koko the gorilla, a human newborn, a human toddler, and a human middle-aged woman, with how many counts of murder should he be charged? It seems like the right answer is three – the three humans. But if the property that gives us our rights is something other than our human nature, we will have to include animals and/or exclude infants. For example, if the property is “self-awareness,” the answer to the question would be “three,” but it’s *the wrong three*. Koko would be included, and the infant would be excluded.

The Equal Rights Argument (For Reference)

1. Human beings outside the womb, with all of their differences, deserve equal treatment in terms of the basic right to life (or, the right not to be the victim of violence).
2. Equal treatment (as in Premise 1) only makes sense if there’s something the same about all of us.
3. Humanness is the characteristic or quality we all share equally which makes the most sense, since alternatives have counterintuitive implications (squirrels that should be treated equally or infants that should not be treated equally.)
4. Therefore, since the unborn has that same humanness, he or she should be treated equally to those outside the womb.



EQUAL RIGHTS ARGUMENT

PART I

EQUAL RIGHTS ARGUMENT

Imitate

Pro-Choice: Okay, I agree the unborn is a living human organism, but it's not a person.

Pro-Life: Let me see if I understand what you mean. Would you agree that there are lots of examples of real persons around here?

C: Sure. There's one over there. I'm one. You're one.

L: Okay. Look at all of these people standing around. **Do you agree that we deserve equal treatment?**

C: Of course.

L: **If we deserve equal treatment, doesn't that mean that there must be something the same about us – something that demands that we treat each other equally?**

C: That makes sense.

L: **What do you think is the same about us?** [STEP 1: Lay Out the Equal Rights Mystery]

C: I don't know. What do you think?

L: We all have a human nature, and that makes sense of why racism and sexism are wrong.

C: I agree, but what does this have to do with abortion?

L: The unborn also have that same human nature. Shouldn't they be treated equally? [STEP 2: Clarify Who Would Be in and Who Would Be Out]

C: I understand your argument, but I need to think about it...

PART II

"THINKING" (DEGREED VERSION)

C: ...Maybe there's something else the same about us other than our human nature.

L: What are you thinking of?

C: Well, all of us can think, and the unborn can't think like us.

L: By thinking, do you mean having thoughts like "I feel cold" or "2+2=4"?

C: I think so.

L: If thinking makes us valuable, though, I don't see how that would solve the problem. Don't some of us think better than others? [STEP 2: Clarify Who Would Be in and Who Would Be Out]

C: Well, I see your point. If we don't all think the same, then thinking can't demand that we be treated the same... [Step 3: The Pro-Choice Person Is Answering, "Does that Make Sense?" (Without the Question Needing to Be Asked!).]

PART III

"THINKING" (NON-DEGREED VERSION)

C: ...But I don't think that's what I mean. I think the difference with the unborn is that they don't think at all.

L: So, it's not the thinking that makes a difference, but rather it's "that we think at all?"

C: Yes.

L: Well, I agree that the unborn early in their development don't have the characteristic of being able to "think at all." [Step 2: Clarify Who Would Be in and Who Would Be Out]

C: So that's something you and I have equally that demands that we be treated equally. It solves the problem. That's why we have equal rights.

L: I agree that the characteristic of being able to *think at all* is not something that comes in degrees. You either have it or you don't. And I agree that that would answer our question of why we have equal rights. It makes sense of the fact that we deserve equal treatment. But may I

Imitate, continued

ask you another question about this?

C: Okay.

L: When does this ability to “think at all” begin? Do infants have it? *[Step 2: Clarify Who Would Be in and Who Would Be Out]*

C: Yes. Infants can think basic thoughts like “I’m cold.” They wouldn’t put it in words like that, but that’s not what I meant when I was talking about thinking. I mean the most rudimentary of thoughts like the ability to have any awareness or experiences at all.

L: Where in development [pointing to JFA’s “*Invitation*” Brochure, Pages 4-5] would you say the human has the ability to “think at all” in that sense?

C: I’m guessing here [pointing], at about 18 weeks.

L: Okay, if “the ability to think at all” is the thing that gives us equal rights, should we treat the unborn equally after 18 weeks?

C: Yes, I’m against late-term abortion.

L: So we agree on that. Let me ask you another question about this characteristic of “thinking at all.”

C: Sure. Go ahead.

L: Wouldn’t dogs and cats and even possums have the same ability to “think at all” as the infant and the unborn late in pregnancy? *[Step 2: Clarify Who Would Be in and Who Would Be Out]*

PART IV

SELF- AWARENESS

C: Well, I think I mean thinking in the sense of being aware of oneself.

L: Can you have more or less of that awareness?

C: No, I mean awareness in the same way that we were talking about thinking: aware of oneself at all.

L: I agree that that could ground equal rights for us. But are infants aware of themselves at all? *[Step 2: Clarify Who Would Be in and Who Would Be Out]*

C: I’m not sure. Well...I guess they aren’t. So, that’s a problem. Either self-awareness is the thing that grounds our rights and infants don’t have equal rights, or self-awareness is not the thing that grounds our rights, and I’m back to square one. *[Step 3: The Pro-Choice Person Is Answering the Question: “Does that Make Sense?”]*

L: I think you’re making a good point.

C: I don’t think it makes sense to say infants don’t have equal rights. It just seems like self-awareness has something to do with the kind of thing we are.

L: I agree we are the sort of thing that develops self-awareness, but I don’t think it is the thing that gives us our rights. May I share with you another reason why?

C: Sure.

L: If self-awareness is the thing that is the same about us and that grounds our equal rights, then wouldn’t it also ground equal rights for Koko the gorilla, who also is aware of herself? *[Step 2: Clarify Who Would Be in and Who Would Be Out]*

C: Well, I think Koko should be treated better than we treat her.

L: In what way are you thinking?

C: Well, I think she should be able to live in the wild.

L: Okay. I might agree with you about that. But do you think she is equal to human beings such as you and me?

Imitate, continued

C: I'm not sure. What would be wrong with thinking that?

L: Well, I think Koko is very special, but I don't think it's as wrong for someone to kill a gorilla as it is for someone to kill a human.

PART V

**"NOT BORN" &
"NOT VIABLE"**

C: Fair enough, but it seems like there's a simpler solution here. The unborn isn't born yet.

L: It sounds like you're saying the unborn are disqualified because they haven't been born yet.

C: Yes, that's my point.

L: Well, I agree the unborn isn't born, but why is that significant? Isn't this the same thing as saying the *unborn* is disqualified because she is *unborn*? Isn't that just an assertion with no argument?

C: Okay, well, it's significant because they can't survive outside the womb. They aren't viable.

L: I agree the unborn cannot survive outside the womb. But why is that significant?

C: Because they're not independent. They can't have rights if they're not their own entity.

L: Okay. These all seem to be saying the same thing: Those who are unborn, not born, not able to survive outside the womb, and aren't independent are disqualified just because they are all of those things.

C: Well, they seem distinct to me. I'm saying you can't have rights if you're not an individual entity.

L: I agree that one must be an individual in order to have rights. A functional part of one's body doesn't have rights. Organisms have rights. But I thought we agreed the unborn are organisms.

C: They are, but they're totally dependent on the mother.

L: I agree they're dependent on their mothers, but I still maintain the unborn is an independent entity capable of having rights. Let's follow your argument for a moment, though. If being born or capable of surviving out of the womb or being independent in some other sense qualifies one for equal rights, then wouldn't the line on human rights change as our technology changes or as we go from place to place where hospitals have different abilities to keep prematurely born children alive?

C: I guess it would, but I guess I don't think that's a problem.

L: It's worth thinking about. Wouldn't your explanation also mean that thousands of animals also have equal rights? Many animals have been born and are just as independent as infants, or more.

PART VI

**HUMAN PLUS
ARGUMENTS**

C: No, animals don't have equal rights, but I'm not talking about animals. I'm only talking about humans. You have to be human and be independent in order to qualify for rights.

L: So, let me see if I can map where our conversation has landed us, to make sure I've understood you. You presented an explanation of equal rights by pointing out we are out of the womb or independent or capable of surviving on our own. I pointed out animals also have those characteristics, and now you've adjusted your explanation to limit it to humans only. Why should I believe this combination explanation is the right one? Is there any reason other than it saves your view that the unborn shouldn't be included?

C: That's just what I think. It seems animals aren't really relevant to this discussion. It seems human consciousness is something distinct and special.

L: I agree that human consciousness is special. But is it the subject that has the consciousness that is special? Or is it the consciousness? It seems that consciousness can come and go and increase and decrease. Would you agree with me that the human adult has rights because he or she is the sort of being who by nature has that special consciousness? And wasn't he or she also that same sort of being before the consciousness arose? ... (See www.jfaweb.org/notes#4 for a continuation.)

MORE STRATEGIES: EQUAL RIGHTS

Strategy 2: Point Out How the Unborn Differ...and How They Are the Same

Point Out the Differences: *“I agree the unborn differ from us in form and function...”*

Size / Level of development / Environment / Degree of dependency / Growth rate / Experiences /
Happiness / Awareness of pain / Mental calculations / Minimal experience of anything at all /
Experience of self / Rationality (etc.)

Point Out the Similarities: *“But can we agree it’s more significant that the unborn share our...”*

Second-order capacities for developing all human capacities

Human nature (on which human rights are based)

Identify (as at later stages such as infant, toddler, pre-pubescent child, young adult, adult)

Future like ours

Trajectory of development

Strategy 3: Give a Counter-Example

For many functional definitions of value, we can give a counter-example. If someone says we have rights and value because of our awareness of pain, we can point out the fact that many different humans have different levels of pain, so this criterion for value would justify those more sensitive to pain having more rights (and maybe even ruling over) those with a lower sensitivity. The person might adjust this property to make it non-degreed: “that we feel pain at all.” Sure, that would exclude the unborn early in development, but it would also exclude adults who can’t feel pain at all. It would also include animals who can feel pain. So, adults who can’t feel pain and animals who can feel pain are counter-examples, because we know adults who can’t feel pain have equal value, and we know animals who can feel pain do not (although the sensitivity to pain might dictate that we should take care not to cause them unnecessary pain).

Strategy 4: Ask Why Functional Abilities Ground Our Value

Ask “Why does that functional ability matter for value or rights?”

Ask, “Is there an independent reason to believe this property is important other than ‘It saves my view on abortion?’” (Ask with gentleness.)

More Resources on Equal Rights

See www.jfaweb.org/love3/notes#4 for real-life dialogue models you can read and imitate to learn to use the Equal Rights Argument.

Your Reflections, Notes, and Questions

Your Reflections, Notes, and Questions



THE QUESTION OF RAPE

Analyze

In conversations about abortion, the issue of rape comes up frequently. Many pro-life advocates, in their zeal to defend unborn humans, come across as not caring about women who have experienced rape. If we can't recognize the horror of rape, listeners won't just think we're uncaring. They'll also think our argument is incoherent. Here's why: Our concern about abortion is that it's an act of violence. Rape is also an act of violence. The principle undergirding our concern about abortion should also motivate us to be just as concerned about rape. So, when we respond to the question about abortion in the case of rape, we need to be careful to meet two distinct challenges: *relational* and *intellectual*.

Relational Challenge

When people ask about abortion in the case of rape, they are not concerned with whether or not the unborn is human. They are trying to determine if *we* (pro-life advocates) are human. Instead of immediately launching into arguments for the humanity of the unborn, start with expressing concern for the woman who was raped. Following are some specific ways to express concern, but note that they are only helpful if you are genuinely concerned. (If you are not very concerned for the woman who has been raped and you are only using these approaches in order to make your argument against abortion more persuasive, the person with whom you're speaking will likely know it. Worse yet, you will know it.)

Show sympathy.

- Sometimes silence is the best way to show sympathy.
- Express concern that we give the best possible care and help to the victim.
- Acknowledge the difficulty of the question because of how the evil of rape affects people.
- "Do you personally know anyone who has been raped? How is she doing?"
- "I don't think I can understand what that's like. I can only imagine how hard it must be."
- "I'm sorry that happened to your friend." (Or, "I'm sorry that happened to you.")

Articulate the extreme horror of rape and the complexity of pregnancy in the case of rape:

- The woman who has been raped has been violently assaulted. This is both evil and traumatic, and for those of us who haven't been through the same thing, we can really only imagine how difficult it is.
- The woman also has to live with the memory of that experience. It's not only hard to talk about, but because of issues like abortion, others regularly talk about it casually or in political sound bites.
- If the woman gets pregnant, she then has to deal with the experience of pregnancy (sometimes her first!) in less-than-ideal circumstances. She may feel like a mother, but she has to grapple with the way in which she has entered into the experience of motherhood.
- Whatever happens with her pregnancy, she experiences difficult things which are hard for others to understand:
- If she carries to term, she deals with all of the challenges of pregnancy, from morning sickness to bodily changes, and sometimes she has more serious health issues as a result of pregnancy. All of these things are accompanied by a memory of how the pregnancy came about – these reminders may cause the woman to "re-live" that most painful experience in memory many times over.

- If the woman miscarries, she deals with all of the sorrows related to miscarriage, but with the added complexity of the memory of how the pregnancy came about.
- If the woman decides to get an abortion, she then deals with all of the difficulties and complexities related to abortion. No woman aspires to have an abortion, and in this case, the woman may have been strongly against abortion for herself but feels she has only two painful options before her.
- If the woman gives birth to the child, she experiences the pains related to labor and delivery.
- Once the child is born, then the woman is confronted with another decision with another set of options – a decision she may make with a feeling of being extremely alone: “Should I place my child in the care of a loving adoptive couple or should I care for him for the next 18 years? If I choose adoption, how will I deal with the sadness and the feeling of having little or no control over what happens to my child? If I choose to care for this child, how will I deal with being reminded so often of the rape? Will I be able to give this child a good life as a single mom? Will my child find out about the rape and be tormented by the way in which he came into existence?
- If the woman decides to give birth and care for the child as the child’s single parent, she will then likely be asked at some point, “Who is the father?” Others might ask what happened to cause her to be a single mom. In response, she either has to tell everyone about one of the most traumatic events that has ever happened to her, which is painful. This might also result in the story of the rape being more public than she intended, which in turn might result in her child learning the story before she was ready to share. When asked about the father, the woman could also lie or cover the truth with vague statements, both of which are uncomfortable. No one wants to lie or be put in a spot where he or she feels like the best of a set of bad options is to awkwardly evade a question. JFA trainer Grace Fontenot related a story of a woman she met who said that when she didn’t give a straight answer to a question like this, her church community ostracized her because it appeared to her church that she’d been immoral, when in fact she had been the victim of a crime.

So, the woman who is raped and then finds herself pregnant has not just one difficult experience to process, but a whole set of experiences. This underscores how very evil the act of rape is, for it brought about all of these painful, difficult challenges in addition to the horrific act of violence itself. This woman deserves our best efforts to care for her.

Just Be Normal

To sum up, it’s important not to be so focused on the unborn that you forget the other human beings who deserve our best care and protection. The woman who has been raped has experienced a heinous crime. Unfortunately, it is very common for pro-life advocates to forget to express concern for her. When talking to a victim of rape, let’s be careful to do what any normal person would do when someone tells him about a painful experience. Say something like, “I’m so sorry this happened to you. How are you doing?” When talking to a person who is not a victim of rape but is simply asking about abortion in the case of rape, the same principle holds true: Express concern for the victim of rape.

About Punishment

Our team has found it helpful in some conversations to show sympathy by affirming our belief that the rapist should be punished to the fullest extent of the law. In a similar way to the bullet points above, we’ve elaborated how the crime of rape involves more than a violent assault: it also entails forcing the woman into all sorts of decisions and experiences to which she did not consent, and which she didn’t deserve to have to confront. This underscores how very evil the act of rape is.



QUESTION OF RAPE

Intellectual Challenge

While the pro-choice advocate will usually appreciate concern for the rape victim, she also generally is intending to ask us if we think abortion in the case of rape is *right or wrong* and whether or not it should be *legal*. In the same way that it would be a mistake to neglect the relational aspect of the challenge, it's also a mistake to ignore this *intellectual* challenge, especially if that's what the pro-choice advocate is most concerned about. If the unborn is a human being, then killing the unborn who came into existence through rape is morally equivalent to killing a two-year-old who came into being through rape (assuming all other factors being equal). In other words, just as it's wrong to kill already-born human beings because they were conceived through rape or because they remind us of a painful circumstance, it's wrong to kill unborn human beings for the same reasons.

It follows that abortion should not be legal in the case of rape, not because women who are victimized by rapists are less valuable, but because all women, whether *in the womb* or *in the crib* or standing *over the crib* are equally valuable. If this intellectual, moral, and legal assessment doesn't sit well with us emotionally, we can acknowledge that fact. Still, the conclusion is sound.

About "Forcing to Become a Mother"

One comment pro-lifers hear regularly is the idea that if we don't think abortion should be legal in the case of rape, we are forcing the woman to become a mother. But if what we've said above about the rapist is true, that he is responsible for the experiences he forced the woman to confront as a result of the rape, isn't the rapist himself the one who forced her to become a mother? It depends partly on when she becomes a mother. That in turn depends on the answer to the question, "When does the unborn become a human being with equal value – at fertilization or sometime later?"

The More Sophisticated Intellectual Challenge: "Right to Refuse" in the Case of Rape

One might acknowledge that the unborn who was conceived in rape is a human being who is equal in value to the already-born human being, but also claim that the woman carrying the unborn in her womb can kill the unborn because of her bodily rights. Various versions of this bodily rights argument will be described in Session 6, but it's important for us to note here that the response to the intellectual challenge above may not meet the challenge at all if the person making the argument from rape is willing to grant that the unborn is an equally valuable human being. For the person who grants that the unborn is a human being but maintains that a woman's bodily rights justify abortion anyway, in the case of rape or also in other cases, you'll need to address those concerns with a different approach. See "Bodily Rights."

Find more resources on the question of rape, including real-life dialogue examples you can read and imitate, at www.jfaweb.org/love3/notes#5.

*Imitate***PART I****MEETING THE
RELATIONAL
CHALLENGE**

Pro-Choice: What if the woman was raped and became pregnant? Do you think in that case she should be able to have an abortion?

Pro-Life: [Pause] ... That is certainly a difficult question. Rape is a horrible crime. No one should ever have to go through that. [*Common Ground, Silence, Sympathy*]

C: Definitely.

L: Rape is evil. I don't think I can really understand how horrific it is. I don't think we usually take into account how many ways in which it affects the life of the person who was raped. She will deal with the memory of the rape for her whole life.

C: I know.

L: That's so hard. Then if she gets pregnant, that is very difficult, too, in a lot of ways. I imagine she may be reminded of the rape by the pregnancy itself.

C: That's why abortion seems to make sense at least in this case. It should be legal, shouldn't it?

L: I can see why you would say that. It seems like abortion would help, but can we agree there really isn't a simple solution here? After all, no woman wants to get an abortion, and the rapist forced this woman into a situation where now she may be considering abortion for the first time because she thinks all of her options are bad in some way.

C: I never thought about it that way. It's horrible to be forced into a situation where you feel like you have no good options – where every decision seems bad.

L: Even if the woman decides to carry the pregnancy to term, I don't think it's easy.

C: That's for sure. She'll have morning sickness. Her body will change.

L: I agree. Those things are difficult even for a woman who wants to be pregnant. Imagine not wanting to be pregnant and then dealing with them. I met a woman who said that she had gotten pregnant from rape but then she ended up miscarrying. That's another difficult aspect of this.

C: You're right. That is so difficult.

L: In some cases the woman feels like a mother, but this is surely not how she wanted to become a mother. If she carries the pregnancy to term, she deals with all of the pains of labor and delivery. She didn't even have anything to say about becoming pregnant, and if she doesn't want to have an abortion, then she has to go through labor. That's not all, though. She may not want to care for the child after birth because she doesn't feel like she can give the child the best life. Or she may feel like she'll reveal how the child came into existence, and she doesn't want the child to have to live with the knowledge of that evil act.

C: I wouldn't want that child to have to deal with that. Can you imagine what that's like?

L: No, I really can't. It's hard to imagine how hard this is, but we can *try* to sympathize with what this woman is dealing with, and what the child will deal with if he or she ever learns about the rape. Another thing that can help us sympathize is talking with people who understand these things from experience. If it's alright to ask, do you know someone who's had a personal experience with rape?

C: Well, not anyone close to me. But I think it's pretty common. Often the rapists aren't even punished.

L: I agree. And I think the woman many times feels alone. I don't think I can erase that feeling completely, but I do want to do all I can to make sure these women who have been victims of rape at least know someone cares.

C: I do, too. I think I've realized through our conversation that it's not as simple as just offering the woman a choice of abortion. The woman is confronting many difficult, painful things. It won't solve everything, but can you agree it should be one of her options to decide as she wishes? ...

PART II

THE
INTELLECTUAL
CHALLENGE*Imitate, continued*

Continued from “The Relational Challenge”: The Pro-Life Advocate seeks to answer the intellectual question, “Should abortion be legal in the case of rape?” by Trotting out the Toddler.

Pro-Choice: ... Should the woman have the option of abortion at least in the case of rape?

Pro-Life: Again, I think that is a very difficult question. As we’ve already discussed, the woman who is pregnant from rape is confronting a very difficult situation and has difficult decisions to make, both if abortion is an option and if it is not. She needs our best efforts to care for her and support her through these decisions. I also can understand why you are suggesting abortion should be an option. Of all the activities that should require consent, sexual intimacy is probably the most important. And it also seems that forcing a child on someone through rape has something amiss about it – something wrong. *[Agree]* I think the question might be, though, “When was the child forced on her?” That question might be confusing, so here’s what I mean – did she have a child inside of her at fertilization or only at birth? If there is no child until birth, then of course abortion should be legal in the case of rape. If there is a child at fertilization, though, then isn’t the woman already a mother, and wasn’t the rapist the one who forced her to become a mother?

C: I’m not sure I understand what you’re getting at. No matter who forced her into it, doesn’t it make sense that she should be able to get out of it?

L: I agree that in many situations where we are forced into something, it makes sense that we should be able to get out. *[Agree]* The question is whether this is one of those cases. If abortion involves killing a human being, then doesn’t that change things?

C: Perhaps. The whole thing just seems so wrong.

L: I agree. And I think it’s important that we both keep emphasizing that. We can’t emphasize too much the wrong done to the woman in rape. Perhaps an illustration would help us as we think through this. I think you and I will agree, but I just want to make sure: Imagine a woman named Sarah is raped, gets pregnant, and gives birth to the child. Imagine her friend Karen visits her and the new baby the next day, then later that same night, Karen is raped. Karen also becomes pregnant. Sarah and Karen are on the phone one month later. Sarah is looking at her child in the crib and wondering if she can handle being the mother of her rapist’s child. Karen is rubbing her belly and wondering the same thing. Would you agree with me that Sarah cannot kill the child in the crib? *[Apply]*

C: I agree. She can’t kill a child in a crib.

L: I know this may seem like an obvious question, but why is that so clearly wrong? *[Ask Why]*

C: Well, the one-month-old is a human being, just like you and me.

L: Do you believe that Karen, who is still pregnant, should be able to get an abortion?

C: Okay, well I see your point. If Karen, who’s still pregnant, has a child – a human being – just like Sarah, who already gave birth, then that limits the options we would give to Karen. If the unborn is a human being, we shouldn’t be allowed to kill a human being. *[Ah!]*

L: That’s right. So, what do you think about the unborn being a human being with equal rights?

C: I think we already agreed that the unborn is a human being with equal rights. But something about this bothers me. It just seems that, at least in this case, the woman has a right to do what she wants with her body...



BODILY RIGHTS: “MY BODY, MY CHOICE”

Analyze

A Word Before We Begin

The most important thing we can emphasize when considering how to respond to justifications of abortion based on the woman’s right to her body is that the woman does, in fact, have a real right to her body. We need to realize that many women, when they hear our belief that abortion should not be legal, feel some of the same feelings of violation we described in the section on rape. In the same way as with the topic of rape, then, when we discuss the woman’s right to her body and whether or not it includes the right to abortion, we are confronted by a *relational challenge* and an *intellectual challenge*.

The relational challenge could be summarized in this way: “Do we care about all of the acts that are uncontroversially violations of a woman’s right to her body (rape, abuse, domestic violence) which are still common in the US and around the world?”

The intellectual challenge could be summarized this way: “Women do have a right to do what they want with their bodies, generally speaking. We need to promote a woman’s right to safety from harm. But does that right to her body include the right to remove the unborn by abortion?”

We need to see every discussion of the intellectual challenge through the lens of the relational challenge, regularly punctuating the intellectual discussion with affirmations of common ground about a woman’s bodily rights. [See “It’s Her Body”: www.jfaweb.org/bodily-rights.] What, then, do we make of this intellectual question?

A Third Type of Pro-Choice Statement

Let’s call back to mind what we learned in earlier sessions: *Focus on one central question, “What is the unborn?” Make a case that the unborn is a living, human organism. Make a case that if equal rights are best explained by humanness, and if the unborn has humanness, then the unborn has equal rights.* If we’re not careful, from that material, we’ll assume that every pro-choice statement falls into one of two categories:

1. Some pro-choice statements ***assume*** that the unborn are not fully human. These statements can only succeed in justifying abortion if the unborn is not a human being with an equal right to life to other humans. Justifications for abortion based on poverty and overpopulation are often examples of this type of statement.
2. Other pro-choice statements ***argue*** that the unborn is not fully human. Statements about the biology of the unborn or a lack of valuable functional abilities often fall into this category.

There is, however, at least one more broad category:

3. Some pro-choice statements ***agree*** that the unborn is a human being with an equal right to life to the rest of us, but claim that even still the woman’s right to her body justifies abortion. Let’s call these “bodily rights arguments.”

Identifying Bodily Rights Arguments

Look at the following common pro-choice statements:

“The unborn is a part of her body!” “It’s in her body!” “My body, my choice”
 “It’s totally dependent on the woman’s body!” “The woman has a right to her body!”

Continued →

When people make the above statements that include the word “body,” you might be tempted to think they are always intending to make a bodily rights argument. We’ve found, however, that people can use the same or similar “body” language to make very different claims. Consider, for example, the phrase, “The unborn is a part of her body.” The person who makes this claim might be intending to argue that...

- ...the unborn is not a living human organism biologically (because it’s not an organism at all)
- ...the unborn is not a human with an equal right to life (because the unborn’s relationship to the woman’s body makes him less valuable), or
- ...even though the unborn is a human being with an equal right to life, abortion is justified by some sort of appeal to the woman’s bodily rights.

(Indeed, the person also may not be very sure what he or she is intending to argue.)

Ask a Key Question

Discovering which type of argument the person is intending can be confusing at first, but it’s really just another exercise in learning to listen and ask the sorts of questions (think *Three Essential Skills*) that help the person clarify what they mean. (This is an especially helpful approach for the person who isn’t quite sure what she meant.) Specifically, we suggest asking the following question:

Do you mean (1) that the unborn is **not** a valuable human being, because it’s a part of her body, or do you mean (2) that **even though it is** a valuable human being, that’s not the issue, because she just has the right to do what she wants with her body?

If the pro-choice advocate picks the first option, you’ll need to then return to a discussion of biology or equal rights. But if she picks the second option, claiming that abortion is justified even though the unborn has an equal right to life to you and me, recognize that she is making a bodily rights argument.

Two Types of Bodily Rights Arguments

Once you determine that the person is really intending to make a bodily rights argument, you may have to explore further to determine the precise character of the person’s argument. Otherwise, your response, though on the general topic of bodily rights, may fail to meet the challenge of the person’s argument altogether. Trent Horn identified at least two broad types of bodily rights argument when he was an intern with Justice For All (for more information about Trent’s current work, see www.trenthorn.com).

- **Sovereign Zone** arguments claim that the woman’s body is a sort of “sovereign zone” such that she can do anything she wants with anything within her body.
- **Right to Refuse** arguments make a more modest claim, that the woman simply can’t be forced to do something with her body (support the unborn) which she doesn’t want to do.

Identifying when a bodily rights argument is being made is the focus of the dialogue examples in rest of the Analyze section (Bad) and in the Imitate section (Good). The Imitate dialogue also gives one suggestion for responding to the Sovereign Zone argument. To understand and respond to the Right to Refuse argument, and for more resources for responding to any bodily rights argument, see “It’s Her Body” (www.jfaweb.org/blog/bodily-rights) and the resources at www.jfaweb.org/love3/notes#6.

Bad Dialogue Example 1: Missing it

The pro-life advocate “misses the argument” by assuming the pro-choice advocate is making an argument against the unborn’s value. This pro-choice advocate may very well be intending to make a bodily rights argument instead. Compare this also to Part I in the Activity on the next page.

Pro-Life: It seems like the thing that makes us equal is that we’re human. So doesn’t that mean that it’s wrong to kill the unborn?

Pro-Choice: But it’s a part of her body!

L: It’s not a part of her body because if it were a part of her body, it would have the same DNA as her, and it doesn’t. And if it were a part of her body, then wouldn’t she have two heads and twenty toes?

C: But it’s in her body!

L: Well sure it’s in her body, but that’s not a good reason for it to not be a valuable human being. Why should our location determine our value?

C: But a woman can do what she wants with her body. It’s her choice. When people say “My body, my choice” I think that really makes a lot of sense.

L: I don’t think that makes any sense, because if you’re saying “my body my choice” then you’re assuming the unborn is not a human being because you wouldn’t say you should have the choice to kill another human being.

C: It’s totally dependent on the woman’s body!

L: Sure, I agree that it’s dependent on the woman’s body, but that’s not a good reason to think that the unborn is not a valuable human being. Infants are really dependent on their mothers. Are they not valuable human beings?

C: But the woman has a right to her body! [etc]

Bad Dialogue Example 2: Missing it Again

The pro-life advocate “misses the argument” by assuming the pro-choice advocate is making a bodily rights argument. This pro-choice advocate may very well be intending to make an argument against the unborn’s value. Compare this also to Part I in the Activity on the next page.

Pro-Life: It seems like the thing that makes us equal is that we’re human. So doesn’t that mean it’s wrong to kill the unborn?

Pro-Choice: But it’s a part of her body!

L: Oh, it’s part of her body. So you think the unborn is a valuable human being, but that abortion is justified because a woman has a right to do what she wants with her body.

C: Um...I don’t think that’s what I said.

L: Well, you said that it’s a part of the woman’s body, but that’s a bodily rights argument and that’s the argument that says that the unborn is totally valuable and equal to us but it doesn’t matter that it’s a human being because she has a right to do what she wants with her body.

C: You’re saying that I think that it’s a human being, and that it’s okay to kill human beings. I don’t think that’s what I believe.

L: But of course that’s what you believe. You said it’s a part of the woman’s body, and that’s a bodily rights argument. [etc.]



BODILY RIGHTS

Imitate

PART I

MEETING THE RELATIONAL CHALLENGE

In **Part I**, the pro-life advocate focuses on meeting the relational challenge.

Pro-Life: It seems like the thing that makes us equal is that we're human. So doesn't that mean it's wrong to kill the unborn?

Pro-Choice: But it's a part of her body! If a woman doesn't have a right to her body, she doesn't have anything. Bodily rights are human rights!

L: I agree that women's bodily rights are important, and that they are still being trampled on throughout the world. Domestic violence, rape, slavery. All of these practices are horrific and evil, and I stand with you against these harms against women.

C: Okay.

L: So, for abortion to be made illegal, I agree that it would be a big deal, because we would be telling women there is something they can't do with their body. We'd be restricting them. I can understand how this topic seems heavy and how the person who wants to restrict abortion seems unconcerned about how this is affecting a woman's right to her body.

C: So how can it make sense to make abortion illegal then?

L: For it to make sense to make abortion illegal, abortion would have to be much more than removing a mass of tissue. If that's all it was, a simple surgery to remove a mass, I agree women should be able to get an abortion by law.

C: Okay, well, we can agree on that much.

L: Let's say, though, that the case I've made is true that the unborn is a human being with equal rights to the rest of us. Then the woman's bodily rights matter, but there is another human being with bodily rights, too. So, then a law against abortion may still be unjustified, but isn't it at least within the range of being *possibly* a reasonable policy? Can we agree on that?

C: Maybe it's not completely insane, but I definitely don't think any policy against abortion is reasonable. A woman should be able to do what she wants with her body. Pregnancy is in her body, so that's different than a toddler or something like that. The unborn is part of her body.

PART II

CLARIFYING THE TYPE OF ARGUMENT

In **Part II**, she uses the Three Essential Skills, and especially the question in bold, to accurately understand the pro-choice advocate's argument as a bodily rights argument (the Sovereign Zone version).

L: When you say that "it's part of her body," it seems you might mean one of a couple of different things. Help me figure out what you mean. **Do you mean that the unborn is *not* a valuable human being, because it's a part of her body? Or do you mean that *even though it is* a valuable human being, that's not the issue, because she just has the right to do what she wants with her body?**

C: I'm not sure. Let me think about that for a second...I think the right to her body is so important...I guess it doesn't really matter to me whether the unborn is valuable. She has the right to do what she wants with her body no matter what's true about the unborn.

L: So, are you saying that the unborn is a human being with an equal right to life but that she should be able to kill that human because of bodily rights? Or are you saying that you're not sure if the unborn is an equal human, and so her bodily rights trump any rights the unborn might have?

C: I guess I think the unborn is a human being with an equal right to life. That seems pretty clear. But her bodily rights seem to trump the right to life of the unborn.

L: With that view of the unborn in mind, that he is a human being with an equal right to life, let's focus then on this issue of bodily rights and see how far bodily rights go.

Imitate, continued

C: This may sound extreme to you, but I think the woman can do anything she wants with anything in her body. [*Bodily Rights: Sovereign Zone*]

PART III**RESPONSE TO
“SOVEREIGN
ZONE”**

In Part III, the pro-life advocate begins a response to the Sovereign Zone argument.

L: That does sound a little extreme, but let’s investigate that a bit. We certainly agree on one thing at least: I think bodily rights are really important, and generally speaking, we have lots of rights over our bodies. [*Common Ground*] I don’t think I agree with you, though, about how far they extend.

C: Okay.

L: Let me ask you this question. Have you heard of a drug called thalidomide?

C: No.

L: Thalidomide is a drug that was given to pregnant women – mostly in Europe – in the 1950’s and 60’s to help reduce morning sickness. It was soon found to be the cause of very severe birth defects. As a result of women taking thalidomide while pregnant, many children were born with deformities. Sometimes they were born without arms or legs.

C: Wow, that’s really sad.

L: Yes, it is. So, can we agree that it would be wrong for a pregnant woman to take thalidomide, knowing that it would likely cause her child to be deformed?

C: I think that would be wrong, but... as awful as it would be, I still believe she has the legal right to do so if she and her doctor decide that’s the best thing for her.

L: I see. Let’s take it a step further, then. Let’s say that the pregnant woman has a two-year-old son with severe physical handicaps, and she has a desire for him to be able to grow up with a sibling who can really understand and relate to him. Should it be legal for this woman to take thalidomide during her pregnancy in order to *intentionally* cause birth defects in her child?

C: No way. That would be so wrong. I don’t think that it should be legal.

L: So, it sounds like you *do* believe there should be some limits on what a woman is allowed to do with her body. Am I understanding what you believe?

C: I suppose my position isn’t really that she can do *anything* she wants with *anything* that’s in her body. But I still don’t think she should be forced to use her body as life support for another human being... [*Bodily Rights: Right to Refuse*]

PART IV**RESPONSE TO
“RIGHT TO
REFUSE”**

In Part IV, the pro-life advocate responds to the “Right to Refuse” argument.

C: ...she should have the legal right to refuse to let the unborn human use her body.

L: Are you saying that abortion is simply “refusing to allow the unborn to use one’s body”?

C: I haven’t really thought about it much, I guess. Abortion is pretty graphic. I don’t like it. But I don’t think a woman can be forced without her consent to let the unborn use her body.

L: Let me see if I understand you. When you say “without her consent” are you referring to cases in which the woman gets pregnant from rape, or are you referring to any pregnancy resulting even from consensual sex?

C: I think it’s especially wrong to force a woman to stay pregnant in the case of rape, but I think I am talking about any case of pregnancy. Just because she consented to sex doesn’t mean she

Imitate, continued

consented to be pregnant. And it definitely doesn't mean she consented to be a life support machine for another human for nine months.

L: "Life support machine." That is really intense. I agree pregnancy has a great burden inherent in it, and I can understand why you would use a term like "life support machine." I can't argue with the fact that many pregnant women probably feel like the unborn child is almost making them into a machine that is being "used." That feels heavy.

C: I just don't believe that we have the right to ever use another person's body.

L: I think I agree with you on certain cases. Am I right that you are not talking primarily about morality—what is right or wrong, but you are talking about what someone can be legally forced to do?

C: I'm not sure. Are you asking if I'm saying it should be legal to refuse to let someone use one's body? Yes.

L: That's what I thought you meant. It might be worth talking about the moral side of this at some point, but to keep things clear, let's just put things in legal terms. It might help to talk about specifics. Can we agree that in the case of someone who needs a donation of my blood that it doesn't make sense to legally force me to donate blood to that person?

C: I agree.

L: I think the reason might be that there are three options in that case: We can "help" the person, we can "not help" the person, and we could physically kill the person so that we don't have to deal with it. Can we agree that helping and not helping should be legal and that directly killing the person should not be legal?

C: I agree.

L: Let me give you another specific case and see what you think: Imagine I own a yacht and I take it out to sea one day, and only then do I come to find that a homeless man has stowed away on my boat. Let's say I know that he isn't a good swimmer. What are the options open to me in terms of helping or not helping?

C: You can help him by letting him hang out. I don't think you have another option.

L: Well, theoretically, I could kick him overboard and let him drown, couldn't I?

C: Are you asking me what should be legal?

L: Yes.

C: Well, I think you shouldn't have the legal option to kick him overboard because it would kill him. [Pause] Wait, I see your point. You don't have the option to "not help" in that case, and we know it shouldn't be legal to directly kill, so the only legal option you have open to you is to help him get to shore. [Pause] So, let's apply that to abortion. You can help the fetus by letting him "stay aboard the boat" but you don't have a "not help" option. The only other option is to directly kill, and we know that shouldn't be a legal option.

L: I think that makes sense.

C: I'm not convinced abortion should be illegal, but I'm not sure I can poke holes in this logic.

L: I understand. One thing I think we can also agree about is that we can certainly sympathize with how "stuck" a woman might feel in the midst of finding herself pregnant. And many times we as a society give men a different kind of pass. I think that's wrong. Men should take their responsibility as a father just as seriously as we're expecting a pregnant woman to take her responsibility as a mother.

C: It just seems wrong for her to have no way out.

L: I agree that it's not simple or easy. I wonder, though, if there's a way we could change our perspective on children away from thinking they are burdens to thinking they are gifts to be cherished?

C: That's really easy for you to say and really hard for many women to hear.

L: I agree. I think it's important that I acknowledge how hard this is for the woman... [etc.]



LIFE OF THE MOTHER

Analyze

Following are a few general principles for responding to the question, “Should abortion be legal if the mother’s life is in danger?” See www.jfaweb.org/life-of-mother for more resources.

- **Common Ground:** Anytime someone’s life is in danger, it is a very heavy thing. Let’s remember as we talk about this that we’re talking about very difficult circumstances people might be dealing with even today.
- **“Life” Versus “Elective” cases:** Whatever we might say about “life of the mother” cases, and however we might come to different conclusions about them, can’t we agree that “life of the mother” cases are distinct from “elective” cases? The most common abortions are purely elective, meaning, there is no medical emergency that’s physically threatening the woman and for which a doctor might be recommending abortion. So, keep in mind that if a pro-life advocate believes abortion should be legal in a particular “life of the mother” case, that does not then mean she supports the vast majority of abortions, which are elective.
- **Two Patients:** Can we agree that there are two patients in these cases where the pregnant woman’s life is in danger? So, if the unborn is a human being, any action we take should seek to care for the lives of both mother and child. If we don’t agree the unborn is a human being, though, then shouldn’t we determine the answer to that question first? If I believe we should avoid abortion if possible, that may not make sense if we don’t agree on what the unborn is.

Indeed, in many of these cases, the parents believe the child is a child and the parents desperately want the child to live, as well as the mother. Williams Obstetrics makes precisely this point:

“...the status of the fetus has been elevated to that of a patient who, in large measure, can be given the same meticulous care that obstetricians provide for pregnant women.” (*Williams Obstetrics, 20th Edition*, F. Cary Cunningham et. al., Appleton & Lange, 1996, p. 78)

- **Which Medical Circumstances?** Let’s say we do agree that the unborn is a human being, and the doctor is caring for two human beings. Then we might ask, “Can you tell me what specific medical circumstances you’re talking about?” Can we agree that when we talk about threats to a woman’s life, we should talk about medical circumstances where her physical life is in danger such that if we do not intervene the pregnant woman will likely die?
- **It’s Hard to Get the Facts.** Keep in mind that it is difficult to know the details of a particular circumstance you hear about in the news. You are not the doctor looking at the patient or the file. You’re an interested citizen looking at a report from a reporter. This makes these conversations even more complicated.
- **Most Pregnancy Complications, Whether Early or Late:** With many pregnancy complications, the best high-risk pregnancy specialists aren’t even recommending abortion. Generally, the doctor is aiming to save both lives and recommends medical management, bedrest, early delivery, or C-section delivery.
- **A Few Rare Pregnancy Complications:** In a few rare cases, a doctor may recommend abortion or another intervention that is the immediate cause of the death of the child or otherwise hastens the death of the child. In all of these cases, we recommend getting a second or third opinion from a pro-life high-risk pregnancy specialist to make sure the intervention is truly necessary. (One doctor, Thomas Murphy Goodwin, lamented in the 1990’s that some doctors recommended abortion because they were unaware of the medical literature which showed abortion was not necessary.) Whether these interventions are right or wrong, and whether any of them should be legal or not, is outside the scope of this article. Please contact your JFA mentor for further discussion.
- **More Resources:** See your JFA mentor or go to www.jfaweb.org/life-of-mother.



BACK-ALLEY ABORTION

Imitate

Pro-Life: What do you think will happen if abortion is made illegal?

Pro-Choice: Women will still do it. They'll have unsafe abortions in the back alley.

L: If a woman did that, would you agree with me that it's tragic?

C: Of course. That's why abortion should be legal.

L: But it sounds like you're saying there are only two options, that either the child gets killed in a legal abortion clinic, or the child and his mother gets killed in an illegal back alley clinic. Isn't there a third option?

C: What would that be?

L: Isn't it possible for the woman not to get an abortion at all? Couldn't she give birth?

C: Sure, but I still think it should be her choice. She shouldn't have to be subjected to an unsafe surgery.

L: I think that makes sense, if abortion is simply a surgery like tonsillectomy. We should certainly keep it safe. But is abortion safe for the baby?

C: I don't think it's a baby.

L: Do you see, though, that this is where we really disagree? We have different views on whether abortion should be legal because we have different views on what the unborn is. If the unborn is a human being, abortion can never be made safe for him. If the unborn is not a human being, it makes no sense to make abortion illegal, unless it's really unsafe for the woman having the abortion. Do you agree?

C: Yes, I see your point...

See www.jfaweb.org/love3/notes#7 for more dialogue examples related to Back-Alley Abortion.



“I’M PERSONALLY OPPOSED, BUT...”

#MINDBLOWN

Imitate

Brian: I’m pro-life.

Becca: Brian, what does that mean for you? Do you think abortion should be illegal?

Brian: No, we can’t force our beliefs on others. I’m pro-life because I’m a Christian, but legally enforcing my stance on abortion would push my religion on people who don’t believe the same as me.

Becca: Brian, you mentioned that it is because you are a Christian that you are pro-life. Do your Christian beliefs give you reasons for thinking that abortion is wrong?

Brian: Of course. Human life is sacred. God created those human lives, they are valuable, and we should not kill them.

Becca: I agree with those statements. From what you just said it seems that you may believe the unborn are human beings biologically. Is that true?

Brian: Yeah, absolutely.

Becca: Human beings like you and me?

Brian: Yes.

Becca: When do you believe that the unborn become biological human beings like you and me?

Brian: [He walked up to the Justice For All Exhibit (2000) and pointed at a picture of fertilization.] From the very beginning. Conception.

Becca: Okay. Brian, can you explain to me why you think that you would be pushing your religious beliefs on others if you supported laws that would protect unborn human beings from being killed through abortion?

Brian: Well, women have a lot of difficult choices that they have to make in their lives. Choice is an important thing. If we make a law against abortion, we are taking away their right to that choice. That’s like pushing my views on them. They no longer would have the right to choose.

Becca: That’s true. The choice to kill their children in utero would no longer be granted to women. I’m curious. Do you think that it is ever right for the government to make a law that takes away a “choice”?

Brian: Uh...no?

Becca: Well, do you agree that the laws that make it illegal to walk onto this campus and kill college students are good laws?

Brian: Of course.

Becca: I agree. However, when enforcing that law, the government is taking away particular choices of other people. What about laws prohibiting beating children in the privacy of your own home? Are those good laws?

Brian: Yes, yes. Those are good laws.

Becca: What if it is just your religion that makes you think that it is wrong to beat children? Should you have the right to impose and force your religious beliefs on me?

Brian: Yes, because those laws protect others from being harmed. That’s not just a religious belief. It is a law protecting human rights.

Becca: So we can agree that laws which restrict “choice” in order to protect human lives are good, despite the fact that your support of those laws might be based on religious beliefs? It’s possible that our religious



**“PERSONALLY
OPPOSED BUT
IT SHOULD
BE LEGAL”**

Imitate, continued

beliefs may guide us to the same conclusion as those who don't share those beliefs—the conclusion that all human lives should be protected. That wouldn't be forcing our religion on others, but simply protecting human rights. Can we agree on that?

Brian: Yes, we can.

Becca: If it is important for us to protect human life and if the unborn are just as human and valuable as you and me, shouldn't they also be granted that same protection under the law?

Brian: Wow. Yeah, I guess. I just have always thought that would be imposing my beliefs on others.

Becca: [I then pointed to pictures in the *JFA Exhibit 2000 Brochure* depicting various genocides throughout history.] Brian, do you think that people who were not victims of the injustices shown in these pictures had an obligation to stand up for those who were being killed?

Brian: Yes.

Becca: I'm going to make a proposal. Brian, not only is it *right* for you to believe that abortion should be illegal because it takes the life of a human being; but actually—as a person who has the knowledge that 1) the unborn is a human being and 2) over a million are killed each year in the country in which you reside—you *have an obligation* to speak up for those humans who are being killed.

(silent pause)

Brian: #MindBlown [hashtag: Mind Blown].

- Rebecca Hotovy, November 2015 (www.jfaweb.org/mindblown)

DIXON AND TWO BUCKETS

Imitate

Dixon: What is this all about?

Tammy: We are an organization named Justice For All. We were invited by the Students for Life club to discuss the topic of abortion with CSU students. We want to ask students what they think and then have a healthy and respectful dialogue. What do you think?

Dixon: I don't think I have a say. I don't think we can tell other people what to do.

Tammy: Thank you for sharing. May I ask you a few questions to better understand your view?

Dixon: Sure.

Tammy: It sounds like it's important to you to not tell others what they can or can't do. Do you mind sharing with me why that's important to you?

Dixon: Well, I don't like people telling me what to do, and I think most people feel that way.

Tammy: I agree with you – I think most people are sensitive to being told what they can or can't do.

Dixon: [nodding head] Right.

Tammy: Let me give you a scenario and ask what you think about it. Imagine that a woman has a two-year-old son, and she's having a really tough life. She can't afford to feed or take care of her son. This might seem

Imitate, continued

like an odd question, but bear with me: “Should she be allowed to kill her two-year-old son, if that’s what she wants to do?”

Dixon: No, absolutely not.

Tammy: I agree. Why can’t she kill him?

Dixon: Because he’s a child.

Tammy: Right. Would you agree that he’s a human being like the mother?

Dixon: Yes.

Tammy: So if the unborn child is a human being like the two-year-old, then wouldn’t it be just as wrong to kill the unborn child through abortion as it would for the mother to kill her two-year-old?

Dixon: I’ve never thought about it that way. I guess that could change things. [He paused.] But I still don’t think we can tell others what they can or can’t do. Each person should have the freedom to make his own choices.

Tammy: I agree with you that freedom is important. Maybe it would help to break down our types of choices into two categories. Let’s picture them in two separate buckets. Bucket number one contains choices that are our personal preferences. My “personal preference” bucket would contain two of my favorite foods, strawberries and broccoli. People can choose to eat or not eat strawberries or broccoli, but that choice does not harm other people. Bucket number two contains choices that cause serious harm like murder, stealing, and rape. Would you agree that people shouldn’t have the choice to do any of those three things? [This paragraphs represent the gist of what I said on campus. I have altered it a bit here to clarify my meaning.]

Dixon: Yes.

Tammy: Why not?

Dixon: Because they’re wrong.

Tammy: I agree. Each of these harms a human being, right?

Dixon: Yes.

Tammy: Do you see the difference? Someone who chooses to eat or not eat broccoli does not harm another person, but someone who chooses to rape does harm another person, right?

Dixon: Yes.

Tammy: And since abortion takes the life of a human being, would you agree that it belongs in the same bucket as rape and stealing?

Dixon: Yes. Wow! This has been enlightening. You’ve given me a lot to think about. What if I hear of someone who is thinking about having an abortion? What should I do?

Tammy: Good question! Let me show you an app on my phone that you can download. [I showed him a video of an eight-week embryo using the “See Baby Pregnancy Guide” app (www.jfaweb.org/links).]

Dixon: Wow, that’s cool.

[Dixon had to get to class, but before he left, I was also able to show him how to use the JFA Exhibit Brochure (www.jfaweb.org/brochure) to help someone considering abortion. He thanked me for all of the new information and appeared to have a genuine change of heart about abortion.]

- Tammy Cook, September 2017 Impact Report (www.jfaweb.org/two-buckets)



HELPING THOSE CONSIDERING ABORTION

1. Your friend must know that you genuinely care about her.

In other words, she must feel safe confiding in you. Begin by asking about her feelings: “Sara, what are you most afraid of? Are there people you fear telling about this, and why does that seem so difficult?” Sincere questions like these will demonstrate your concern and will earn you the right to be heard later.

2. Ask how far along she is and if any plans have been made.

Many students make abortion-related decisions rapidly and with little forethought. Do not be surprised if your friend has already visited the local abortion clinic for counseling. The key here is to ask directly while still communicating that you care: “Sara, with all that is on your mind, I’m concerned that you make an informed decision. Have you made any plans yet?” If she has, and those plans involve the local abortion facility, advise her to delay until she has all the facts. If she feels abortion is the only way out, ask: “What needs to happen in order for you to have this baby?” This will help you discern her needs and concerns.

Finding out how far along she is will help you know how long you have to change her mind and will help you give her specific information that can help her reverse the process if she changes her mind. If she’s early in pregnancy and has taken the abortion pill, she needs to know about abortion pill reversal (www.abortionpillreversal.com). While an early abortion is sometimes done in one clinic appointment, later-term abortions are likely done over two days or more. She needs to know that the laminaria inserted on day one can be removed if she changes her mind.

3. Never assume that the baby is safe.

Ask her if she has told anyone else so you can know if you are the only one in whom she has confided. She may tell you she will not abort, and she may even mean it at the time, but she could change her mind under pressure. Even Christian friends may fall for the lie of quick, seemingly confidential relief. Many women who have abortions say that it is because having a baby will interfere with their education or job, or because they feel they can’t afford a baby, or because they don’t want to be a single mother, or because of relationship problems. Against that backdrop, abortion providers are telling these young women that their problems can be solved over a lunch break. In short, if your friend is not more horrified of abortion than she is terrified of her unintended pregnancy, she will likely kill her baby. Words alone cannot convey that horror. You must use accurate images of abortion (preferably video).

4. Ask your friend’s permission to show her images of the unborn and abortion.

Once she knows you care, provide the visual facts she needs by showing her the videos at JFA’s “What Is Abortion” page (www.jfaweb.org/what-is-abortion) or the images in JFA’s “Invitation to Dialogue” Brochure (pages 4-7). Use a warning similar to the one JFA uses in its training: “These images are extremely graphic and disturbing because abortion takes the life of an innocent human being. You can look away at any time. I don’t show these images to make you feel bad or condemn you. I think you deserve to have all of the information before you make a decision, and generally abortion providers don’t show these images. I don’t want you to see these images later and think, ‘If I had known, I wouldn’t have gone through with it.’ You deserve to know, and I think you’re capable of making a good decision. I will be ready to help. Would you be willing to look at these images with me?” Be ready to also share information on fetal development and abortion risks. You can find helpful resources at your local pro-life pregnancy help center or at www.jfaweb.org/links (including “What Is the Unborn?”, abort73.com, and ehd.org).

5. Always offer to take your friend to a pro-life crisis pregnancy center.

Don’t just offer a phone number; take personal responsibility for getting her there! The pregnancy resource center (PRC) provides counseling, pregnancy tests, maternity clothes, and baby items. Some are certified medical clinics offering ultrasound for free. Coupled with your care and support, the PRC can help your friend navigate discussing the pregnancy with others in her life and help her make a decision that is best for her and her baby. To find a center near you, call the JFA office (316-683-6426) and ask to speak with a JFA trainer. (Or, see www.optionline.org.)



HELPING POST-ABORTIVE WOMEN AND MEN

Listen, Ask Questions, and Acknowledge

When you ask questions, you communicate that you care and are willing to listen. Many women and men find healing when they can share their story with someone who is compassionate. Here are some questions to ask:

- How are you doing?
- Did the abortion happen a long time ago or was it fairly recent?
- Did you have support at that time?
- Have you been able to share this with anyone else?
- Have you had any physical complications or side effects?
- What kind of effect has that had on your life, your heart, or your emotions?
- Is there anything that I can do?

Important: Show Compassion

While you don't agree with the abortion, and you likely don't agree with the decisions that led to the abortion, you can still voice your compassion for what she experienced and the confusion, loneliness, helplessness, and hopelessness she may have felt. One woman shared:

"Compassion is so important because there's such a fear of condemnation. Just that gentleness and compassion and wanting to listen."

To prepare for this conversation, see Kaitlyn Donihue's "Bridge to Healing" (www.jfaweb.org/bridge-to-healing), which includes many first-hand accounts from post-abortive women on what they say would be helpful to them.

Connect her to resources

It is important to realize that post-abortive women and men don't often seek help or resources on their own. They need someone to connect them to those resources. Here's what two post-abortive women shared:

- "People who are post-abortive do not often seek help. Everybody is relational. It usually takes one person to bridge the gap between the person and help."
- "It was 20 years before I heard anyone talk about healing being available. There were 8 to 10 years where I was involved in Christian circles and no one ever said anything about healing. Until I heard those words, 'It's possible to heal,' my perspective was, there's no point in going for help..."

Here are two good questions to transition into a conversation about resources:

- "Would you like to talk to someone who's been through what you have been through?"
- "Have you ever sought any kind of healing?"

In addition to getting to know your local pro-life pregnancy resource center or women's clinic, one highlighted resource is Deeper Still (www.deeperstill.org), a ministry which hosts free weekend retreats for women and men who have lost children to abortion. See also www.jfaweb.org/healing-after-abortion for all recommended resources.

Be Persistent and Pray

If a loved one has shared with you about their abortion, consider following up with them and asking them how they are doing. Most post-abortive women and men never intend to share their secret. If it slips out, they may struggle with intense shame and the feeling that you are judging them. If you follow up and remind her how much you love her and express concern for how she is doing, you can dispel some of her fears as well as gain a further opportunity to listen, show compassion, and encourage her toward resources.

Your Reflections, Notes, and Questions

NEXT STEP: START ONE CONVERSATION

Option 1: Talk to Someone You Know Well

Consider three people you know who are either pro-choice or whose views on abortion you don't know. Choose the person on the list who you believe will be the most approachable or easiest for you to talk to about abortion. Your goal is to start the conversation with that person in a natural, non-awkward way. We suggest using a direct approach which is up front about how you are purposefully trying to learn something, and you need the person's help:

"I'm troubled by the fact that good conversations about abortion are rare. It seems to only be hurtful to people. I've been working recently on learning to discuss abortion productively. Would you be willing to sit and chat with me for 15 minutes or more and help me out? My commitment to you would be that I will ask questions with an open heart, listen to understand, and find common ground when possible."

Please adjust the wording to fit your personality! Once you've had a conversation with the person who's most approachable for you, challenge yourself by engaging one of the others on your list.

Another alternative is to tell the person you're doing an assignment for a class you're taking:

"I'm taking a class aimed at helping people create better conversations about difficult topics. The topics we're focusing on are unintended pregnancy and abortion. I'm wondering if you would be willing to have a 15-minute conversation with me to help me out. The assignment for this week is to ask someone what they think about these topics and to listen, ask clarification questions, and find common ground without challenging anything that's shared for the whole 15-minute conversation. Would you be willing to help me out?"

Option 2: Talk to Someone with Whom Abortion Conversations Have Gone Badly

Introduce the conversation by saying,

"I wanted to contact you and say something about how I've treated you in past conversations about abortion. In short, I am sorry for the way I've treated you. I think I communicated that I don't care about you or your opinions through the way I responded to you in those conversations. Would you forgive me? [Wait for a response.] I am wondering if you would allow me to try again. I just took a class in three skills I am trying to learn to put into practice: listening to understand, asking questions with an open heart, and finding common ground when possible. Would you be willing to talk to me for 15 minutes about abortion? I promise to do my best to use these skills to show you the respect you deserve."

Option 3: See the Love3 Notes Page for More Ideas for Starting Conversations

See www.jfaweb.org/love3/notes for more ideas on engagement in each session.

Option 4: JFA Outreach Event

Join us! See www.jfaweb.org/mission-trips and www.jfaweb.org/calendar for more information. Or, call our office: (316) 683-6426. Some of our outreach events do not get posted on our Calendar page. Call our office and ask to speak to JFA's Director of Operations, Paul Kulas, about upcoming outreach events.



**KINDLING AFFECTION FOR THE FORGOTTEN,
BEGINNING WITH WOMEN IN DISTRESS,
THE SMALLEST HUMANS ON EARTH,
AND THOSE WHO DIFFER
IN APPEARANCE OR BELIEFS**

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