



Because One Person Can Change the World

Should We Flip-Flop When Someone Flips Out?

January 24, 2024

Dear Friend of Justice For All,


JFA trainer Kristina Massa was surprised when an angry young woman lashed out at a poll table sign at our outreach event at Boise State in the fall. She was even more surprised at the conversation that followed. Through her retelling in a recent letter, "Flipping Tables in the Courtyard" (enclosed, or see www.jfaweb.org/jan-2024), Kristina provides a great model for deciding "what to say when," and she illustrates the sort of balanced approach all JFA trainers aim to exhibit in every conversation. Please read her letter, and then I'll explain.

Note how Kristina doesn't shy away from the young woman's question about homosexuality and marriage. You might think this would lead to a distraction from the main topic. While controversial questions can be a distraction in some abortion conversations, in this instance addressing the topic turned out to be helpful.

Kristina answered the young woman's questions directly and honestly, giving her the benefit of the doubt that she was asking in good faith and not intending to trap. Kristina didn't try to hide her views on sexuality and marriage, even though she knew they were very controversial. She didn't go weak-kneed or change her views because this woman had flipped out by "flipping tables" (her words). Instead, Kristina gave a straightforward answer with a reasonable explanation, and she also avoided expressing her views in an unnecessarily harsh way.

Then Kristina prayed with the young woman, banking on the fact that they shared similar backgrounds in Christian communities. Rather than focusing on the differences she definitely had with this woman regarding beliefs about God, Jesus, and how we should live, Kristina focused on the small sliver of common ground that this woman had implied earlier, that she did consider herself to be following Jesus.

With many people who vehemently disagree with us on difficult topics, we have found this approach to be disarming and bridge-building. In this case, I am guessing that this woman appreciated the fact that Kristina showed interest in a passion of hers. I believe the woman also felt dignified by Kristina's decision to trust her with what she really thought.

 Steve Wagner, Executive Director



Recent and Upcoming Equipping Events

- 1/7** Workshop - St. John the Evangelist (VA)
- 1/8-29** Workshops (4) - Christian Faith Acad. (OH)
- 1/10** Workshop - High School Group (TX)
- 1/13** Seminar - Our Lady of Good Counsel (MO)
- 1/18** Extended Q&A - CO Christian Univ. (DC)
- 1/20** Breakout Sessions (2) - Biola Univ. (CA)
- 1/27** Workshop - St. Raymond Catholic Church (CA)
- 2/10** Seminar - Christ Community Church (AZ)
- 2/10** Seminar - Univ. Texas at San Antonio (TX)

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Upcoming Outreach Events

- 2/12-14** Univ. of Arizona (AZ)
- 2/12-14** UTSA / Texas State Univ. (TX)
- 3/4-6** Univ. of Cincinnati (OH)
- 3/25** Tarleton State University (TX)
- 3/26-28** Texas Woman's Univ. / UNT (TX)
- 3/25-26** Wichita State Univ. (KS)
- 4/2-3** Grand Valley State Univ. (MI)

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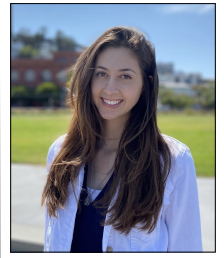


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Flipping Tables in the Courtyard

A JFA UPDATE FROM KRISTINA MASSA

NOVEMBER 2023



Dear Family and Friends,

A female student at Boise State University charged towards me and, with all her might, tried to rip the “No” sign off our poll table. Everyone’s attention turned to her. She seemed to have zero shame. I contemplated calling the police but first wanted to give her a chance to redeem herself, if she was willing. Whatever I would say, I needed to avoid adding more fuel to the fire.

Kristina: It looks like you’re very passionate about this issue. Would you be open to sharing why?

Like many students I meet on campus, she explained she was angry that her perceived right to abortion was up for debate. As she spoke, I built rapport by acknowledging any common ground we had and refraining from challenging her accusations. She must have realized that I wasn’t her enemy because she started to cool down.

Changing the subject, she asked:

Student: Are you one of those homophobic people?

Kristina: I do think that marriage is for a man and a woman. If you’re interested, I’d be happy to share why.

Student: Jesus taught love and kindness. I just wish more people were kind to each other.

Kristina: I do, too. Do you think, though, that trying to damage our display exhibited kindness?

Her face flushed with embarrassment.

Student: I am so sorry about that. I just had a “flipping tables in the temple” moment. I was angry, and when I get angry, I can hardly control myself.

Her demeanor continued to soften.



My team spent three days at Boise State University in August. Although abortion is banned in Idaho, most of the students who voted on our poll were pro-choice, suggesting that the laws are vulnerable to change.



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As I asked more questions about her life, I learned that she was raised in the Episcopal church, her parents were divorced, and her dad had a boyfriend.

Student: Jesus preached against judging people, and he actually thought highly of women. He was even kind to prostitutes.

Kristina: He did treat women well, which was countercultural at the time. In the story of the woman caught in adultery, he challenged the Pharisees who were accusing her by saying, "Let the man without sin cast the first stone." But do you know what he did afterwards?

Student: No, what did he do?

Kristina: He said to the adulterous woman, "Go, and sin no more." He taught repentance. So Jesus' full message is faith in him accompanied by love and repentance. We have to turn from our sin.

Student: What does "sin" mean?

She seemed to know so much, yet so little at the same time, but she was also enthusiastic to learn.

I walked her through the story of the fall in the Garden of Eden, how each of us has disobeyed God by violating the moral law, and how Jesus is the only way to freedom from sin. I also shared why marriage is a covenant that can only exist between a man and a woman. While she didn't agree with my explanation, she didn't argue with it either.

Kristina: Would it be alright if I prayed with you right now?

Student: Sure!

We bowed our heads. I thanked God for our conversation and the unique gifts that He gave her. I also asked that her heart would be opened to knowing Jesus and to turning from the sin in her life.

Student: I learned a lot today, and I really appreciated this conversation. Again, I am so sorry for trying to damage your display.

It was like the woman I met earlier that morning was a new person!

As followers of Christ, we have all been transformed through second chances. If God can change us, He can certainly change the people around us. Please join me in praying for this student's openness to knowing the truth about Christ, as well as knowing the truth about abortion.

For the unborn and their parents,

Kristina Massa

"The refusal to take sides on great moral issues is itself a decision. It is a silent acquiescence to evil. The tragedy of our time is that those who still believe in honesty lack fire and conviction, while those who believe in dishonesty are full of passionate conviction."

- Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen