

SESSION 2

Simplifying the Issue

Being able to answer these questions clearly demonstrates your mastery of the material of the last session. Use this self-assessment exercise as a review of the last session.

STUDENT INTERACTIVE



DEMONSTRATING MASTERY

Try recalling the answers to the following questions without using your notes. The answers are located at the end of session 1.

1. What are the four essential tasks in making abortion unthinkable?

- We must _____
We must _____
We must _____
We must _____

2. What are three reasons the word "abortion" has lost its meaning to most Americans?

- We _____
We _____
We _____

3. How do we restore meaning to the word "abortion"?

- Move _____
Use _____

4. What three points could you use to answer the charge that graphic visuals are simply emotional manipulation?

- 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

5. What two mistakes are often made when using graphic visuals?

- 1. They are used _____, with no _____ given.
2. They are _____ at all.

6. What four things must we remember to do when using graphic visual aids?

- 1. _____ your listeners.
2. Invite them to _____
3. Assure them your purpose is not to _____
4. If appropriate to the setting, tell them about the _____ available through _____

NOTES

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N O T E S

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I. REVIEW

A IN THE LAST SESSION, WE COVERED . . .

- 1. The four essential tasks involved in making abortion unthinkable.
a. Restoring meaning to the word "abortion"
b. Simplifying the issue
c. Offering an argument
d. Refuting the rhetoric
2. The three reasons the word "abortion" has lost its meaning to Americans.
a. We live in a culture that thinks and learns visually.
b. We live in a culture that thinks with stories, not facts.
c. We live in a culture that wants difficult problems to "just go away."
3. How to restore meaning to the word "abortion."
a. Take the issue out of the abstract and make it concrete.
b. Use visuals with sensitivity to show that abortion actually kills babies.
4. Four things to do when using graphic visual aids.
a. Warn your listeners.
b. Advise them to look away if they do not wish to watch.
c. Assure them your purpose is not to condemn, but to clarify the issue.
d. Mention the forgiveness available in Christ.

B IN THIS SESSION, WE WILL . . .

- 1. Simplify the debate by making a very basic point.
a. The "complicated" issue of abortion is really very simple.
b. The issue can be reduced to only one question.
2. Introduce the argument against elective abortion by giving the moral logic of the pro-life position.

II. ONLY ONE QUESTION


A INSTEAD OF TALKING ABOUT ABORTION, THE DISCUSSION OFTEN LEADS TO IRRELEVANT TANGENTS, SUCH AS . . .

- 1. Choice and privacy
2. Back-alley abortions
3. Teen pregnancy
4. Rape and incest
5. Abuse of unwanted children



N O T E S

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AMBASSADOR SKILLS

Adversaries frequently jump from issue to issue, so be intentional about setting the ground rules. What is the main issue? Reduce it to the one question at hand.

B IN ORDER TO RESPOND TO THESE SIDE ISSUES, HOWEVER, WE MUST ANSWER A FOUNDATIONAL QUESTION: WHAT IS THE UNBORN?

1. This question simplifies the issue and prevents the discussion of tangential issues.
2. Yet the question is ignored.



AMBASSADOR SKILLS

The difference between addressing each argument for abortion and reducing it to one pivotal question—What is the unborn?—can be illustrated through the two different ways we can cut down a tree.

- We can lop off each branch, one at a time, by trying to deal with each argument as it comes.

Or...

- We can attack the trunk, placing one decisive blow at the right place to bring the entire argument down.

C THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS FOUNDATIONAL QUESTION BECOMES MORE CLEAR THROUGH THE USE OF A KEY ILLUSTRATION.

1. If your child comes up behind you while you're working and asks, "Mommy/Daddy, can I kill this?" what one question must you ask before you can answer his question?
2. Before you answer the question "Can I kill this?" you must first ask the question "What is it?"² If it's a spider or a cockroach, he can smash it. If it's the funny-looking boy down the street, he'll need to sit down for a long talk with you.

D THE ILLUSTRATION TEACHES A VERY IMPORTANT LESSON: WE MUST KNOW WHAT WE'RE KILLING BEFORE WE CAN KNOW WHETHER OR NOT IT'S MORAL TO KILL IT.

Abortion kills something that's alive. Whether it's right or wrong depends entirely upon the answer to one question: What is being killed? or, What is the unborn?



QUESTION: *Can I kill this?*

RESPONSE: *What is it?*



N O T E S

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STUDENT INTERACTIVE



Think for a moment about the illustration, rehearsing it in your mind. Then take turns practicing the short dialogue about the question “Can I kill this?” with a partner. Be sure to explain in detail the significance of the question. (5 minutes)



If the unborn is not a human being, no justification for abortion is necessary. However, if the unborn is a human being, no justification for abortion is adequate.

If the unborn is a non-viable tissue mass, a part of a woman’s body, or a “potential” human, then have the abortion, no questions asked.³

But if the unborn is a real human being, then abortion kills an innocent child simply because she’s in the way and can’t defend herself.



AMBASSADOR SKILLS

Ask your challengers if it’s defensible to kill any other human being (an infant, a toddler, a teenager, an adult) because they are in the way and can’t defend themselves. If not, then killing an unborn human being through abortion for the same reason is just as wrong.

If we’re right, then the abortion question is not complex at all. First, use scientific evidence to answer a factual question: What is the unborn? Second, if the unborn is a human being, answer a moral question: How should we treat innocent human beings who are in the way and are defenseless?

GOING DEEPER: INFORMATION FOR SELF-STUDY

The public tends to confuse *psychological* complexity over abortion with **objective moral** complexity. As Stephen Schwarz points out, “People rightly see the psychological complexity of abortion—that it can be an agonizing decision, that opinion is divided, etc. They wrongly interpret this complexity as moral complexity, and thus fail to grasp the horror of abortion.”⁴

The appeal to “complexity” is just one more reason why graphic visual aids are indispensable to our efforts to restore meaning to the word “abortion”—especially in crisis pregnancy situations, where a client cannot be reached with words alone.



N O T E S

STUDENT INTERACTIVE



Think for a moment about the following reasons people justify abortion. How would the fact that the unborn are true human beings nullify these reasons? Hint: Ask if it would be justifiable to kill any other human being for that same reason. Break into small groups and discuss your answers. (5 minutes)

Privacy

Choice

Rape

Back-alley abortions

E IF THE UNBORN IS A HUMAN BEING, THEN THE POPULAR DEFENSES FOR ABORTION ARE NOT VALID BECAUSE THEY FAIL TO JUSTIFY TAKING AN INNOCENT HUMAN LIFE.

1. Popular Defense #1: “Women have the right to privacy with their doctors.”
 - a. *We all have a right to privacy within limits, but do we allow parents to abuse their children if they do it in the privacy of their own homes?*
 - b. *Clearly, the real issue is not privacy, but rather “What is the unborn?”*
 - c. *If the unborn is a human being, she deserves the same protection other children have.*



AMBASSADOR SKILLS

When answering the defense of privacy, ask if the invasion of our privacy or the limitation of our choice is ever justifiable. It is justifiable when someone else’s welfare is at stake.

2. Popular Defense #2: “But women should have the freedom to choose.”
 - a. *No one has unrestricted freedom to choose.*
 - b. *Our freedom to choose depends on what kind of choice we have in mind. This sentence is incomplete: Women should have the freedom to choose . . . what?*
 - c. *Clearly, freedom to choose is not the real issue.*
 - d. *If the unborn is a human being, we do not have the freedom to choose to kill her.*



AMBASSADOR SKILLS

When answering the defense of free choice, ask if we can ever choose to harm another innocent human being simply for our own benefit. Again, our freedom to choose is limited if it affects the welfare of another human being.



N O T E S

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3. Popular Defense #3: “Women shouldn’t have to carry a child conceived through rape.”
- a. *A pregnancy from rape can be emotionally devastating, but why should the child pay with his own life for his father’s crime?*
 - b. *We would not allow the woman to shoot the rapist after he’s been caught for her own emotional relief.*
 - 1) If she cannot kill the guilty party to make her feel better, why should she be allowed to kill an innocent child for the same reason?
 - 2) People may protest by saying the rapist is a human being, but that only furthers our point — being human makes all the difference.
 - c. *Clearly, rape is not the issue.*
 - d. *If the unborn is a human being, she should not be killed just so the mother isn’t reminded of the traumatic event.*⁵



AMBASSADOR SKILLS

When answering the defense of rape, ask if it is ever justifiable to kill an innocent human being (whether unborn or born) who reminds us of a traumatic event. Killing someone who is innocent is never the answer. (The point above can be framed as a question using the “Columbo Tactic”:⁶ “Would we allow the woman to shoot the rapist for her own emotional relief after he’s been caught?”)



By asking these questions (“Columbo Tactic”), we make our opponents establish the reasonable standard and then apply it to their own view. In essence, we’re forcing them to answer their own challenge.

4. Popular Defense #4: “Making abortion illegal forces⁷ women into dangerous back-alley abortions.”
- a. *This argument works if we make personal, elective surgeries illegal, but why should the law be faulted for making the killing of an innocent child risky?*
 - 1) The fact that bank-robbing is dangerous to the felon doesn’t seem to be a good reason for making bank robbery legal.
 - 2) As abortion advocate Mary Anne Warren points out, “The fact that restricting access to abortion has tragic side effects does not, in itself, show that the restrictions are unjustified, since murder is wrong regardless of the consequences of forbidding it.”⁸
 - b. *Clearly, illegal abortions are not the real issue.*
 - c. *If the unborn is a human being and the law forbids an abortion, a woman’s use of a back-alley abortion would be her own choice. No one is “forcing” her.*



N O T E S

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GOING DEEPER: INFORMATION FOR SELF-STUDY

SAMPLE DIALOGUE

Abortion Advocate: Abortion is a private choice between a woman and her doctor.

Pro-Lifer: Do we allow parents to abuse their little children if it is done in private? [Note the “Trotting Out the Toddler”/”Columbo” tactic]

Abortion Advocate: That’s not fair. The children you’re talking about are human beings. I’m talking about a fetus.

Pro-Lifer: Then the issue isn’t really privacy, but rather whether the fetus is a human being.

Abortion Advocate: But lots of poor women can’t afford another child.

Pro-Lifer: Let me ask you a question. When human beings get expensive, can we kill them?

Abortion Advocate: Well, no, but aborting a fetus is not the same as killing a human being.

Pro-Lifer: So, once again, the real question is “What is the unborn?” Is the fetus a human being?

Abortion Advocate: Why do you insist on being so simplistic? This is a very complex issue involving women who are forced to make agonizing decisions.

Pro-Lifer: The decision may be agonizing for the mother, I admit that. But it’s not a complex moral issue. It’s wrong to kill innocent human beings simply because they’re in the way and can’t defend themselves.

Abortion Advocate: Killing defenseless human beings is one thing. Aborting a fetus is another.

Pro-Lifer: So we’re agreed: If abortion actually killed a defenseless human being, then the issue wouldn’t be complex, right? The question we still need to answer is, “What is the unborn?”

Abortion Advocate: Enough with your abstract philosophy. Let’s talk about real life. Do you really think a woman should be forced to bring an unwanted child into the world?

Pro-Lifer: The homeless are unwanted. Can we kill them?

Abortion Advocate: But it’s not the same.

Pro-Lifer: That’s the issue, isn’t it? Are they the same? If the unborn are truly human beings, like the homeless, then we can’t just kill them to get them out of the way. We’re back to my first question, “What is the unborn?”

Abortion Advocate: But you still shouldn’t force your morality on women.

Pro-Lifer: You’d feel very comfortable “forcing your morality” on a mother who was physically abusing her two-year-old, wouldn’t you?

Abortion Advocate: But that’s not the same.

Pro-Lifer: Why not?

Abortion Advocate: Because you’re assuming the unborn are human, like a two-year-old.



N O T E S

3. Our argument can be explained in greater detail.
- Step one:** *It's wrong to intentionally kill any human being for the reasons most people have abortions.*¹⁰



We are not arguing that killing is never justified — killing is often defensible in the instances of capital punishment, self defense, and other cases — but that killing human beings for the reasons people have abortions is wrong.

- Step two:** *The unborn is a unique, individual, living human being for her entire life.*
 - The unborn is alive from the moment of conception.
 - The unborn is an individual being; her body is different from her mother's body.
 - The unborn is a *human* being for her entire life.
 - She's not partially human, potentially human, or possibly human, but she is a complete human being as long as she is alive.*
 - Her body will take many forms during her life, but she will always be the same thing—a human being—until she dies.*
 - Conclusion:** *Therefore, abortion is a terrible evil because it destroys a precious unborn human person without good reason.*¹¹



We are not defending the argument here, only stating it clearly.

4. To answer the question “What is the unborn?” we will argue that . . .
- The unborn is a living being.*
 - The unborn's body is not the mother's body.*
 - The unborn is a human being.*
 - There is no difference between a human being and a human person.*

Finally . . .

- Human beings are valuable in themselves . . .*
 - Not for their size or physical appearance.
 - Not for their level of development (first, second, or third trimester, infant, adolescent, or adult) or anything they can do.
 - Not because of their environment or where they are located (inside the womb or out).



If our case is sound, then abortion kills a valuable human being for frivolous reasons and should not be allowed.

5. Our approach is straightforward, uncomplicated, and fair.
- We ask questions about what the unborn is.*
 - We apply our conclusion to the moral question of abortion.*



N O T E S

- 6. Remember the three steps of the argument.
 - a. *It's wrong to intentionally kill innocent human beings.*
 - b. *Abortion intentionally kills an innocent human being.*
 - c. *Therefore, abortion is wrong.*

- 7. The most important question for our case is, "What is the unborn?" Remember the illustration "Can I kill this?"

IV. *W*HAT HAVE WE DONE IN THIS SESSION?

- A WE'VE SIMPLIFIED THE DEBATE BY REDUCING THE ISSUE TO ONE CRITICAL QUESTION: "WHAT IS THE UNBORN?"**

- B WE'VE LEARNED THE THREE STEPS OF THE ARGUMENT, THE MORAL LOGIC OF THE PRO-LIFE POSITION.**
 - 1. It's wrong to intentionally kill innocent human beings.
 - 2. Abortion intentionally kills an innocent human being.
 - 3. Therefore, abortion is wrong.

- C IN THE NEXT SEGMENT WE'LL DEFEND THE SECOND PREMISE—"ABORTION INTENTIONALLY KILLS AN INNOCENT HUMAN BEING"—BY LEARNING THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT SUPPORTS OUR ARGUMENT.**



N O T E S

“STAND AND DELIVER”

First, have everyone close their notebooks. This will not be an open-book exercise. Then draw an imaginary line down the middle of the room, making two teams. Label one side “The Religious Political Extremists,” and the other “The Anti-Choice Fanatics” (labels used by Planned Parenthood for pro-lifers). If the students are not at tables (which would form natural groups), have them quickly assemble their chairs in groups of 6 – 8.

Next, give each group 30 seconds to nominate:

- *A scribe (to write down questions you will give them)*
- *A teacher (to teach the answers to the group)*
- *A speaker (to give the group’s answers when called upon)*

These positions will change each time the game is repeated.

Once the nominees are chosen, tell the scribes to stand (so you’ll know that every group has a scribe). As you dictate to them, have them quickly jot down 4 – 5 review questions from the current session. The scribe then passes the questions to the group’s teacher, who has four minutes (time it) to review the questions with the team and prep the speaker to answer if called upon.

When the time is up, have all the speakers stand up. Choose two from each side of the room (two per team) to remain standing. All the rest may sit down.

Ask each speaker one of the review questions. If he answers the question correctly, the team earns two points. If he is stumped, the speaker may use a “lifeline” and call upon his smaller group’s teacher. If the teacher helps him answer correctly within 20 seconds, they earn one point for their team.

Finally, total the points and declare one team the winner. If this is a day-seminar with lunch, the team with the most points can go first through the food line.

Don’t be afraid to get into the part. Have fun pitting one side against the other. The whole process must move quickly to keep the energy up and also to fit into the time frame allowed.

“PRO-ABORTION FAMILY FEUD”

This game works just like the TV version. First, divide the room into two teams, just like you did for “Stand and Deliver.” Next, choose eight participants from each side of the room who will then group at opposite ends along the sides of a rectangular table.

Each participant then places his right hand on a book located at their respective ends of the table. His hand remains on the book while you read a review question.

As soon as any participant thinks he knows the answer, he slams his hand on the book. The first person to do so must begin to answer the question within three seconds. Otherwise, the question goes to the opposing side.

Each correct answer is worth one point for the team. If nobody gets the answer correct, the question is recycled for use later in the game.



N O T E S

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

by Gregory Koukl

ABORTION FOR RAPE VICTIMS?

If we allowed abortion under circumstances of rape, we would send the message that it is okay to eliminate someone who reminds us of an extremely painful memory. But we can't kill another human being just because his existence makes our life physically or emotionally burdensome.

However, if I were able to restrict abortion in all cases except rape or incest, I would do it. I don't think rape or incest should be considered exceptions, but I would rather save 96 percent of the children whose lives would have been taken through abortion rather than none at all.

The "coat hanger" argument is one of the most emotionally compelling appeals of pro-abortionists, yet the line of reasoning that supports it collapses when we consider the single element pro-choicers deity: choice.

I'M PRO-CHOICE

"We're Afraid for Our Daughters," the headline read. The ad was hard to miss, filling an entire page of my local paper. "Could it really happen?" it continued. "Could our daughters be forced into back alleys and illegal abortions? We need your help. For our daughters, our wives, and our friends, please help keep abortion safe." Listed in a line down the center of the page were the flowing, hand-written signatures of Cher, Ted Danson, John Denver, Betty Ford, and Cybill Shepherd.

It was a touching appeal. One could almost see Ted Danson's little girl being dragged by her ponytail, kicking and screaming, into a dark alley, or Cybill Shepherd's daughter gagged and strapped to a table while an unshaven dirtbag in coveralls readied a piece of bent wire. Surely the children hadn't chosen their evil fate. It was forced upon them by short-sighted and calloused moralists who robbed them of their only option: abortion on demand.

This "coat hanger" argument is one of the pro-abortionists' most emotionally compelling appeals. But it's also among the most specious appeals. It has little real substance and is dangerously misleading.

If we were talking about personal, elective surgery, this objection could be compelling. Why burden a woman with the additional risk of a dangerous, septic environment to have her operation? When the life of a human child is involved, however, the picture changes dramatically. Should the law be faulted for making the killing of another innocent human being risky? The fact that bank robbery is dangerous to the felon isn't a good reason to make grand larceny legal.



N O T E S

ENDNOTES

- 1 I mean “elective abortion” in the sense that abortion is a personal choice, not a medical necessity to save the life of the mother. Arguably, abortions of this nature are in a separate moral category. I will simply use the word “abortion” to refer to elective abortion from here forward.
- 2 Some might say that the next question is “Why?” However, answering “What is it?” is the more important issue. If your audience answers that the next question is “Why?” ask them, “Isn’t there a more important question to ask first?”
- 3 Pro-abortionists generally object to sex-selection abortions or abortions of children thought to have a genetic predisposition to homosexuality (the so-called “gay gene”) but this is inconsistent. “Choice” justifies abortion for any reason.
- 4 *The Moral Question of Abortion* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1990), 134 — 135.
- 5 You might also point out that killing the child will not take away the woman’s pain. Further, sometimes it’s better to suffer evil and injustice rather than to inflict them on another innocent victim.
- 6 The “Columbo Tactic” employs questions in place of assertions to move the discussion along in an interactive way.
- 7 This is an example of pro-abortion rhetoric. Women are never forced into illegal abortions. They choose to take the risk when many other options are available.
- 8 Mary Anne Warrern, “On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion,” in *The Problem of Abortion*, ed. Joel Feinberg (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1984), 103.
- 9 I mean “innocent” in the sense of not guilty of anything worthy of death.
- 10 This is a self-evident moral truth no civilized person can consistently deny. He may initially attempt to deny it to upend your progress, but once given clear-case examples, he relents: “So, you think it’s okay to kill someone as long as it’s in the privacy of your own home or they’re a financial burden on the family or they have a physical defect . . . ?”
- 11 For the argument to be valid, there must be moral terms in the premises (“It’s wrong to kill”) if there are moral terms in the conclusion (“Abortion is wrong”). When one draws a moral conclusion merely based on the way things are, he’s committed the naturalistic or “is/ought” fallacy: You can’t get an “ought” from an “is.” Our argument does not fall into that error.

