

“In The Name of Choice”

Discussion Guide

The Goal: The primary goal of these group discussions is a deeper understanding of why women feel trapped or forced into abortion. The secondary goal is an exploration of how I can help women feel like they can choose what they desire, which is usually to have the baby. The tertiary goal is repentance in how I have been pre-judging the motivation of these women, or negligent to the problems of these women in my community.

Discussion Leader: The priest or someone designated by the priest should lead the discussion.

Summary: The questions below each episode title are “starter” questions to get the discussion going. Here are some possible ways to respond if you get stuck or the discussion stalls. These responses can be used in any order.

- Clarification: seeking to understand
 - “I think you are saying (and then repeat what they said in your own words)”
- Open-Ended: asking for more information
 - “Can you tell me more about that experience?”
- Redirect: including others
 - “Kathy is upset by the extremism in episode 1. Did that bother anyone else?”
- Affirmation: what to say when the pain is obvious
 - “That seems painful. Thank you for sharing with us.”

Episode One “Extremism”

*“Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either -- but right through every human heart” Alexander Solzhenitsyn “The Gulag Archipelago”
1974*

What did you think of seeing extremism on both sides of the abortion issue?

How did it feel watching that episode?

How did it feel seeing the protestors with pictures of aborted fetuses?

Does anyone disagree with Hayde FitzPatrick’s claim that society almost falls silent and does not help pregnant women who feel trapped?

What do you think of violence against abortion providers and clinics?

Episode Two “Kansas”

“Everybody said they’d be there for me if I had the abortion. Nobody said they’d be there for me if I had the baby.” Anonymous

What do you think about women not having a support network when pregnant?

How did it feel when Gabrielle talked about the pregnant middle schooler?

How did it feel hearing about the 50 high schoolers getting pregnant a year at East High School?

Does anyone disagree with Joan who said protesting is not impacting the change we want to see?

What do you think about Fr. Paul talking about identifying a gap in the community needs and serving there?

Episode Three “Trapped”

“You say that So-and-so is an evil-doer and may he burn in hell fire. But I ask you – supposing God were to give you a fair place in paradise, and you saw burning the fire the man on whom you had wished the tortures of hell, even then would you really not feel pity for him, whoever he might be, an enemy of the Church even? Or is it that you have a heart of steel? But there is no place for steel in paradise. Paradise has need of humility and the love of Christ, which pities all men.” St. Silouan the Athonite

How did it feel seeing Xenia’s response to the “abortion is murder” and other posters?

What did you think about none of the abortion providers responding for interviews?

How did it feel hearing Xenia’s story about the father, drug addiction, and instability?

Does anyone disagree with Fr. Turbo about brushing away the shame?

What did you think about Betsy saying their referrals are from Planned Parenthood?

Episode Four “Home”

“Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” Matthew 8:20

How did it feel when the mom said love doesn’t pay the bills?

What did you think about Laura saying that adoption is the mom’s decision?

Does anyone disagree with Fr. Herman saying that the help has to be unconditional?

How did it feel when one of the moms talked about how her baby would have been seven years old?

What do you think about having a local maternity house sponsored by the Orthodox Church?

Episode Five “Support”

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

How did it feel when the man was told he was going to hell?

What do you think about having a large baby shower in our community?

Does anyone disagree with Nicole about not influencing moms on their decision to parent?

How did it feel when Xenia said everything shrinks down to this one narrow pathway?

What do you think about women feeling trapped into abortion?

Episode Six “Dallas”

“When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.” Matthew 9:2

What did you think about Paul when he talked about being indifferent and angry?

How does it feel for a young girl to find out she is pregnant and how that will shame her parents?

What did you think about Rebekah saying that abortion can seem compassionate for the child(ren) they already have?

Did you disagree when Allan talked about the problem of forced abortion?

How did it feel when Paul talked about wanting to help the woman make an informed decision?

Episode Seven “Choosing”

“And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7

How can we help women feel like they have a choice?

What did you think of Morgan’s story and the safe haven alliance?

What do you think the importance is of having a local maternity house for mothers in need?

How did it feel to hear Molly’s story of being pushed into an abortion?

Do you disagree when Mary said the healing journey involves having a choice?

Episode Eight “Cleveland”

*“A women doesn’t choose an abortion like she would choose to have an ice cream cone or a Porsche. It’s not that kind of choice. A woman chooses to have an abortion like an animal caught in a trap chooses to chew off its own leg.”
Frederica Mathewes-Green*

What did you think of Carmella saying there are women who do not understand how intimacy produces children?

How did it feel when Dr. Moleski said how we react to someone’s pregnancy affects their decision?

What do you think is involved in helping women make an informed decision?

Did you disagree with Dr. Moleski when she said, “Don’t tell women not to have an abortion?”

How did it feel when Diane said she would not know what to say if her daughter was raped?

Episode Nine “Presence”

“Everybody said they’d be there for me if I had an abortion, but nobody said they’d be there for me if I had the baby” Anonymous

What did you think about Xenia’s courage to tell her story and help other women?

How did it feel when Xenia talked about not knowing her child for the rest of her life? That she didn’t realize that the choice would be eternal?

Did you disagree with Frederica when she said the number one factor that would have changed someone’s decision was if someone had stood by the mother?

What did you think about Jor-El saying that an abortion does not turn back time?

How did it feel when Frederica shared the frustration of the abortion doctor who said, “I didn’t go into this line of work so women wouldn’t have a choice”?