Christian Voices for Life

Wednesday Word

Education

Prayer

Action

What does a "Person" Look Like?

Education: What do you **visualize** when you hear the word "person"? Probably the first thing you think of is an adult, a human being grown and able to walk and talk. What about a baby ? Well, yeah, they are people too. We all see babies as newborns (unable to walk or talk) and as they age, watch them grow up. What about the preborn? We don't normally see them at all, but pictures do show us that at 10 weeks gestation, he or she already has a head and arms and legs - but he is so tiny – only a little over an inch long (from crown to rump)! Even earlier in pregnancy the preborn child is even smaller and has none of the normal body parts we associate with a human person. Because we don't see these early stages of a child's life, it is natural that we don't readily associate those images with the word "person". However, if we could put tiny cameras inside the mother's body, we would (with magnification) see the ovum (about 0.1 mm in diameter) being fertilized within the tube that connects the ovary to the uterus. We would see the fertilized egg divide into a ball of cells, and attach to the lining of the uterus in order to receive nutrition and oxygen from mom. Then we could watch the child grow and change to form the various parts of the body as they are needed. By 6 weeks gestation, or 4 weeks after fertilization, the child's heart is beating regularly at 110 beats/min. There is no question that human life begins when a human egg is fertilized. It is just difficult to accept a ball of cells as a "person". And so, abortion advocates will say that a preborn human is not a person, and so does not have a right to life. They then try to define "person" in such a way as to exclude the preborn. Equal rights must be based on something we share equally. But the child in the womb differs from born people only in characteristics that continue to vary among born people: size, level of development, environment, and dependency (SLED). The only thing persons do have in common is our humanity. Slavery, the Holocaust, and other actions against a particular race or heritage were based on declaring that class of people to not be persons. Preborn humans are suffering the same fate.

Prayer: Dear Lord, please help everyone to understand that every human being - every person – has an equal right to life, including preborn children. Help them to realize that the fact that a preborn child is tiny, less developed, in the womb rather than out in the world, and dependent on someone to survive, does not deny them their humanity or personhood. Help every woman tempted or being coerced to abort stay strong in her belief that her baby deserves to live, and find the help she needs to deal with the problems she faces as she continues the pregnancy.

Action: Watch a video such as Baby Olivia (1), which shows fetal development, to see how children develop in the womb. To learn more about arguments about the personhood and equal rights of preborn children, see references 2 and 3. Share what you learn with others and send them links to the resources.

1. https://babyolivia.liveaction.org/

2. Short videos from Equal Rights Institute under "The Equal Rights Argument" in ERI's index. https://equalrightsinstitute.com/index/

3. https://www.str.org/w/the-sled-test