

Leaders 4Life – October 2023

A newsletter from Y4Life

CALVARY: A Life-Affirming Approach

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life

Sometimes it's easy to be a Gospel-motivated voice For Life. You simply wait for God to open a door, and then you walk right through.

Here's a prime example: While exhibiting at a recent youth conference, participants stopped by the Y4Life booth to receive a stamp on their bingo sheets. To earn that stamp, they had to answer two questions:

"Is your life valuable?"

"If so, why?"

Youth overwhelmingly answered the first question confidently and in the affirmative. They knew their lives were valuable, and they were eager to confess it. Even better, most of them knew *why* their lives were valuable; they knew they were created by God Himself, and they rejoiced in that confession. Through guided, joy-filled discussion, youth discovered how each person of the Trinity gives them worth.

Though all of the interactions brought joy from the Lord, not all of them were easy. In fact, some conversations were heart wrenching. Like the young woman who hesitated when asked if her life was valuable and finally concluded, "Maybe, but probably not." Or the adult who stood at our table and stared at the babies. After finally building up the courage to hold one, she quickly choked up and had to walk away. And then there was the woman whose relative is pro-choice and who refuses to refer to the baby growing in her mother's womb as anything more than a clump of cells. God certainly opened doors in these moments, too; He provided opportunities to affirm life and help bear sorrow.

But sometimes God opens doors to paths we'd rather not travel, paths with life issues we weren't expecting, life issues we're sure we're really not ready for. Like hearing a close friend has terminal cancer. Or discovering a child has been diagnosed with a life-altering disability. Or sitting next to a woman on a plane who looks you straight in the eye and says, "I used to have a niece, but now I have a nephew. And my other nephew started saying he was a girl when he was three, so he transitioned early."

It's tempting to jump off the path, to just shut your eyes and hide from the issues. Weighed down by sin and death and brokenness in a fallen world, life issues can be heavy, and responding to them with a Gospel-motivated voice often means saying things that are both counter-cultural and unpopular. Yet ...

"God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control" (2 Timothy 1:7).

Yes, God's Word is pretty clear: We're called to speak the truth in love so that we might win our neighbor, and in so doing, bring him to Jesus.

"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love" (Ephesians 4:15-16).



There are lots of ways to do this, and I'd certainly encourage you to download the Y4Life brochure *Charitable Conversations: 8 Tips for Redirecting a Hostile Discussion* to discover some of the best approaches. (Find it at y4life.org/resources/education-resources). But for now, I'll offer an acronym that might come in handy as you engage in conversations about life. It's based on the word **CALVARY**. Each letter stands for a step you can take to uphold life.

Connect – Life issues are easiest to address when we connect to the person experiencing the life issue. Perhaps this connection is new—like sitting next to someone for a two-hour flight—or perhaps a life long friendship exists. Either way, connections are best built on kindness, graciousness, humility, and respect.

Ask – It's okay—good even—to ask about a person's views on an issue, how he or she is responding to or experiencing this life issue, or how this issue has affected his or her life. It's important to understand a person's experiences as well as the reason behind his or her views.

Listen – After asking a question, listen to the answer. Really listen. What is motivating his or her response? What has shaped his or her view? Is the individual motivated by feelings or logic?

Verify – Make sure those listening skills are sharp! Rephrase what you heard and say it back to the person you're speaking to. Be sure your perception of his or her reasoning is correct.

Affirm – Agree where you can. Admit that it would be difficult for a woman to raise a child on her own. Affirm that experiencing a terminal diagnosis will mean you need others to care for you. Express empathy for the individual struggling with gender confusion and brokenness.

Respond – Here's where all of your work to become educated on life issues comes into play. Use this opportunity to provide a life-affirming alternative to address the life issue at hand. This is where your Gospel-motivated voice shines for life!

Yoke – Like two oxen helping to bear the other's burden, your conversation and response should help ease the burden of the individual you're engaging in conversation. How can you help shoulder his or her burden? How can you help affirm his or her life into the future?

Through our vocations, both permanent and temporary, Christians are gifted opportunities to share the Gospel-motivated message that every life is valuable and in so doing, carry the light of Christ into dark places filled with sin and death. It's true, this work won't always be easy; there may be times when we wonder about the path God has placed us on. But we can be confident that we aren't traveling alone. Christ goes with us, and His grace is sufficient. Always.

Lions4Life Team Update

by Elizabeth Crawford

Faith Lutheran School, Plano, Texas, started its Y4Life Team in November 2022, and we have been working very hard behind the scenes to promote life!

Our first official activity as a team was participating in our school's Treat 'N' Feast fall festival. At our small booth, we gave away Life Savers® candy and bracelets to everyone who stopped by. There was a lot of interest from youth and adults alike, which was very exciting!

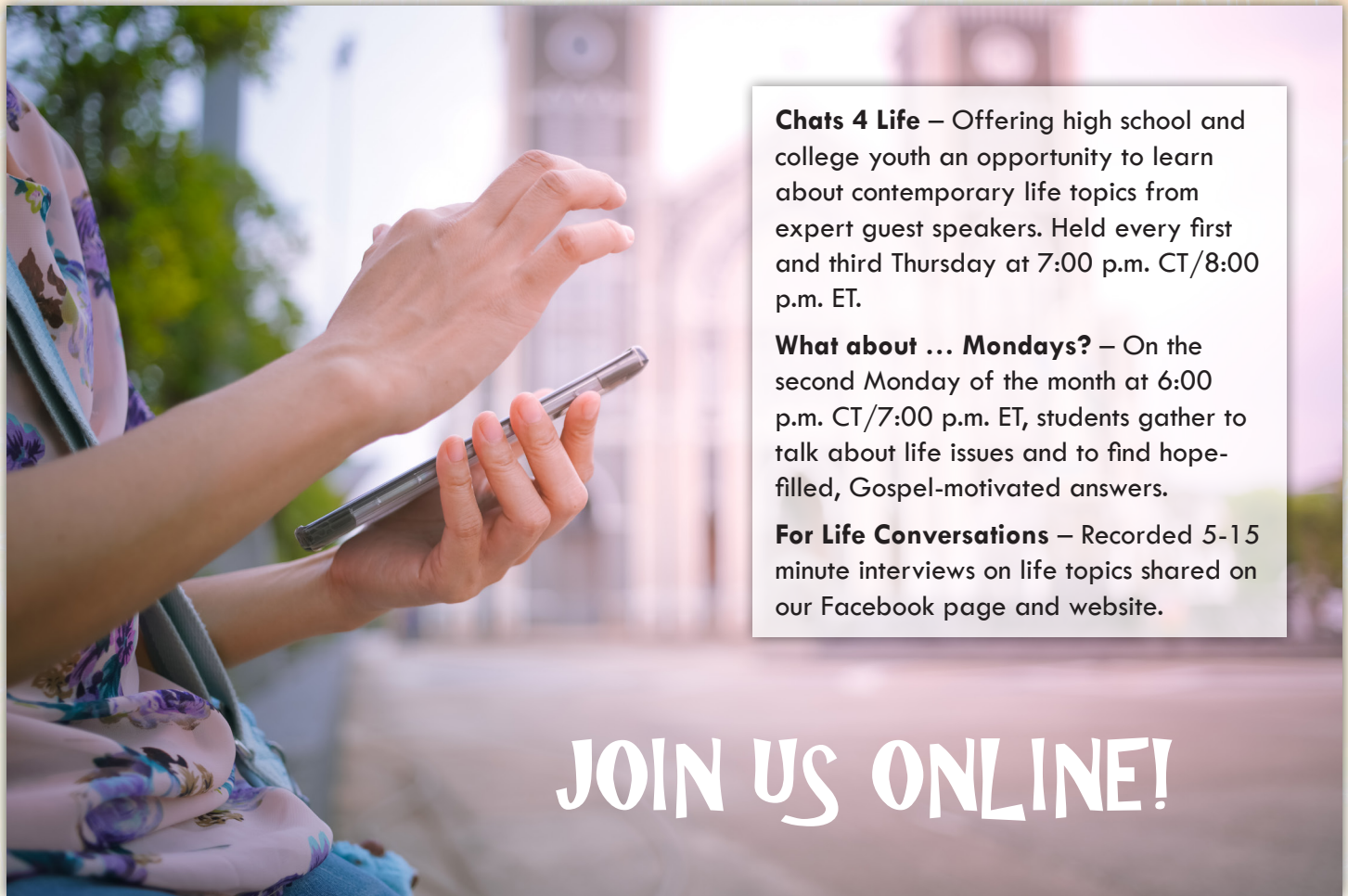
Our team also supported our school's Life Week in April through a "Baby Bottle Drive" for a local pregnancy resource clinic. We used the baby models that Y4Life gifted us and explained the different stages of life to students. All of the children, especially the younger ones, were fascinated by the baby models and asked many questions about how babies were born and how babies could fit in their mother's womb. Life Week was an intimidating but exciting experience, and seeing how excited the staff and students were about the presentations was very encouraging.

In the spring, as part of an after-school event that featured social time and snacks, we showed the life-affirming movie *The Drop Box* and had a brief discussion about the movie after viewing.

At the end of the school year, we partnered with Human Coalition, a local pro-life organization, and began a collection box for clothes and diapers. We were able to use some of the money from two grants to purchase strollers, baby carriers, and other needed supplies to donate to the mothers served by Human Coalition.

We are looking forward to the next school year and have even more activities planned. We continue to pray for the unborn, the differently abled, the older members of our community, and others. We are honored and determined to be a Gospel-focused voice For Life, and we are excited to see where the next year takes us!





Chats 4 Life – Offering high school and college youth an opportunity to learn about contemporary life topics from expert guest speakers. Held every first and third Thursday at 7:00 p.m. CT/8:00 p.m. ET.

What about ... Mondays? – On the second Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. CT/7:00 p.m. ET, students gather to talk about life issues and to find hope-filled, Gospel-motivated answers.

For Life Conversations – Recorded 5-15 minute interviews on life topics shared on our Facebook page and website.

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