

Presentation Notes: *Responding to Pro-Choice YouTubers, Part 1*

***[CANVA SLIDES CAN BE FOUND HERE.](#)

Slide 1: Title

- Introduce the topic: “We’re going to discuss some common pro-choice arguments you’ll come in contact with during outreach. It’s important to be aware of these and understand how to respond. We want to be effective pro-life defenders so we need to know how to handle these types of arguments.”

Slide 2: Quick overview of the three arguments

- The three arguments we’re going to cover focus on the value of the unborn. We’re going to watch three clips and then discuss them together.
 - The first one argues that biologically, an embryo has less value than a born human.
 - ~~The second one argues that morally, an embryo has less value than a born person.~~ **Second video is currently down from youtube. Skip this for now!**
 - The third one argues that regardless of the unborn’s stage in development, it has less value than a born human.

Slide 3: Argument #1

- “A fertilized egg is not a human life.”
 - This first clip focuses on using science to denounce the value of unborn humans. Watch it and be thinking about his argument, as well as how to respond. You might even jot down some notes of what you hear him say that’s wrong.
 - (play video)

Slide 4: Discussion

- One of the biggest reasons why people believe abortion is okay is that they do not realize life begins at conception. This is something we can address with science.
 - What is the difference between miscarriage and abortion?
(Discuss, and hit on this point if necessary)
 - Miscarraige, although a traumatic loss, is a natural occurrence that happens when the unborn dies in the womb. Abortion intentionally kills the unborn human, and then removes it. Both involve death, but only abortion involves killing.
 - Why is it wrong to say a fertilized egg is not all we need for a human life?
(Discuss, and hit on this point if necessary)
 - Any biology textbook will tell you that a new human being is created as soon as fertilization occurs. The sperm meets the egg, and both die, resulting in a brand new human organism. Implantation into the uterine wall is simply the next step in its development, as are all of the changes that the unborn human undergoes in the womb.

- What would you say in response to his message?
(Discuss, and hit on this point if necessary)
 - The beginning of human life at fertilization is a scientific fact. Not only is a zygote a living human being, but it is also a distinct organism, completely unique in its characteristics. It is also a whole organism, self-directing its own growth and development. It requires a stable environment and sufficient nutrients to survive, just like born humans. Because it belongs in the human family, it has the same right to life as we do.

Slide 5: Argument #2 - VIDEO TAKEN DOWN, WILL BE REPLACING SOON. SLIDE IS HIDDEN FOR NOW

- “The unborn may be a person, but the mother takes precedence.”
 - This second clip develops the same argument from before, but adds the element of bodily autonomy. Watch the video and focus on his portrayal of the unborn vs the mother.
 - (play video)

Slide 6: Discussion - SLIDE IS HIDDEN FOR NOW, SKIP THIS

- Two more huge issues we run into during conversation are when people 1) equate moral value with developmental milestones 2) use bodily autonomy to give the mother more value than the unborn child. We must be able to identify these issues and respond in a way that is both compassionate and rational.
 - Why is it wrong to say we become valuable once we reach a certain developmental level?
(Discuss, and hit on this point if necessary)
 - Notice how he said the zygote wasn’t a person because it wasn’t fully functioning? The newborn he compared it to wasn’t fully functioning either. Newborns and infants have little to no ability to reason, feel nuanced emotions, or retain memories. They also can’t walk, talk, or even eat by themselves! Yet we would all agree that they are people. It is dangerous to say our rights come from anything we can or cannot do. The only way we can be consistent about who gets human rights is to include every single human being.
 - Why doesn’t the “right to refuse” argument justify abortion?
(Discuss, and hit on these points if necessary) This is a huge topic so we won’t cover it all, but it is worth discussing to get a grasp on some of the basics.
 - Refusing help to someone in need is different from intentionally killing that person. When women choose abortion, they are not merely withholding their bodies from being used, they are forcing another person to die an extremely brutal death.
 - What’s more, our moral intuitions lead us to believe that all mothers *do* have responsibility towards their unborn children: if a mother drinks or does drugs while pregnant, we would agree she is doing something

morally wrong, because she is harming her child. If the woman and her child are both people, then both should be protected.

- How can we show compassion when talking to someone who cares about women?

(Discuss, and hit on this point if necessary)

- When someone brings up a bodily rights argument, it's all too easy for us to think that person just doesn't care about human rights at all. We might even subconsciously label them Bad People. However, we should always be looking for ways to establish common ground with others, and we know for sure that people who care about bodily rights *care about women*. We do too! Show that you care about women's rights, and how this fits in beautifully with your pro-life view.

Slide 7: Argument #3

- "It's not enough to be 'pro-birth.'"
 - This third clip focuses on the pro-life cause as a hypocritical and unworthy one. Watch the video and focus on his portrayal of our cause vs other human rights causes.
 - (play video from 1:20 until finish)

Slide 8: Discussion

- When people argue that being pro-life is really just being pro-birth, they are really telling us they don't see unborn humans as valuable humans worth our protection. As pro-lifers, we must convey the humanity of the unborn, and the fact that abortion is a worldwide human rights injustice.
 - Why is it wrong to say we can't be pro-life if we don't actively work to oppose other injustices?
(Discuss, and hit on this point if necessary)
 - All life is important. However, when we see abortion as the needless killing of millions of innocent humans, we are justified in throwing all of our efforts into stopping this atrocity. Just like abolitionists worked so hard to end slavery, and the suffragists fought for women's right to vote. The underlying issue here is clearly that the person does not believe the pro-life cause is not a worthy one. If he did, this argument would disappear.
 - How can we show that abortion is one of the greatest injustices happening today?
(Discuss, and hit on this point if necessary)
 - In systematic injustice, one group in power decides that another group is less valuable than them. With slavery, it was based on skin color. With the holocaust, it was based on ethnicity and religion. With abortion, it is based on the unborn's lack of development and dependence on mothers to

survive. All of these things fail to dismantle the idea that we are human, and we are all deserving of basic human rights. When people with loud voices speak to strip rights from people with no voice, we should always question the morality of the situation.

- Given that this speaker cares about human rights, how can we find common ground?

(Discuss, and hit on this point if necessary)

- We want to show people that our care for the unborn stems directly from our care for humanity. It's *because* we care so much about people that we defend the weakest and most vulnerable. It's *because* we care about people that we work to help women choose life. We know that abortion is harmful to absolutely everyone involved, and we work against it because we have humanity's best interests at heart.

Slide 9: Closing Thoughts

- Unborn human beings have intrinsic value and rights. We can use reason to share this truth with others, while recognizing that everyone has different experiences and worldviews. We must be aware of where the person is coming from, find common ground, and focus the discussion on what matters.
- This is a space for any further questions and dialogue. Try to talk about past/upcoming outreach experiences and see where they tie into this subject.

Slide 10: Practice Time

- I'll pretend to be a pro-choice student, and the rest of you will be working together to try and change my mind about abortion. You ask me what I think about abortion, and I say_____.
- Biology
 - Pro-choice Argument: "It hasn't even implanted yet! The woman isn't pregnant! Why do you care so much about the clump of cells when she isn't even pregnant!"
 - Pro-life Response: "Well, we know from the science of embryology that from the moment of fertilization, there is a distinct, living, and whole human being. We know the zygote is distinct from its mother because it has its own DNA. We know it is living because it is growing, responds to stimuli, and is metabolizing energy. And we know that it's a whole human being because it's not a *part* of a human (like our skin cells are a part of us). Instead, it has the ability to grow and develop, given the proper time, nutrition, and environment, the same things we born humans need to continue living. We also know that the unborn are human because they have two human parents, and things produce after their own kind. So while the unborn may look like a clump of cells, we know that it belongs to the human family because it is a living human being."
- Moral Value

- Pro-choice Argument: “Why do you pro-lifers not care so much about a fetus that isn’t as developed as the woman. We know she has rights that need to be protected. We don’t know if the fetus does because we don’t know if the fetus is developed enough to be a person.”
- Pro-life Response: “You’re right that we need to care about the women who are in these hard circumstances. But I disagree with you and your claim that the unborn aren’t just as valuable as the woman. You made the argument that development determines whether a human is a person with rights that should be protected, and I think that’s a dangerous way to categorize personhood because that would often exclude people who are handicapped or have special needs.”
- Pro-birth
 - Pro-choice Argument: “If you were really pro-life, you’d be fighting to reform foster care! You’d be adopting children!”
 - Pro-life Response: “Those are hard situations, and it breaks my heart that any child would grow up in foster care, be abused, or separated from their family. We agree about that. But let’s say for sake of argument that I am only “pro-birth.” How does that make abortion ok? What I’m out here saying is that it is wrong to intentionally take the life of an innocent human being and because I think abortion does that, it’s wrong. Even if I don’t care about children in foster care, does that invalidate my argument?”
 - Pro-life Response continued: “I think your expectation is unfair because there are lots of groups that focus on specific issues, and we’re ok with that. Like the American Cancer Society only focuses on cancer, and we don’t expect them to research cures for *all* diseases. If they did research all diseases, they wouldn’t be able to research cancer so effectively. And it’s the same with pro-life groups. We do care about these other issues, but we focus on abortion because we have to choose one issue to advocate well for a change. But we also choose to focus on abortion because it is an injustice against the weakest and most vulnerable, abortion takes the lives of thousands daily, and it is currently legal. This makes abortion stand out among other injustices and social issues, thus we think it deserves our focused efforts to stop it.”