

Appendix B

Teaching the *Continuum of Life*

Let's look at this *Continuum of Life* banner. (*Explain that LIFE is a "continuum." It starts as a single cell and continues.*) These pictures represent a person's life from beginning until old age. We can learn a lot from this banner about God's perfect plan for how human beings begin and grow.

As you see on this banner, at the different stages of life we are called by different names. (*Point to the stage of LIFE your students are in.*) Right now you are at this stage and people may call you a _____. When you began, you were called a single cell. Then you were called an embryo, then a fetus. After your BIRTH day you were called a newborn, then an infant, a toddler, then a child. Teenager is what we call people who are between a child and an adult--they are in their "teen" years. You all know people who are young adults, adults (your parents) and senior citizens (your grandparents). Just because a person is called by these names **does not change who they are.**

We are looking at the life of this girl represented at all stages. We could have a banner of anyone in this room if we had all these pictures of you. This is how **all** of us grow from when we begin until the end of our life on earth.

(Point to the picture of each stage of life as you discuss it with your students.)

She started out as a SINGLE CELL. Everyone starts out as a single cell--no bigger than a pinhead. Within that single cell, that we all once were, is all that a person will ever be. Within that single cell is whether this human being is a boy or a girl, whether she has blue, green or brown eyes, whether her hair is straight or curly and whether or not she has freckles. At this point she may not **look** like a human being, but she is. As a matter of fact, if you look at this banner you can see that the way a person **looks** changes throughout life. (*In one picture there is no hair, in another there is. In one picture the baby is only a little thing and then she grows to be pretty tall, etc.*)

It is important to understand that a person does not **come from** a single cell--no, each of us **was** a single cell, just like this! From that first moment of life, when this girl was a single cell, she was a unique individual--**one that has never been before and never will be again.**

(Older students should be told that this is an important concept for anyone considering an abortion. An expectant mother may say that she is not yet ready for a baby. What she needs to understand is that growing inside her is a unique individual who has only this one chance for life. If the mother chooses abortion, she will never have another chance to be a mother to this child. Her next pregnancy will be a different person, not the same person at a different time. If she chooses abortion, this child will be dead and her next "pregnancy" will be a different person, another unique individual.)

Beginning with the single cell nothing will be added to this new being except food and oxygen. This newly formed human being does not stay a single cell for very long. Within a few hours, the single cell divides into two, and then continues to divide in this manner. By the end of

the first week, the new human person consists of several hundred cells. This is how a person grows and develops.

After she is no longer a single cell, she is called an EMBRYO. Now the organs start to form. After only 18 days the heart starts to beat and doesn't stop until that person dies. Feel your heartbeat--that is the same heartbeat that started when you were just a tiny thing only 18 days old! Then the arms and legs start to form. These arms and legs did not "float" down and attach to the body. No, everything that was needed for the arms and legs to grow was within that single cell, but they just needed time to grow. It's the same as when you plant a seed. Within that seed is everything that is needed for the stem, leaves, and flower to grow; it just needs time.

This little one is about 12 weeks old and is now called a FETUS--The unborn baby continues to grow inside her mom. She lives and grows inside her mother, but she is NOT a part of her body. She has her own heartbeat (the mother does not have two hearts) and even her own blood supply (maybe even a different blood type than the mom). Look at how beautiful she is. She has the fingerprints that she will have for the rest of her life. She moves around inside her mom, and even has certain times when she is awake and asleep.

(Point to next Fetus--20 weeks)--As the baby continues to grow, she is being prepared to live outside of her mother. She grows fingernails and hair. This baby can even get the hiccups and cry. Just a little bit longer, and she will be born. Does this baby look the same as she did when she was a single cell? No, but nothing has really changed about this person except that she has grown.

Once a person is born, we call them a NEWBORN--This baby has just been born--she has had her "birth" day. She is no longer living inside her mother, but we can see how much she looks just like she did at 20 weeks, when she was called a fetus--the only difference is her size. She weighs a little more, but she is the same person she has been since the beginning. Now her mother and father can hold her and put some clothes on her😊!! She has the same eyes, nose, arms, legs and heartbeat as she had back in these other stages, but she now lives in a different place. She still gets the hiccups! As you all know, little newborn babies can't do much for themselves. This little girl can't feed herself or anything. Just as before she was born, she still needs her mother (or someone) to do everything for her.

We call this older baby an INFANT. This baby has grown some. She can do a few more things now. Look how her hair has grown. She can sit up by herself now. She looks a lot different than she did back here when she was a fetus doesn't she? But she is the same person, she has only grown.

When the infant grows old enough to start walking around we call her a TODDLER. This little girl looks different, doesn't she? She has more pretty hair. She has grown, so she is able to do many more things than she could when she was a newborn or when she was inside her mother. She can sit up and walk and probably even talk.

When she is older than a toddler, people call her a CHILD. At this age, the little girl can do many things now. She is learning to do a lot of things.

Once she gets to her "teen" years she is called a TEENAGER. When the girl is a teenager, she looks more like a grown up than a little girl. She has gotten taller. She can do many things on her own now. She might even be able to drive a car. The things that she is learning to do now are preparing her for when she is "all grown up."

This YOUNG ADULT is probably in her 20's. As a young adult, this girl is now probably as tall as she is going to be. She really has grown throughout the years. She can live by herself, and can do many things that she hasn't been able to do before. As an adult she doesn't remember some of the things that happened to her when she was a toddler because it was so long ago. She is the same person as she was as a toddler, but she's had time to grow a lot since then.

As she goes into her 30's she is simply called an ADULT. At this point, the woman probably has children of her own. She still has those beautiful eyes and smile, but you can tell that she is a little older now. She looks a little like she did as a young adult, but she looks nothing like she did when she was a fetus or a single cell, and yet, she is the same person.

We call elderly people SENIOR CITIZENS. This is sometimes called "old age." Here she is at old age. She no longer has the beautiful long hair, but she still has her wonderful smile. Her heart that started beating a long time ago, when she was an embryo, is still beating today. **She is at a point in life where she may need some extra help from other people.** She may not be able to do many of the things that she could when she was a teenager or a young adult, but she is still the same person she was when she started out as a single cell. She has come a long way and has grown and learned many things.

As we look back over this *Continuum of Life* it is so clear that from the very beginning of life there is a unique individual -- one that never has been before and never will be again. How special and how wonderful God has made each person!