

Growth Group Lesson
February 4-5
Sanctity of Human Life

All of life is precious to God because He has created and sustains it all. As God loves and protects the lives and dignity of the vulnerable, we partner with Him to love, protect, and serve others.

Spend some time praying. Ask God for compassionate hearts towards those he loves. Ask God for grace in conversations about people who are vulnerable and need his love and transformation.

Each year at Good Shepherd we spend a week focusing on the Sanctity of Human Life. This is a time for us to pray as a church and serve the “least of these,” as God holds all life precious. We have highlighted specific organizations during the weekend service that are working to protect and care for preborn children, mothers and families who have previously had or are considering abortions, women and children being trafficked and abused, and people experiencing homelessness.

1. What has been your experience with any of these vulnerable groups? Psalm 68:4-6, Psalm 146
2. What is God’s heart for people in these circumstances? **Psalm 68:4-6, Psalm 146, James 1:27, Matthew 25:31-46, Deut. 27:19**

As is the way of the world, the flesh, and the devil, these vulnerable groups are abused, taken advantage of, or cast aside. This is clearly not how God sees them, nor how the Church is to respond. God gives us many appropriate ways to respond to injustice in the world. **The first response is to pray.** One of our callings as children and ambassadors of God is to cry out to him for help and deliverance for those who need it, both physically and spiritually.

We have an opportunity to lament¹: 1. Turn to God in prayer 2. Bringing our complaints 3. Asking boldly 4. And choosing to trust and praise

Read Psalm 94, a lament over injustice. The Psalmist cries out to God to act in his righteousness and save the vulnerable.

3. What is your reaction to reading this Psalm?
4. Does it move you to pray? What does it move you to pray for?

Spend some time as a group praying a lament, asking God to act justly and save the lost and vulnerable.

- Pray for protection for the vulnerable groups we’ve discussed
- Pray for wisdom empowerment for the Church to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our communities
- Pray for wisdom and movement in the government to protect these groups

¹ Elements of Lament from Mark Vroegop

Our second response is to...pray again! After we've prayed for God to act, we can pray for God to lead us in how he might be calling us to act.

Spend some time as a group praying over the list of organizations that we are partnering with and ask how he might be leading you to support them.

Garden of Hope Ministries (Tina and Mark Fortin)

Provides support and encouragement to women facing unplanned pregnancy as they explore their options and/or prepare for parenthood, and to anyone that is facing pain and regret from past abortions.

First Image Pregnancy Resource Center

A faith based nonprofit that provides pregnancy related services, education and support through Pregnancy Resource Centers, as well as HEART, biblically based support and recovery groups for men and women who've experienced abortion.

Obria

Provides medical and educational services to equip individuals to make healthy choices related to pregnancy, relationships, and parenting, based on their calling to share Jesus' love with their clients through compassionate and life affirming care and education.

Sandy PRC

A Christian ministry that lovingly affirms and assists women who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy with personalized care and resources, encouraging and supporting individuals in making responsible choices about their own lives and the lives of the unborn.

Guardian Project

A Northwest based non-profit organization that believes every woman facing an unplanned pregnancy should have the ability to see her baby via ultrasound, and hear the hope that comes through faith in Jesus. They partner with pregnancy resource centers and provide mobile ultrasounds for mothers.

Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap-Oregon works alongside law enforcement and other community partners to provide resources and support to sexually exploited and other complex trauma survivors.

Loved Ones Disability Ministry at Good Shepherd

Impacting the lives of those with various disabilities from young kids to adults. Join us in being Jesus' Hands and Feet to people who will change your life for the good.

Our final response is to be obedient to where the Holy Spirit is leading you to serve. This does not necessarily mean you must volunteer, but perhaps is an opportunity to continue praying for these ministries, give financially, or to help connect those in need with these organizations. God will lead us when we ask!

5. How is God leading you individually?
6. How is God leading you as a group?
7. One of the main purposes of serving and protecting others is to share and model the Gospel so that others may know and be transformed by Jesus. Have you shared the Gospel with anyone recently? What was that like for you?
 - a. If not, who would you like to share the Gospel with? Do you need help from your group in doing that?

8. How can your group work together to love and serve your neighborhood and community this week?

Spend some time praying. Thank God for including us in his mission to reach and save the lost and vulnerable.