

Tennessee Right to Life
SANCTITY OF LIFE CURRICULUM
Grade 5 - Week 1
PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT

PERSPECTIVE FOR THE TEACHER

The Ten Commandments are familiar to most fifth graders. Telling the truth, not stealing, and honoring their parents may occupy their thoughts. The commandment, “you shall not kill” (do not commit murder) is probably not a subject on their minds. They do know the story of Cain and Abel, however, and that is where you will begin to lay a foundation in their lives using the basic truths of the Scriptures concerning the sanctity of life, and how murder defies that sanctity. To these you will add the amazing facts of prenatal development, so that your students can be equipped with the wisdom of knowing God’s value of life at every stage of life.

In Grade 3 of this curriculum, we introduced the concept of the continuum of life, talking about all the stages of a person’s life, from its beginning as a single cell through to old age. In Grade 4, we discussed the preciousness of life at all stages and talked about death and murder. Now, we will connect these truths, as we introduce, for the first time the word, “abortion.” Most of your students have probably heard the phrase, “Sanctity of Life,” together with the word, abortion, in a sermon by their pastor. Most pastors teach on this topic in January, because this is the month we remember the *Roe vs. Wade* Supreme Court decision, which made abortion legal in our country for all nine months of pregnancy.

Some of your students may have an understanding of what abortion is while others may have misconceptions. Through the use of the **Fetal Models (Appendix A)** and **The Continuum of Life (Appendix B)**, you will gently help them understand that abortion is the taking of a precious human life. It is an act that grieves God and robs the world of a unique, one-of-a-kind, individual. They will learn that God calls us to protect life, and that they can work toward ending abortion, through prayer.

The Take Home Assignment will give the students the opportunity to discuss with their parents the details of their own birth or adoption, and bring them to a deeper appreciation of their own preciousness in God’s plan. We will also study Scriptures that will reinforce for them their value to God and God’s standard to protect life. This will enable them to see clearly the contrast between God’s life-giving love, and the tragedy that is abortion.

Please encourage discussion and interaction with your class! The questions asked in the lesson are not intended to be rhetorical, but intended to encourage student responses so they will begin to articulate what being pro-life means.

SCRIPTURE:

Exodus 20:13

Genesis 4: 8-14

Exodus 20:1

Psalms 139:13-15

Memory Verse – *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”* Ephesians 2:10 (NASB)

LESSON GOALS:

- To review the developmental facts of life before birth
- To make clear that the baby is the same person at the single cell stage and at every stage of life as visually represented on the *Continuum* banner
- To give a limited, age appropriate, definition of abortion
- To help them understand the power of their prayer for those in danger of abortion

THIS LESSON SHOULD HELP THE STUDENT:

- Understand that a “birth” day is the continuation of life which began long before birth.
- Begin to understand the tragedy of abortion.
- Realize that God has commanded that life be protected and valued. This is the positive expression of the Commandment, “you shall not kill.”

VISUALS/SPECIAL PREPARATION:

- Fetal Models (Appendix A)
- The Memory verse written on the board so it can be read by the students
- A Bible with Psalm 139, and Ephesians 2:10 marked
- *The Continuum of Life* banner (Appendix B)

TAKE HOME MATERIALS:

- *We Are His Workmanship* worksheet
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TEACHING THE LESSON

A. Introduction**1. Opening Prayer**

Pray for the class, asking for wisdom and understanding as the class learns about the difference between the sanctity of life and death. Thank God for the life He has given each of your students and thank Him for how He wants to use each of them to accomplish His purposes.

B. Class Activity**1. Before Your Birth Day**

Do you remember what it was like before you were born? (*Give children time to respond.*) When God made us He already knew us, even before we were born. Though we don't remember life before we were born, we know from the Scriptures how important we were, even then. Let's read a verse that shows how precious we are to God: Psalms 139:13-15. (*It's important that the children see you going to God's word, so read this from the Bible or appoint a student to read it.*)

Did you know that you were “knit” in your mother's womb, created individually by God? What does it mean to be “knit together?” (*Allow some discussion, then summarize.*) We can say it means that we were each carefully made by God. There is no other person like you in the whole world, you are the only “you” that has ever been and ever will be. You are precious in His sight! Like a craftsman, God's work to create you was done with skill. Modern day technology can now show us the wonder of how you came to be. This banner is called the *Continuum of Life* because it shows many stages of one person's life, from the beginning continuing all the way to old age.

The first picture shows how your life began as a single cell. (*Point to the Continuum*) This single cell is the first picture of this person. It is what you once looked like; you did not come from a single cell; you were a single cell. Everything you are today, your hair, eyes, skin, toes, and fingers, was part of you then. You just needed time and nourishment to develop into what you look like today. And even today, you continue to grow and change. You don't look like you did when you were a single cell, or even what you looked like when you were a newborn. (*Point to newborn stage on Continuum.*) If you look at your school picture from last year, you can see how you've changed. This banner shows how this little girl grew and changed, little by little through all the stages of her life, beginning when she was just a single cell. As she got bigger, she was called an embryo. (*Point or allow your students to go up to the Continuum and point to the embryo stage.*) Then she grew even more, and she was called a fetus, which means “little one” in Latin. (*Point to the first fetal picture.*) She was called a fetus for a long time-nearly six whole months, and all the while she was

growing bigger and bigger. (*Point to second fetal picture on Continuum.*) Here she was 20 weeks old. She still had nearly twenty more weeks to grow before she was ready for the next stage. That stage began with her “birth” day, and this is what she looked like on her birthday. (*Point to newborn stage on Continuum.*)

2. All the Stages and Ages

Do you have pictures of what you looked like on the day you were born? Did you look like you do today? (*Allow time to share briefly.*) Even though you don’t look the same, are you still the same person you were when you were born? Is that the same heart beating in your chest, that was beating way back here when you were just 18 or 19 days old? (*Point to the first fetal picture which is four weeks, actually two weeks older than they were when their hearts began to beat.*) This little one didn’t stop growing when she was born either; she grew bigger and stronger, and everyone called her a baby. (*Point to the baby stage on Continuum.*) Then she started to walk, and she was called a toddler. (*Point to the toddler stage on Continuum.*) Soon she was big enough to go to school and learn to play the violin. Then she was called child. (*Point to the child stage on the Continuum.*) In just a few years, she was called a teen, and she was big enough to learn how to drive a car. (*Have them continue to point out the various stages as you continue.*) Here she is a young adult, then she became a mom, and as she got older, she became a grandmother.

At every stage, she looked different, she could do different things, she was called by different names, and she had special work to do that God planned for her when He created her as a single little cell. That’s exactly what our Scripture verse tells us! Let’s read and begin to memorize these wonderful words of God. (*Again, let the students see you finding your truth in His word; after reading it refer them to the verse written on the board, and have them say it with you a couple of times to let the amazing meaning of it sink in.*) “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (NASB)

1. The Fetal Models

The Continuum banner shows just some of the stages we went through before we were born, but there are many more things we can learn about that special time. In fact doctors know so many things about how God knit us together before we were born, that they have created models of exactly what we looked like during those stages. We call them “fetal models.” What did we say fetus means? (*little one*) So let’s look at these “little ones” and see the work God gave us to do before we were even born:

The first model represents a human embryo at 4 weeks: You were called an embryo when you were this age. You were only 4 weeks old. See how very tiny you were; but already your heart had been beating since you were 18 days old, and your brain was beginning to work.

The second model represents a human embryo at 6 weeks: This is what you looked like at six weeks. Now you were still called an embryo. You were only one inch long and weighed only one gram, but you could make a fist, get hiccups; you were already trying to suck your thumb!

The third model represents a human fetus at 10 weeks: Here you were at 10 weeks. Now you were called a fetus, which means “little one”. At this age you weighed a whole ounce and were 2 inches long. You were very active and could kick your little feet! Your little toes, and fingers, and fingerprints are the same toes and fingers and fingerprints that you have today, but they are much bigger now.

The fourth model represents a fetus at 14 weeks: This is what you looked like when you were a 14 week old fetus. That’s almost four months old. You were 5 to 8 inches long and weighed about half a pound. You could swim and turn somersaults. Your mom could even feel you kicking.

The fifth model represents a fetus at 18 weeks: Here is what you looked like at 18 weeks. You could punch and kick and suck your thumb. 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.

(Now you can take a few minutes and let the children hold the removable models and pass them around the room. Let them see your awe at the amazing gift of life before birth)

C. Class Discussion

1. The “Birth” Day

What do we call the day on which the baby is born? (*birthday*) And can you find that day on the Continuum? (*Have one of them point out the “newborn” picture.*) That is one special day in everyone’s life isn’t it? But it isn’t the first day of your life, is it? When did your life really begin? (*Have the students point that out on the Continuum- the single cell.*) That’s right, your life began way back there when you were just a single cell. You were alive for nine months before you were born, but your birthday still marks a very special day. Some cultures even calculate their age by including those months before birth.

What was the biggest change that takes place on the day you were born? (*You began to live in a new place-outside your mother’s womb.*) Even though you had been alive for a long time, this was the first day that everyone got to really see and hold you. It was a very exciting and joyful time for everyone who had been waiting for you to be born, but **it was not the first day of your life**. It was just the day that you began to live outside your mother’s body. Still that was such a special occasion that we celebrate our birthdays every year, don’t we? (*Let them share how they like to celebrate their birthdays.*)

2. Babies who have no birthday

We also need to talk about some babies who are never born. These babies die before they can be born. They never have a birthday. This is a very sad thing. Sometimes this happens because something is seriously wrong with the baby, and doctors have no way to help. When a baby dies in this way, we call it a “miscarriage.” Even though the baby was never born, those who were waiting for the baby are very sad, because they know that that little one was alive and is now dead.

Some other babies die for a different reason. When a baby is deliberately killed before he or she can be born, it is called an abortion. You may have heard your pastor speak about abortion during his sermon on Sanctity of Life Sunday in January. On this Sunday, many Christians remember a sad day in our country when abortion was made legal. Since 1973, little babies are not protected by our laws when they are in the single cell or an embryo or fetus stage (*Indicate all the stages of life before birth on the Continuum.*) If a baby is killed during any of these stages, it is **legal**. But after this stage (*Indicate the Newborn frame.*) the law says that the deliberate killing of this baby is a crime. Now what is the difference between these two babies? (*Where they are living*)

Do you remember the Scripture story of Cain and Abel? (*Genesis 4: 8-14*) When Cain killed Abel, what did we call that sin? (Murder) We have already learned how important we are to God, from when we were just a tiny single cell. We know that every person is made in the image of God, and we have read in the Bible how God knew us and loved us when He “knit us together” in our mother’s womb. So, when a baby is deliberately killed before birth, it is murder. Exodus 20:13 tells us that murder is against God’s commandments. Abortion takes the life of a person who will never be again, a person made by God in His image. A person, “*created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand,*” just as our memory verse says. Imagine all that has been lost because of abortion. Perhaps one of these little ones would have discovered a cure for AIDS or cancer. Maybe one would have found a way to end world hunger, or one of them might have become your best friend. It is a very terrible thing to think about, and it is a great tragedy that abortion is legal in America. Sometimes a good country like America, can have bad laws. There are many of God’s people working to change the law and end abortion, because they know that God calls His people to a higher law to protect all human life. It is important that we pray everyday for an end to the crime of abortion, and that all unborn babies will be protected by our laws.

D. Closing**1. Summary**

- We have learned more today about how precious we are to God.
- We saw how perfectly He “knit” us together before we were born.
- We learned that we were called “embryo” and “fetus” during the stages of our life before birth, and that we have many different names as we grow.
- We saw the *Continuum of Life*, showing how one little girl grew from a single cell, through all the different stages of life.
- We now understand that our birthday is not the first day of our life, just one special day on the continuum of our lives.
- We also learned that some babies never have a birthday because of abortion, which is legal in our country.

2. Take Home Assignment

This week you will have a chance to talk with your parents about what you have learned. Then you will learn more about what they remember about you before you were born. Be sure to work on our memory verse with you parents, too.

3. Closing Prayer

Does it make you sad to hear about abortion? It *is* a very sad thing, and it’s alright to be sad or even mad about it. God gives us these feelings, and He wants us to use them to help us remember to always pray for an end to abortion. Before we leave today, let’s take some time to pray:

“Heavenly Father, we thank You for life! You have given each of us a wonderful gift and a plan for our lives. You have created good works for us to accomplish and the opportunity to praise Your Name every day. We pray for all unborn babies and their mothers, and we ask that abortion be removed from our land. Please help those who are working to end abortion, and help us to remember to pray always for those in danger of abortion. Amen”

Remember to pass out the Take Home Packets.