




VIDEO 5

HOPE AND FEAR: UNDERSTANDING THE
HEART OF A PREGNANT WOMAN



One of the most poignant hurts and fears that a pregnant woman faces is the feeling that she is all alone.

SUMMARY

In the fifth video, participants are invited to more deeply understand the five main fears in the heart of a pregnant woman: (1) I am all alone, (2) I am not enough, (3) It's all up to me, (4) There is no room for this baby in the heart of the father, (5) There is no room for this baby in the hearts of my family members. Understanding these real fears opens up a space in our hearts to receive her, support her, love her, hope with her, and empower her to make an act of faith in herself during this time of crisis.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Holy Trinity, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us into life. We ask for the grace to receive anew the gift of our own lives, that we may live deeply out of our true identity as your beloved sons and daughters. We pray that each person may know themselves as chosen and loved, willed into being from the very beginning of time and held in existence at every moment by your love. Father, we ask you to fill us with your light and renew us with your peace. Holy Spirit, we ask for the courage to speak your Word of life; may our actions, words, and thoughts serve to uphold and protect the dignity and worth of every person, and may our lives give radiant witness to the truth of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Hopefully, at this point in the program, participants are beginning to form meaningful relationships with one another. Still, participants are invited to share something that is significant to them because sharing an experience of importance is deeply humanizing and encourages the formation of trust between participants. These connections are essential for building and maintaining community.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Invite participants to share their response to the “Introductory Question”.

Reminders: Remind participants of time boundaries (if any) and confidentiality.

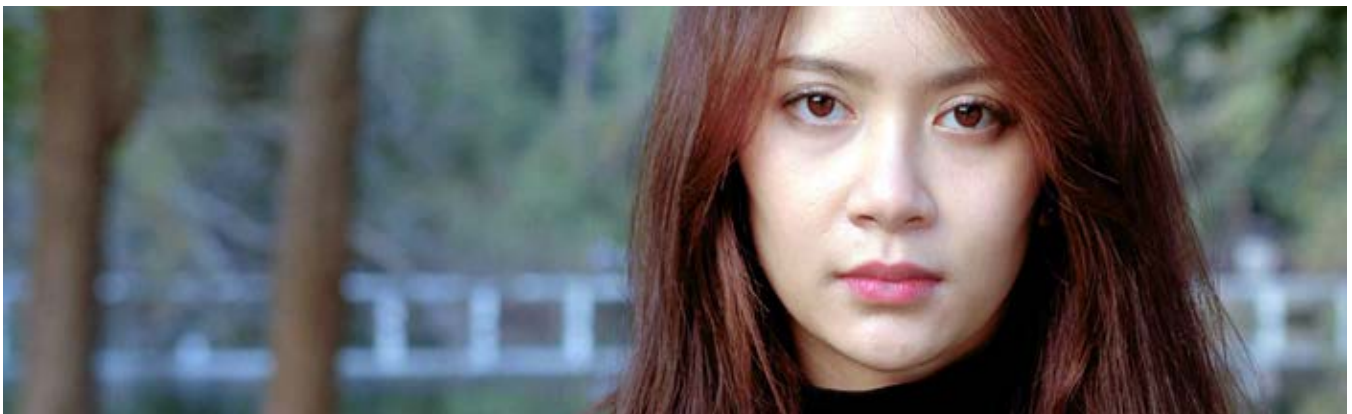
INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

Describe a time when you overcame a fear.

Read the question twice and allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

VIDEO #5

HOPE AND FEAR: UNDERSTANDING THE HEART OF A PREGNANT WOMAN



Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

Video 5: “Home and Fear: Understanding the Heart of a Pregnant Woman”

Instructions:

Introduce video segment.

Sample Introduction:

In this video, we will ponder the realities of fear and hope. Specifically, we’ll explore in detail the five main fears in the heart of a pregnant woman: (1) I am all alone, (2) I am not enough, (3) It’s all up to me, (4) There is no room for this baby in the heart of the father, (5) There is no room for this baby in the hearts of my family members. Only by understanding these real fears can we open our hearts to receive her, love her, help her to recognize her own goodness, and empower her to make an act of faith in herself.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Time: 15-30 minutes

Space: Church, if possible, or a quiet place for reflection.

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Transition to period of personal reflection.

Reminders:

Remind participants that this time is for their personal reflection and that they are not required to answer every question or reflect on every Scripture passage, but should follow the promptings of God.

Suggested Scripture passages and questions are offered as aides to prayer.

Space for note-taking and journaling is provided in the *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

1 JOHN 4:18

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”

“For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you.’”

1 PETER 5:7

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

PSALM 34:4

“I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.”

DEUTERONOMY 31:8

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a word, phrase, or idea that resonated with me? That was new to me?
2. Sister Magdalene, SV says, “Fear is a natural response to a situation where you feel powerless and overwhelmed.”
 - When have I felt powerless or overwhelmed? What were my particular fears?
 - What fears do I hold onto now? Have I ever spoken about my fears with Jesus? Give yourself the space to reflect on this, and invite Jesus to shine his light into these places. His love casts out all fear.
3. The fears of a pregnant woman in crisis are: the fear of being alone, the fear of being not enough, the fear of having to figure it all out, and the fear that there is no room in the hearts of others for the baby or herself. How have I experienced those fears in my own life, even if I have not experienced an unexpected pregnancy? Can I relate to this experience in some way?
4. Sister Magdalene shares, “Jesus promised that ‘perfect love casts out all fear.’ It’s really true. We see it all the time in our own hearts and in our missions. However, we must first know somebody before we can love that person. That’s why it is so important to know and understand the common fears that crowd and overwhelm a woman’s heart when she discovers that she is in an unplanned pregnancy.”
 - Who is someone I have gotten to know more deeply over time? How has my love for that person changed as I have come to know him/her more deeply?
 - How has understanding more of the interior realities of a woman in crisis affected me? How does it change my understanding of what it means to accompany a woman in an unexpected pregnancy?
5. Has there been a time in my life when someone gave me love and support to help me out of a place of fear? How did that feel? What did I learn from that experience?
6. When was a time in my life when I have made an act of faith in myself? Did others believe in me? How did that make me feel?
7. Are there people in my life whom I might feel like the Lord is calling me to accompany and love in a more intentional way?
8. Is there a fruit from my prayer that I would like to share with others?

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Every woman desires to love and be loved. And a woman who knows she is loved can do anything.

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DISCUSSION

After a period of personal reflection and prayer, participants re-gather as a large group for sharing and discussion.

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: *INTO LIFE: Love Changes Everything* Participant Guide

Instructions: Facilitator transitions to group discussion. Offer conversation guidelines, if using them.

Reminders:

Remind the group to maintain confidentiality. All comments and stories should stay within the group.

Remind participants that they are encouraged, but not required, to share.

At the beginning of the discussion, it may be helpful to review the five common fears of a woman who is pregnant and in crisis.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there a fruit from your prayer that you would like to share with others?
2. Discuss the five main fears of a woman who is pregnant and in crisis. Are any of them surprising to you? How do they impact your understanding of what is helpful to a woman in crisis?
3. Sister Magdalene shares, “Women often tell us, ‘My boyfriend told me he would support me whatever I decide’. But no matter what he means by the statement, the woman hears in that: he really wants me to have an abortion.” How does this highlight the importance of language in affecting a woman’s decision for life or not? What does a woman really want to hear as she is struggling?
4. Sister Grace Dominic, SV says, “We [Sisters of Life] try to help her see that she is not alone. ... We are with her, others believe in her and want to assist her; many others have gone before her on a similar challenging but beautiful journey.” In light of the fears that a woman experiences, how does this approach help alleviate these fears? How does it help her to flourish?
5. Sister Magdalene says, “Women have the incredible capacity to suffer for another. They are altruistic. Unfortunately, some women will even suffer an abortion in order to save a relationship.” In what ways does this quote shift your perspective of the choice a woman is making when she chooses abortion? Is she really free in her choice?
6. How does understanding the interior realities of a woman in crisis affect you? Does it change or nuance your understanding of what it means to be pro-life?
7. What are some ways that you can help support and encourage women who are pregnant and struggling?

NOTES

Five Common Fears of a Woman Who is Pregnant and in Crisis

1. I'm all alone.
2. I'm not enough.
3. It's all up to me.
4. There's no room for this baby in the heart of a father.
5. There's no room for this baby in the heart of family members.

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How many a young couple have found themselves fearful, not necessarily that there wouldn't be a physical place, a room, a clinic, a hospital, for a baby to be born, but that there would be no place in the hearts of the people that mattered; there would be no room in the hearts of the young girl's parents. How often has a young girl gone wandering, confused knowing that there was no room in the heart of the man who had made her pregnant. What poverty.

—CARDINAL O'CONNOR

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CLOSING

At the end of the group discussion, the facilitator should thank the participants for sharing and their involvement in the discussion. The facilitator may also ask if there are any closing questions, comments, or points of clarification before proceeding to the closing prayer.

What's coming up next?

Video 6: "Exodus From Fear: Accompanying Her to Life"

In the next session, participants will explore the importance of our disposition of heart in the work of accompaniment. A woman who is struggling with the reality of her pregnancy needs someone who believes in her and her goodness, someone who can give her the time and space to grieve, hope, and express her heart.

CLOSING PRAYER

*Jesus, we praise and thank you for your goodness and mercy.
We ask for an outpouring of your Spirit upon the whole world.
We pray that every person may powerfully encounter your love
today, and that all will come to know that life is a gift to be
cherished and protected. May the clarity and power of your love
cast out the fears of any women who are pregnant and vulnerable
to abortion, and give them the courage to move forward in hope.*

*We ask this in your name as we pray: Glory be to the Father,
to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever.*

Amen. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Life, pray for us.

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