

Roe v. Wade:
Building a Culture of Life
in the Face of a Culture of Death
(for use on and/or around January 22)

OPENING PRAYER

5 minutes

Our Lady of Guadalupe, we turn to you who are the protectress of unborn children and ask that you intercede for us, so that we may more firmly resolve to join you in protecting all human life.

Let our prayers be united to your perpetual motherly intercession on behalf of those whose lives are threatened, be they in the womb of their mother, on the bed of infirmity, or in the latter years of their life.

May our prayers also be coupled with peaceful action which witnesses to the goodness and dignity of all human life, so that our firmness of purpose may give courage to those who are fearful and bring light to those who are blinded by sin.

Encourage those who will be involved in the March for Life; help them to walk closely with God and to give voice to the cry of the oppressed, in order to remind our nation of its commitment to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all people.

O Virgin Mother of God, present our petitions to your Son and ask Him to bless us with abundant life.

Amen.

(from USCCB Office for Pro-life Activities)

A Reading from the Book of Jeremiah 1:5

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you.

OBJECTIVE

Make students aware of the spiritual, social and cultural damage resulting from *Roe v. Wade*.

Learning Objectives

During this presentation it is essential to communicate the following points:

- Each and every human life is valuable from the moment of conception.
- *Roe v. Wade* legalized the killing of the unborn in the United States at any time for any reason.

- Since *Roe*, roughly 50 million unborn Americans have been killed¹ and their parents forever harmed. That decision and its ramifications are part of the culture of death.
- We are all responsible for building a culture of life.

LECTURE (w/VIDEOS)

25 minutes

- Every human being is valuable from conception
 - Review of basic fetal development facts²
 - From the moment of conception, all 46 chromosomes are present, gender is determined, and a new unrepeatable human being comes into the world.
 - By the third week, the heart begins to beat.
 - Brain waves can be recorded in the second month.
 - By eight weeks, all body systems are present.
 - Video suggestions
 - There is probably only time for one. Consider using the one you did not use in the fall, or replaying the one you did for reinforcement.
 - 4 ½ minute YouTube Video on fetal development (no narration, images with music): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RS1ti23SUSw>
 - 5 minute American Life League's *Baby Steps* video (narrated ultrasound images): <http://babystepsdvd.com/>
- History of Abortion in the United States
 - In the decade before *Roe*, a few state legislatures began passing laws legalizing abortion in limited circumstances.
 - *Roe v. Wade* (1973)
 - With this decision and its companion case, the Supreme Court found a right to privacy in the Constitution that includes a right to abortion at any stage in pregnancy for essentially any reason whatsoever.³
 - First, the Court limited this right, allowing states to put certain restrictions on abortion, to protect the health of the woman and to protect the life of the unborn.⁴ According to the Court, the state has the right to regulate or proscribe abortion "except where it is necessary, in appropriate medical judgment, for the preservation of the life or health of the mother."⁵
 - Then the Court so broadly defined "health" to functionally defeat this limitation. Health is defined in *Roe*'s companion case, *Doe v. Bolton* to be "that the medical judgment may be exercised in the light of all factors - physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age - relevant to the wellbeing of the

¹ Alan Guttmacher Institute, *Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States*, http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html.

² *Watch Me Grow*, Little One Sweet Publishing (2004).

³ *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 152-3 (1973).

⁴ *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 162-4 (1973).

⁵ *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 164-5 (1973).

patient. All these factors may relate to health. This allows the attending physician the room he needs to make his best medical judgment.”⁶

- The result – by Court order, abortion is legal through all nine months of pregnancy, for virtually any reason.
- 1 minute video of Norma McCorvey, Roe in *Roe v. Wade*, describing how she has since come to regret her involvement in the case:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_MUUvcvjEg
- Subsequent developments
 - Over the last 35 years, courts and legislatures have wrestled with various protections for women and the unborn, including fetal pain legislation, restrictions on certain types of abortions, requirements of notification to a minor’s parents before abortion, requirements that certain information be provided to a woman seeking an abortion, and others.
- Situation today
 - Well over one million abortions are performed each year across the country. Millions more are committed throughout the world.
 - Planned Parenthood
 - Nation’s largest abortion provider, providing 24% of abortions in the United States in 2006⁷
 - Margaret Sanger, foundress of Planned Parenthood
 - "More children from the fit, less from the unfit -- that is the chief aim of birth control."⁸
 - New methods of abortion have been created that further deny the humanity of the unborn, including the morning after pill, RU-486, and abortifacient contraceptives. All of these are legal and end the life of a human being. Most are marketed as contraception.
- Effects of *Roe*
 - On unborn children
 - Some scientists have discovered that the unborn feel pain. At 5 weeks, pain receptors are found around the mouth. By 18 weeks, they are present throughout the body.⁹
 - Facts based on 2003 statistics¹⁰ (which should be roughly accurate today)
 - There were over 3,500 abortions per day in 2003, 146 per hour, about one every 25 seconds.
 - For every 1,000 live births, there were 312 abortions in 2003.
 - There were more than 148,000 second and third trimester abortions in 2003.

⁶ *Doe v. Bolton*, 410 U.S. 179, 192 (1973).

⁷ National Right to Life, *Planned Parenthood*, <http://www.nrlc.org/Factsheets/PPabortionFSrev.pdf>.

⁸ *Birth Control Review*, May 1919, p. 12

⁹ National Right to Life, *Pain of the Unborn*, http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/Fetal_Pain/FetalPain091604.pdf.

¹⁰ National Right to Life, *Abortion in the United States-Statistics*, <http://www.nrlc.org/ABORTION/facts/abortionstats2.html>.

- In 2003, more children died from abortion than Americans died in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Korean, Vietnam and Gulf Wars combined.
 - Less than 1% of abortions are committed in cases of rape and incest.¹¹
 - 40 second pro-life video, “Imagine the Potential”:
www.catholicvote.org/index.php?/site/viewVideo/&videoId=V2CaBR3z85c
 - On women, men, and families
 - ½ of all abortions are committed on women under 25 years old¹²
 - 43% of women will have at least 1 abortion by the age of 45¹³
 - 70% of women choosing abortion believe that abortion is morally wrong. They are choosing against their consciences because of some pressure, from others or circumstances, which make them feel they have no other choice¹⁴
 - Symptoms of post-abortion stress include:
 - Bouts of crying
 - Depression
 - Guilt
 - Inability to forgive oneself
 - Intense grief / sadness
 - Anger / rage
 - Emotional numbness
 - Sexual problems or promiscuity
 - Eating disorders
 - Lowered self esteem
 - Drug and alcohol abuse
 - Nightmares and sleep disturbances
 - Suicidal urges
 - Difficulty with relationships
 - Difficulty bonding with subsequent children
 - Anxiety and panic attacks
 - Flashbacks
 - Multiple abortions
 - Pattern of repeat crisis pregnancy
 - Discomfort around babies or pregnant women
 - Fear / ambivalence of pregnancy
 - Watching their parents experience these symptoms affect parents’ born children as well.

¹¹ National Right to Life, *Why to Women Have Abortions?*,
<http://www.nrlc.org/ABORTION/facts/reasonsabortions.html>.

¹² Alan Guttmacher Institute, *Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States*,
http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html.

¹³ *The Jericho Plan: Breaking Down the Walls Which Prevent Post-Abortion Healing*, by David C. Reardon.
Springfield, IL: Acorn Books, 1996

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- 4 ½ or 7 minute Rachel’s Vineyard video:
<http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/video/index.aspx>. Scroll down to “How to Save a Life.” If you are running low on time, stop the video after the first song. The second plays during testimonies of post-abortion healing.

SHORT ACTIVITY

5 minutes

Brainstorm 3 ways in which you personally have been affected by *Roe v. Wade* and 3 ways you can respond, building a culture of life.

Invite students to share with the class if they wish.

LECTURE

5 minutes

Reiterate essential lessons

- Value of every human from conception
- *Roe v. Wade* legalized the killing of the unborn at any time for any reason.
- You are all responsible for building a culture of life.

QUESTIONS

5 minutes

CLOSING PRAYER

Prayer of Reparation (from Priests for Life)

God and Father of Life,
You have created every human person,
And have opened the way for each to have eternal life.

We live in the shadow of death.
Tens of millions of your children have been killed
Thanks to the *Roe vs. Wade* decision legalizing abortion.

Father, have mercy on us.
Heal our land
And accept our offering of prayer and penance.
In your love for us,
Turn back the scourge of abortion.

May each of us exult in hearts full of hope
And hands full of mercy
And work together to build a culture of life.

We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.