

The Respect Life Church Ministry:

Educating and Leading the Church Community in Prayer and Action

Do you know ...

- ... how many abortions are happening every week in your county?
- ... that minority communities suffer disproportionately from abortion?
- ... what pregnancy centers do, and where the nearest center is in your community?
- ... that hormonal methods of birth control can actually act to cause very early abortions?
- ... what post-abortion syndrome is; how women are harmed by abortion?
- ... that human embryos are routinely discarded during the process of in vitro fertilization?

There is much knowledge relating to life issues that has not reached the average American. Does your church have a ministry to inform the membership on how the lives of our brothers and sisters are being threatened, how women are being misinformed and victimized? Are you interested in learning about life issues and passing on that knowledge to your church members? Please consider forming a Respect Life committee or team in your church.

First, educate yourself. Then sit down and talk to your pastor. You understand that he has his hands full with all the ways he is already ministering to his flock. Would he like to have a Respect Life Committee at the church who would serve the congregation in this area? The mission of the group could be to educate, to encourage prayer, to support women with the choice for life, and to encourage political action to build a culture of life in our community.

A. Educate: Excellent pro-life books, brochures, videos, and audio files are available.

1. Pamphlets can be placed in a rack available to members, featured at a monthly table, or even passed out to the congregation.
2. If your church has a library, make sure it includes good pro-life literature and videos. If not, perhaps your group can begin a small collection of pro-life books and videos available for lending. Audio presentations featuring national leaders on several pro-life topics are available for downloading at www.endingabortion.com.
3. Encourage existing church groups to feature a pro-life presentation at one of their meetings, or invite a speaker to address the entire church. Many local organizations would be happy to provide a speaker at no charge.

Resources: (by no means a complete list – just a sample to get you started)

Local: Houston Coalition for Life, www.HoustonCoalition.com

Christian Voices for Life of Fort Bend County: www.ChristianVoicesForLife.org

Texas Right to Life: www.TexasRightToLife.com

Local pregnancy centers: www.PregnantToday.com

National: Life Issues Institute: www.LifeIssues.org/orders.html

Heritage House '76: www.HeritageHouse76.com

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.usccb.org

American Life League: www.all.org

Anglicans for Life: www.AnglicansForLife.org

Life, Education and Resource Network (LEARN): www.LearnInc.org and

www.BlackGenocide.org

www.ProLifeFreebies.com - yes- it has FREE materials!

B. Prayer: Encourage prayer in your church community for an end to abortion and more specifically for our brothers and sisters who are involved with and affected by abortion.

1. Intentions:
 - a. Pray for women who are tempted – that they find the support, courage, and grace they need to choose life.
 - b. Pray for women who have aborted - that they find healing and forgiveness
 - c. Pray for conversion of those involved in providing and promoting abortion
 - d. Pray for government leaders – that they will work to protect life with legal measures.
2. Encourage prayer within the church:
 - a. Print and distribute a simple prayer for daily use, such as the one featured on <http://www.christianvoicesforlife.org/prayer.html> .
 - b. Encourage your pastor to regularly include petitions relating to life issues in public prayers during services. Samples of such petitions, as well as bulletin quotes and occasional homily notes can be seen at <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/liturgy/wolarchive.shtml>
3. Prayer at abortion clinics: Be informed about group prayer at abortion clinics and encourage church members to participate.

Links: www.houstoncoalition.com (see Stand and Pray under Make a Difference),
<http://www.archgh.org/RespectLife/helpers.htm>,
www.40DaysforLife.org,
www.ChristianVoicesForLife.org. (Fort Bend County)

C. Support: Show the women of your community that you will support them with alternatives to abortion.

1. A map of the Houston area with all the local pregnancy centers can be found at www.pregnanttoday.org. Find the nearest center and talk to them about how your church can help support their efforts. Pregnancy centers need both volunteer and financial support from the community in order to help the women who come to them to choose life, and to continue to offer them help during their pregnancy.
2. Catholic parishes can participate in the Gabriel Project to have pregnant women in need referred to them for one-on-one help. www.diogh.org/RespectLife/gabrielproject.htm
3. Let the families of your own community know that an unplanned pregnancy would be met with love and support, not judgment.

D. Civic action: It is a Christian duty to help build a government system that truly serves the common good. Church members can be encouraged to make life issues a priority in political decisions and action.

1. While churches are prohibited from endorsing political candidates or parties, it is certainly appropriate for church leaders to speak to the moral issues that relate to political decisions. Christians can be encouraged to form their consciences to make political decisions in accord with Christian moral beliefs, fostering the common good rather than their own interests. They can be encouraged to place appropriate priority on issues that literally affect life and death over issues that affect the quality of life. Churches are allowed to speak in favor or opposition to particular proposals, according to how they bear on moral issues.
2. Articles presenting church political freedoms and guidelines for civic action are available at <http://oldsite.alliancedefensefund.org/userdocs/PastorsGuidelinesLetter.pdf> and www.faithfulcitizenship.org (from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops).



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www.ChristianVoicesforLife.org