

Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas

(Prepared by the staff of the Office of Catholic Schools)

UNPLANNED STUDY GUIDE

Note: This Guide is meant to be a starting point in discussing the movie with older teens. We recognize that the discussion and activities suggested would require more than one session. We would welcome suggestions and comments, especially after it has been used with this audience. Please feel free to email Dr. Kathy O'Hara, Superintendent of Schools, at kohara@archkckcs.org.

1. What part of the movie had the most impact on you and why?

Possible answers:

- Abby's chemical abortion scene
- Young girl's hemorrhage after abortion
- POC Room at PP Clinic
- Suction abortion scene
- Abby's family's responses to her
- Sidewalk counselors – both types

Allow time for students to describe their feelings and reactions. Listen without interrupting. Be prepared to offer materials for Project Rachel; Project Joseph groups in the event that a student has had a personal experience that evokes unresolved emotions. Be prepared to stop for prayer, invoking Jesus, Mary, and Joseph for mercy, forgiveness, comfort, healing, peace, and hope.



2. The “Fence” scenes:

- Have you ever participated in sidewalk counseling?
- Have you seen the compassion of those “outside the fence” as portrayed in the movie?
- Have you seen the hateful “yellers?”
- Discuss your reactions to these approaches?
- Which do you think is more effective?
- Which do you think is more in keeping with how Jesus would respond? Where in scripture can you find support for your answer?

Provide Bibles for students to look up passages related to the Woman at the Well; Jesus and Matthew, the tax collector; the Roman Centurion; the Good Thief...

Allow time for prayerful reading of passages, possibly employing Lectio Divina.

3. Abortion clinic workers: “I feel like I’m doing God’s work here.”

- What do you think this worker meant when she said this?
- What would be other ways to “do God’s work” that would not result in abortion?
- Can a person truly be Catholic/Christian and condone the killing of *innocent* life?
- Discuss how abortion clinic workers and others can be misled and unaware of the true nature of abortion even when they are in the clinic. Refer to the line used in the movie promotion, “What she saw changed everything.” Also refer to the POC room scene where it is implied that not every worker is privy to what happens in that room.

4. Abby’s family: Abby’s family disagrees with her work yet stands by her.

- Why do you think they could do this?
- Could you do this?

5. The abortion procedure: Were you aware of the exact medical nature of abortion before you saw the movie? How has the movie changed your understanding of abortion?

Discuss how medical science has improved our knowledge of prenatal development and also how premature babies can be nursed to full health (i.e. “viable”) now and how that refutes the old pro-abortion argument that the baby really is not a baby.



6. Who are some saints who have had a similar conversion as Abby Johnson?

Possible answers: St. Paul; Woman at the well; Mary Magdalene; St. Matthew

Provide time for students to read the Scripture passages about these individuals and discuss other applications for today.

7. Do you think that women/men understand what abortion actually is? What would be ways to help improve understanding?

See #5 discussion.

8. What about the impact of abortion on other members of the baby's family besides the mother (father, grandparents)? Why do you think this is never discussed by abortion proponents?

Refer to the scene in which the father brings his daughter into the clinic for an abortion that resulted in her hemorrhaging and potential consequences of that, e.g. hysterectomy. Discuss the guilt a father would have knowing that he participated in an action that led to his daughter being unable to ever give birth to a child.

9. The movie refers to the murder of Dr. George Tiller. Why was the murder of Dr. Tiller wrong?

Explain how the movie, itself, shows the power of prayer, love, mercy, compassion, and patience can make a profound difference versus resorting to violence.

10. Abortion proponent rhetoric: In the original marketing of abortion by proponents, the phrase, "Every child a wanted child," was used. However, since abortion has been legal in the United States, the incidences of child abuse have risen dramatically. What do you think could be the cause of this? Where could you find research on this?

Beyond Google searches, direct students to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Pro-Life Committee and State-level Pro-life Committees.



11.What are some alternatives to abortion to ensuring that “every child is wanted?”

Possible answers: adoption; parent counseling and support (such as what is offered at pro-life pregnancy clinics); education regarding “Theology of the Body” and the beauty of God’s plan for sexual intimacy within the boundaries of a sacramental marriage.

Provide literature about adoption and counseling and have students read and discuss. Review Theology of the Body; have students research and discuss the writings of St. John Paul II.

12.Recently the state of New York passed legislation allowing for abortions to occur as the baby is being born. Other states are trying to pass similar legislation, including making it illegal to help a baby who survives an abortion attempt. Discuss why this type of legislation is immoral. What can be done to stop and/overturn this legislation?

Have students research statements from the USCCB Pro-Life committee.

13.What can you do to help?

Possible answers: advocacy (civic; peer-to-peer); volunteering (pro-life clubs; pregnancy centers); personal behavior (living a chaste lifestyle)

Have students discuss how Abby’s risky choices as a college student and with her first marriage led to her decisions to have both abortions. Have students discuss other risky behaviors that can lead to unintended consequences and how to avoid compromising situations.



14.Voting dilemma for some Catholics: There are some Catholics who say, “I personally am against abortion, but I am also against the death penalty, so I don’t know who to vote for.” Others say, “I’m personally against abortion, but I don’t think I should impose my beliefs on others?” How would you advise someone who mentioned these thoughts to you?

Explain that the Catholic Church stands against both abortion and the death penalty, but distinguishes between the taking of innocent life vs the taking of life as punishment for severe crimes against humanity. Discuss the logical similarity between personal choice and other forms of murder (i.e. “I personally would not murder anyone, but I don’t think I should impose my belief on others”) and the fact that we have laws against other forms of murder, including the fact that if a pregnant woman is murdered, the perpetrator is charged with 2 murders. Have students look up and discuss the teachings of the Church in the Catechism of the Catholic Church on capital punishment and abortion.

15.Back to the Movie: What is one word/phrase you would use to describe the movie/the impact it had on you?

16.Would you recommend this movie to others? Why?

