

**Tennessee Right to Life**  
**SANCTITY OF LIFE CURRICULUM**  
**GRADE 4-WEEK 1**  
**TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS ARIGHT**

**PERSPECTIVE FOR THE TEACHER**

From kindergarten until now, the emphasis of this curriculum has been on the preciousness of God’s gift of Life. This week you will discuss the concept of death with your students. Death is a part of our lives, and it is important for your students to have a godly understanding of death to build upon as you present the concept of murder to them next week. In fifth grade we will define and briefly discuss abortion. We begin by using the *Continuum of Life* banner, which was first used in grade one. Be sure to emphasize the use of the correct terms for each stage of life since pro-abortionists have appropriated these terms and use them to dehumanize the pre-born child.

With this *Continuum*, you will also reinforce the truths that life begins long before birth that God is the giver of life, and that death can occur at any time along the continuum of life. Students will have an opportunity to share their experiences of losing a loved one, and you will help them to understand that life is one of our greatest gifts from God, no matter how long or short it may be. Each human life is unique and precious, and makes wonderful contributions to others simply because it was created in the image of God. It is not necessary for a life to **do** anything; just “being” in the image of God makes a contribution to the world. To illustrate this, you will share the story of Baby Hope. All of this is in stark contrast to the culture of death, which holds that some lives, because they are not wanted, or because they don’t possess a “quality” sufficient to meet their standards, are not valued, and do not even have the right to protection under the law.

You will talk with your students about natural and accidental death and point out that these occur in God’s own time. You will show them that this kind of death is part of the Continuum of Life - another step on our journey to God. Some time will be spent using an obituary, with special emphasis on that person’s unique contributions to the world.

**SCRIPTURE: Memory verse:** *“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart for a special work.”*

Jeremiah 1:5 (International Children’s Bible)

**LESSON GOALS:**

- To discuss and name the stages of life, both before and after birth
- To emphasize that God knows us and loves us even before we are born, and that He has a plan for each of our lives
- To briefly discuss death, and give them an opportunity to share their perceptions
- To help the students recognize that each life has been created by God and is a unique, unrepeatable gift which must be respected and protected
- To help them understand that each life makes important contributions to others, no matter

how long or short that life may be

- To show the students that, though we are created by God for good works, our lives are precious simply because we have been made in His image

#### THIS LESSON SHOULD HELP STUDENTS:

- Understand that they are called by different names during the different stages of life.
- Realize how precious their lives are to God at every stage of life.
- Value the important contributions others have made to their lives.
- Understand that death is a part of the continuum of life and that it leads to eternal life with God.
- Recognize that the worth of each individual does not depend on any works or accomplishments, but on their very existence as a being created in the image of God.

#### VISUALS/SPECIAL PREPARATIONS:

- The *Continuum of Life* banner, with the name of each stage covered
- Obituary study (Choose one from your local newspaper, online or one you have from a loved one)
- *Baby Hope* story (in the lesson and in Appendix D)
- Stages of life description (in the lesson and in Appendix B)
- The memory verse written on the board: Jeremiah 1:5 “*Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I set you apart for a special work.*”

#### TAKE HOME MATERIALS:

- *Teach Us* worksheet
- *Baby Hope* story (Appendix D)

### TEACHING THE LESSON

#### A. Introduction

*(Have the Continuum of Life banner prominently displayed at the front of the classroom with the names of the stages covered.)*

##### Opening Prayer

Thank You, Father, for the gift of life and all the good things that You have created for us to do. Thank You for these students, each one blessed by You with certain gifts and talents to do special work here on Earth. Help us to learn more about this gift of life as we study today. Help us to make good use of this gift for Your honor and glory. Amen

#### B. Discussion

##### 1. The Stages of Life

I would like you to notice the large banner here at the front of the room. This banner shows some of the many stages of life each person may go through. It is called the *Continuum of Life*. Do you know what we mean by that? *(Allow a little time for sharing.)* It simply means that

life begins and continues from one stage to another all through life. These pictures represent all the different stages of one person's life. Did you know that we call a person by different names at different stages of life? What stage of life do you think this is? (*Point to the "Child" stage and let the children give you an answer. Tell them what the name of that stage is - infant or toddler. Then point to the other post-birth pictures and tell them the names we use for each one.*) Do you know when your life began? You were alive long before you were born. In fact you began your life as a single tiny cell.

Even then, when you were just a single cell, God knew you and loved you. In the Bible we read in Jeremiah 1:5, that God said, "*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born, I set you apart for a special work.*" (*Using the text below, describe the various stages of life before birth, while pointing to those stages on the banner. Uncover the name of each stage as you discuss, and have the students repeat the name.*)

- Frame 1:** Now let's see what you looked like when you were just a single cell, here on the *Continuum of Life*. You were so small that you could only be seen with a microscope. But everything that you are today, right down to the color of your eyes and the curl of your hair, was all right there in that single cell.
- Frame 2:** After you grew for a while, you were called an **embryo**. This is what you looked like at only 8 weeks old. See how very tiny you were; but already your heart had been beating for more than a month, and your brain was beginning to work.
- Frame 3:** This is what you looked like at 12 weeks. Now you had a new name; you were called a **fetus**. You were only two inches long and weighed only one ounce, but you could make a fist and get hiccups. You were even already trying to suck your thumb!
- Frame 4:** Here is what you looked like at 20 weeks. You were still called a fetus, but you were much bigger. You could punch and kick and suck your thumb. You could swim and turn somersaults. Your mom could even feel you kicking. You could hear your mother's voice, but you could also hear sounds even adults wouldn't be able to hear. You weighed a whole pound and were almost 9 inches long. You were only halfway to the time when you would be ready to be born. You would be 38 weeks old by then and you would be about 20 inches long and weigh about seven pounds.

Here's what you looked like right after you were born, and even then you were called by a new name; you were a **newborn**. Then you continued to grow and soon you learned how to walk, and you were called a **toddler**. After a little while, you were old enough to go to school and everyone called you a **child**. Someday you will get to be 13 years old and everyone will say that you are a **teen**. By the time you are eighteen years old you will be called a **young adult**, then an adult and when you get much older you will be called a **senior citizen**. So you can see

that there are a lot of stages to our life and that we have different names at different stages. Are we still the same person? Yes, we are! Whether we are a single cell or an embryo or a fetus or a newborn or a toddler or a child or a teen or an adult or a senior, we are still the **same person at every stage**. And don't forget, at every stage God knows you and loves you. Let's say our Scripture verse together: "*Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born, I set you apart for a special work.*" This is our memory verse this week.

## 2. Death – Another “Part of Life”

We’ve been talking about all the stages of life, but we all know that people die. Do you know anyone who has died? *(Allow them to briefly share their experiences.)* How did you feel, when \_\_\_\_\_ died? We do feel sad when someone we love dies. Sometimes a person dies because they are very sick. That happens often when someone gets very old, but it can happen to younger people, too. Sometimes a person dies because of a bad accident. This can happen at any place along this *Continuum of Life*. Sometimes a person can die even before they are born, because something is very wrong in their bodies. This kind of death is called by a special name when it happens before a person is born. It is called a miscarriage. Death is a part of life and God decides how long each person’s life will be.

## 3. Everyone makes a contribution/everyone is precious in God’s eyes

No matter how long or short someone’s life may be, it is very precious to God, because He made each one of us, and He made each one of us to do special work. Each one of us has important work to do that no one else can do. Can you think of some important work that *(someone they mentioned above, who has died)* did in their life? *(Allow time for sharing, then use other examples to show them how important that person was--if it was a grandparent, point out that they themselves are part of the important work that their grandparent was sent by God to do. “If your grandmother had not been born, then you would never have been born either.” Take some time to share a contribution someone you know has made to your life, emphasizing that only they could have given that special gift to you.)*

## C. Class Activity

### 1. Obituary

Now we are going to look at something called an obituary. Does anyone know what an obituary is? It comes from a Latin word which means death, and it means a notice of someone’s death. It tells us about that person’s life. *(Hold up the enlarged copy of the obituary you will be using.)* This is an obituary for\_\_\_\_\_. You can see there is a picture of him/her right here next to the obituary. Let’s read what the obituary says about\_\_\_\_\_. *(Have students take turns coming up to reading a portion of the obituary. After you’ve read it, ask your students to tell you something that this person did during their life - was married, had several children, worked as a \_\_\_\_\_, served in the military, fought in a war, flew a plane, etc. Help the students to recognize how many important things this person contributed during their life. Make this person come alive for them.)* Now \_\_\_\_\_ lived a long life and did many interesting things, but I want to tell you a story of someone who lived a very short life. Her name was Hope and this is the Story of Baby Hope:

### 2. Baby Hope

Before Baby Hope was born, while she was still growing inside her mother’s body, the doctor discovered that there was something very wrong with her. He told her mom and dad that Baby Hope was very sick and that she would not live very long. He said that she might even die before she was born. Baby Hope’s mother and father were very sad, so was her big sister, Nicole. They cried for a long time, and they wondered when Baby Hope would die. Baby Hope did not die before she was born. On a pretty spring day, Baby Hope was born right here at the

University of Tennessee Hospital. She was very sick, just as the doctor had said, and they were sure that she would not live for more than a few days. Her mom and dad loved her and held her and rocked her. The doctors and nurses took special care of her, and Baby Hope lived. Her sister Nicole was allowed to come to the hospital to see her new baby sister, and Nicole loved Baby Hope, too.

The days passed and the doctors could not understand how a baby as sick as little Hope could live so long. Finally they let Hope's parents take her home. First, her parents had to learn the special ways to take care of a baby who was so sick, but they paid careful attention and learned everything they needed to know. When they brought her home, they had a lot of work to do to take care of her, but everyone in the family helped, even Hope's grandfather. They took her with them everywhere they went: to the grocery store, to church, to soccer games. Everywhere they went, people knew that little Baby Hope was so sick and that she might not live very long. Lots of people prayed for her and her family, and lots of people helped.

Her mom said that even though Baby Hope could not see, she would listen for her father's voice when he came home from work, and sometimes she would smile. She loved to be held by her big sister. Her father said that everywhere she went, Baby Hope seemed to fill people with love. As the weeks went by, little Hope did get sicker and sicker. She didn't eat as much and it became harder and harder for her to breathe. One night, while her mother was holding her, she died. Everyone was very sad that Hope had died, but everyone was very happy that little Baby Hope had lived even for just a little while.

Doctors learned many things from taking care of Baby Hope that will help other children someday. Many people who knew Baby Hope had learned how to be kind and loving because of her. After Hope died, her mother found some friends to help her make special little caps for other sick babies. Sometimes her mother would visit other parents whose babies were very sick to help them. All the people who knew Baby Hope's family and saw how much they cared for her, began to care for their families with even more love. Baby Hope lived much longer than the doctors thought she would; still she lived only 59 days. She had a very short life, but she did a lot of important work in that very short life. God had a very special plan for her. No one who hears her story will ever forget Baby Hope.

*(After the story, ask the children if they remember how long Baby Hope lived.)* That was certainly a very short life, because she was so very sick. Even though her life was very short, and she couldn't "do" anything, can you think of something that Baby Hope contributed to the lives of other people? *(Allow the students to give you their insights about Baby Hope. If the students cannot articulate what Baby Hope's contributions were, you can say: )* Baby Hope only lived 59 days, and she couldn't really do anything at all, but just because she lived, doctors know much more about helping families who have a child with this condition. Because of Baby Hope, her mother has helped many other families with sick babies. Because of Baby Hope, her mother and many others now make the little caps that are so important for babies born with this condition. In her short handicapped life, Baby Hope accomplished many important things. Her life gave many other people an opportunity to grow in kindness and care for others. We can see that God had a special plan for Baby Hope.

## **D. Closing**

### **1. Summary**

Today we learned that each person, no matter how long or how short their life may be, makes important contributions to the world; contributions that only they could make. Each person is very precious to God, even the tiniest baby, even very sick babies, even babies before they are born, not because of the work they do, but just because they have been made by God.

Now let's take a minute to think about all the things we learned today:

- There are many different stages in our lives and we are called different things at different stages. How many stages can you name?
- We started out as a single cell, and we looked very different at different stages, but it's still us at every stage.
- We are precious at every stage, just because we are made by God.
- God knows us and loves us at every stage—even before we were born.
- Death can happen because of accidents or illness and it makes us feel sad, but no matter how long or short a life might be, God has some special work for each person to do.

### **2. Take Home Assignment**

Here is a special project (worksheet) for you to do with your parents. You will have a chance to talk with them about the contributions you are already making. Be sure to bring it back next week.

### **3. Closing Prayer**

Father, we thank You for the gift of life, and for the special work You have created for each one of us to do. Thank You for all of those who have died and for all the things they have done to help the world. Help us to care for people in all stages of life, because we know they are precious to You, and have important contributions to make to our world. Amen

Remember to pass out the Take Home Packets.