

# Sound, picture, wonder

Today, I was blessed to get a close look at my second child via my second sonogram. It's no wonder so many pro-choice activists wish to prevent mandatory sonograms at pregnancy crisis centers. These windows into the world of an unborn child offer many women the first major step at bonding with the person they are creating. Actually witnessing the baby's very human parts and movements in the womb is a powerful experience, which could easily sway an uncertain mother-to-be into making the right decision; life.

For those expectant mothers who have happily anticipated the new life within them, the first sonogram can mean many things. Usually conducted in the first trimester, this procedure is often conducted to check for a viable fetus and/or to date the pregnancy. Seeing that heart beat on the screen offers welcome relief, especially for those mothers who have endured miscarriages. Early sonogram prints can be difficult to interpret, but the fact that the existence of a nascent human being's existence has been documented stands to matter most. Having an approximate date when the little one can be expected to enter the greater world only increases the anticipation.

The second sonogram exists to ensure that the baby is growing and developing properly. The fetus is an undeniably visible human being at this point with fingers and toes you can easily count. Many expectant parents look forward to this visit because they will be able determine whether to start shopping for their little boy or their little girl in an increasingly gender-defined world. The best part, as many mothers will agree, is being able to make out their baby's face. There's something about those tiny eyes, a nose, a mouth and ears that causes joy to surge throughout our being when we first encounter them, even in fuzzy black and white.

Having lost my second pregnancy, I was elated to witness my unborn child's heart pulsating on the sonogram screen this past October. On this bitter cold January day, I again felt the warmth of new life as I watched my baby-to-be dance, twist, twirl and do everything but pose for the camera at my second sonogram appointment. My

husband and I first told the technician that we did not want to learn whether we were having a girl or a boy. “Not a problem,” she said. “I don’t usually tell people unless they ask.” According to her seventy-five percent of parents do learn the genders of their children. “Most people like to be prepared,” she said as she took measurements on the baby’s arms, legs, and head.

We’d decided to bring our son, who is two, along to see his brother or sister on screen. As I pointed out 10 toes that looked identical to his, he said, “Look at the turtle.” Oh, well. He may be surprised when I bring home a baby instead of a loggerhead come May.

“How do they manage to not get caught up in the cord?” my husband, always curious and observant, asked. Our little one appeared to be jumping a colorful rope as the tech checked the blood flow using infrared technology.

“They do, but they’re smart enough to get untangled,” she said.

The moment I’d waited for the most, seeing the face I’d come to love, that would accompany the three of us at the dinner table, that would reside beside big brother on my desk, was a bit disappointing. I could barely make out the nose, the forehead or even the chin. The photographs I took home weren’t as clear this time as they were with my son. The doctor called to notify me that everything looked good, which, of course, was uplifting, but I still wished I could make a better picture of my unborn child in my mind.

As I mused over my ultrasound throughout the day, I realized that the experience of being in the womb and of coming to know one’s unborn child is a lot like getting to know God:

- Sonograms help us to approximate due dates, but without medical interventions, we never know the exact date and time our babies will arrive. Jesus told us He would return, but we’re not sure exactly when. Just as mothers are late in their pregnancies, we must always be ready for the Son of God to return to us.
- Although we can’t always witness a baby’s existence in the womb, we know it is there. That sonogram glimpse is sort of like those still, quiet

moments when you feel and notice God's presence, even if you can't touch it.

- As much as we want to see and know the faces of our unborn children, we must wait until they emerge from the womb to fully appreciate the perfection of their features. It's the same way with God. Though He made us in His likeness, we will not see his face until we exit this world and enter the next.
- Just as babies can tangle themselves in their mothers' wombs, they almost always find a way out. We may go down the wrong path in life, but there is always a way back to God.
- Speaking of babies being smart enough to get out of an umbilical knot, if that doesn't speak to intelligent design, I don't know what does.