



Expressing
pro-life views
in
Winsome Ways

————— Guide to Engaging Your Neighbor —————

13 Pro-Abortion Assertions & How to Give a Pro-Life Response

Now that you've watched the "Expressing Pro-Life Views in Winsome Ways" video series, how can you apply what you've learned in a real-life conversation? We want to help you feel prepared to communicate your views with grace and confidence. That's why we've assembled this list of common pro-abortion assertions and how you can respond.

But first...

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a gracious heart, mind, and attitude. You are going to face apathy, opposition, and maybe even hostility. But people who have different views than you do are often family, friends, neighbors, and classmates — and they are all precious to God. At Focus on the Family, we want to be honoring in our conversation. And so can you! Our prayer is that you will help clarify the abortion issue and make a winsome and compelling case for the sanctity of the pre-born.

Assertion #1

A woman has the right to decide what she wants to do with her body.

That's right. Living in the United States, we do have a lot of freedoms, including pregnant women who have the option to end the life of their babies or to choose life. A pro-life view wants the mother to deliver her baby. Even if that mom doesn't choose to parent her child, that child can grow and thrive with another family through adoption or foster care. But the main issue really isn't rights. Before we get to that, we first must answer the most foundational question in the abortion debate: ***“What are the pre-born?”*** Our society says that it is *not* acceptable for a mom to end the life of a 2-year-old toddler simply because she can choose to do so. Why is that? Because that 2-year-old is a human being. So, by the same logic, if the pre-born are human, how is it acceptable to end their lives for the sake of a mom's right to choose? That's why we have to focus on ***“what are the pre-born”*** before we talk about anything else. So what's the answer to that question? Embryology holds that the pre-born are human beings from fertilization. When a male sperm unites with a female oocyte, it forms a single cell called a zygote that has its own DNA distinct from the mother's DNA. That's a new life!

Assertion #2

A decision about an abortion is a private matter between a woman and her doctor.

Deciding whether or not to have an abortion is serious and should be made with wise counsel. But before we get into the privacy part of

this issue, we have to answer the most foundational question in the abortion debate: ***“What are the pre-born?”*** Would you say it’s acceptable for a mom to end the life of a 2-year-old toddler if she first discusses it privately with her doctor, family, or a counselor? Of course not! Why? Because that 2-year-old is a human being. The same logic has to apply to the pre-born if they are human. Embryology holds that the pre-born are human beings from fertilization. When a male sperm unites with a female oocyte, it forms a single cell called a zygote that has its own DNA distinct from the mother’s DNA. That’s a new life! As for privacy, a woman certainly has a right to talk discreetly with her doctor as any patient does. But having a private consultation doesn’t excuse ending the life of a human being.

Assertion #3

It’s more humane to end the life of a baby who would otherwise be born into an abusive home.

This is a difficult situation. First of all, a caring response is to come alongside that woman and offer as much help as possible. That’s the pro-life position. She is facing real-life struggles that might require the help of law enforcement or a pregnancy resource center or both. However, a pro-life advocate would disagree that the mother is better off ending the life of her baby. Imagine that mother had a 2-year-old. Would it be OK to end the toddler’s life to spare him or her future abuse? No. The mother would seek a safe space for her child or find a friend, relative, or agency to help. A pre-born child should be treated with the same love and care. As a society, we don’t take the life of an innocent human being because someone wants to rough them up. Similarly, we shouldn’t end a pre-born baby’s life either because of hardship. Adoption or foster care would be a better option that allows the mother to choose life.

Assertion #4

If a woman can't afford to deliver and raise a baby, she has the right to end the baby's life so they're both not financially burdened.

First of all, the pro-life view is to show compassion to a woman in that situation. She's facing real-life struggles. A pro-life response is to encourage her to visit a pregnancy resource center, where healthcare professionals and caring people could give the mom direction and help. But notice what this line of thinking is really saying — that the pre-born baby is not human. Here's why: We wouldn't apply the same rationale to an older child. No mother would end the life of her 2-year-old toddler so she could balance her checkbook or pay her rent. No family would eliminate a son or daughter so they'd be in a better financial position. Why would it be OK to end the life of a pre-born baby for financial reasons? It's not. In a hardship situation, adoption would be an option that allows the mother to choose life.

Assertion #5

An embryo isn't life.

It's true that human beings were less developed when we were embryos in their mothers' wombs. But tell me why that matters? Why would size determine value? Why would level of development be the thing that gives us rights? It doesn't and it shouldn't. Adults aren't more

human or have more value than kids do. We don't think Shaquille O'Neal is more human or valuable than we are, simply because he's 7 feet tall and we're not. Remember what embryology says: The pre-born are human beings from fertilization. When a male sperm unites with a female oocyte, it forms a single cell called a zygote that has its own DNA distinct from the mother's DNA. That's a new life!

Assertion #6

A baby isn't human until it is born. Therefore it has no rights.

How do two parents — two *human* parents — create offspring that is not human, but later becomes human? Can you explain that? The argument that a pre-born baby isn't human until it's born is actually claiming that *location* determines human value. But that's faulty. At the delivery of a baby, how does a change from inside the womb to outside the womb change the essential nature of the baby? How does a journey of eight inches from the womb to the birth canal suddenly transform a baby from non-human to human? How does that baby change from a non-valuable thing we can eliminate to a human being who is valuable? In reality, *location* has no bearing on our worth. No one believes that a resident of Colorado has more inherent value than someone from Texas. Our intrinsic human worth doesn't change based on our address.

Assertion #7

Abortion is healthcare.

What do you mean by healthcare? The original Hippocratic Oath explicitly forbade abortion as valid medical practice. Even the maxim, “Do no harm,” which undergirds the Hippocratic Oath, suggests that ending a life is antithetical to the purpose of medicine. Healthcare involves health and wellness, not the intent to kill. Elective abortion *does* involve the intent to kill. Therefore, elective abortion is *not* healthcare.

Assertion #8

Pro-life views are anti-woman.

That’s not true. Pro-life advocates believe women ought to choose a great many things that impact their lives — the doctor they visit, their education path, their career pursuits, where they live, and so on. But those are all *non-moral* choices though. Some choices are *moral*, such as whether or not to take an innocent life. No one — woman or man — should end the life of a defenseless human being for her or his own gain or convenience. That’s what elective abortion does. Also, it is important for pro-life advocates to acknowledge that there are women who have real hurts and fears as they face an abortion decision. They may be dealing with an unexpected or unwanted pregnancy and experiencing pain and anxiety. Pro-life advocates want to show them care and treat them with compassion. We want to help them no matter what circumstances they are facing. In the same way, people with pro-life views see women who have had an abortion *in the past* as deserving of grace and kindness, not indignity and disgust.

Assertion #9

Pre-born babies aren't developed enough or self-aware enough to be considered human.

It's true that we were less developed when we were embryos in our mothers' wombs. But why does that matter? Why would the level of development be the thing that gives human beings rights? It doesn't and it shouldn't. A 4-year-old girl does not yet have a mature reproductive system and is less developed compared to a 24-year-old woman. But we don't think the 4-year-old is less human or has less value than the 24-year-old. Why is development needed to measure worth? It isn't. Human worth is not based on brain function or age or level of development.

Assertion #10

Abortions are safe, legal, and rare, and pro-lifers exaggerate the abortion issue to make it seem worse than it is.

President Bill Clinton coined the phrase "safe, legal, and rare" in 1996 to describe his abortion policy during his re-election campaign. He used those words to appease voters with moral uncertainties about abortion. Today, however, many abortion advocates brand themselves

as “pro-choice” and want abortion access on demand. They view abortion as a sign of support for women. That’s false.

- First, abortions don’t help women, and they are not **safe**. A human being dies. Half of those are females who never will get to enter the world.
- Second, suggesting that abortion is **legal** does not equal that it is **moral**. It still involves ending a life.
- Third, who decides what’s **rare**? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed more than **638,000 abortions** in 47 of the 50 U.S. states in 2015. (California, New Hampshire, and Maryland don’t share their abortion data with the CDC.) By comparison, the American Cancer Society says that about **590,000 Americans die of cancer** each year. The American Heart Association says that **610,000 U.S. citizens die of heart disease** each year. **Abortions top them both!** The Guttmacher Institute, the research arm of Planned Parenthood, the nation’s leading abortion provider, estimates that 25 percent of all American women will have an abortion by the age of 45. That’s not rare.

Assertion #11

If a pre-born baby isn’t viable, the mother is justified in ending the baby’s life.

This claim is sometimes cited in the case of an ectopic pregnancy, in which the baby is growing in an area of the mother’s body other than the uterus, such as in the fallopian tubes, ovaries, or abdominal cavity. These pregnancies are thought to be fatal unless the baby and, at times, even the fallopian tubes, are removed. In these cases, the pregnancy ceases to be a typical pregnancy and doctors seek to save one life, rather than losing two. The medical actions taken are not to **end** a life, but to **save** life. The same is true for complications in a late-term pregnancy. Medical professionals have affirmed that an abortion

is *never* medically necessary to save a mother. A pregnancy with a child with Down syndrome or another chromosomal abnormality is a different matter. Though they experience challenges, families with a child with Down syndrome often speak of profound joy. Some have said that they cherish life more richly. Many individuals with Down syndrome go to school, even college, right alongside their peers. Their lives have equal value.

Assertion #12

A pro-life view is anti-science.

That's not true. Science and medicine hold that, from the earliest stages of development, the pre-born are distinct, living, whole human beings. Embryology textbooks teach that human development begins at fertilization, when a male sperm unites with a female oocyte and forms a single cell called a zygote. It contains human DNA distinct from the mother's. Therefore, a zygote is the beginning of a new, unique human being.

Assertion #13

Quit trying to force your religious beliefs on me.

Pro-life advocates don't have to quote the Bible or draw from a faith tradition to believe that human life has value. Abortion is a *moral* issue because the pre-born are human beings. Is it right or wrong to end the life of a human being? Do certain circumstances dictate what's right

or wrong? Those are *philosophical* questions that deal with reality and existence. You are no less alive and human right now than you were as a teenager or an adolescent or a kindergartener or a toddler or an infant or pre-born in the womb. Your size, development, and self-awareness have changed, but your inherent human value has *not* changed in your journey to today. A pro-life view is clear: Taking the life of another person — especially a defenseless human being like a pre-born baby — is wrong.



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