Welcome to

Equipped for Life Academy!

The pro-life apologists at Equal Rights Institute are here to help you foster effective conversations about abortion with today's youth. In a post-Roe America, there's no hiding from the abortion debate, and we know that can feel overwhelming. High schoolers are bombarded by pro-choice culture, with classmates and influencers demanding them to change their beliefs. We believe that it's time to engage students in discussing abortion directly by facing the hardest pro-choice questions head on.

With *Equipped for Life Academy*, you can move students from knowing they're supposed to be pro-life to understanding the pro-life position so well that they can confidently defend it and live it throughout their lives. These interactive lesson plans promote engagement with the most popular pro-choice talking points of our day, giving students the tools to understand today's abortion landscape while responding thoughtfully and compassionately to pro-choice people.

Your Students

Whether you're in a high school or a church setting, you should expect that the students in your classroom have diverse experiences with and opinions on abortion. Many of you have vocally pro-choice students in your classrooms, while many students may not know what they believe. A significant number of students are pro-life because their parents told them to be, but they've never taken ownership of the pro-life position for themselves, leaving them vulnerable to become pro-choice as soon as they're faced with a secular college campus culture.

Even in the most conservative settings, it is common for a student or two to be secretly conflicted about abortion or outright pro-choice—but they are afraid to speak up about their views because they fear judgment. Our team has given presentations at countless high schools whose administrators have told us beforehand, "Our school is 100% pro-life! There isn't a single pro-choice student here," and then after our speech, a student discreetly approaches our staff member to thank them for demonstrating respect to pro-choice people and engaging with pro-choice arguments intelligently. That student reveals that they are secretly pro-choice, but since they know that that viewpoint isn't accepted in this conservative setting, they never speak up or ask questions, yet they're seriously considering the pro-life position now that they've heard answers to those questions! If we avoid discussing abortion entirely or proclaim a culture of life without fostering conversation about the issue, we miss crucial opportunities to change hearts and minds and foster confidently pro-life youth who will shape the future of abortion in our world.

With this in mind, this curriculum is written both to teach your students why they should be pro-life and how to convey that truth to others, all without ostracizing those students who do not currently share the pro-life viewpoint. All students are encouraged to think critically about the best pro-choice and pro-life arguments, ask tough questions, and create a space where genuine dialogue can happen.

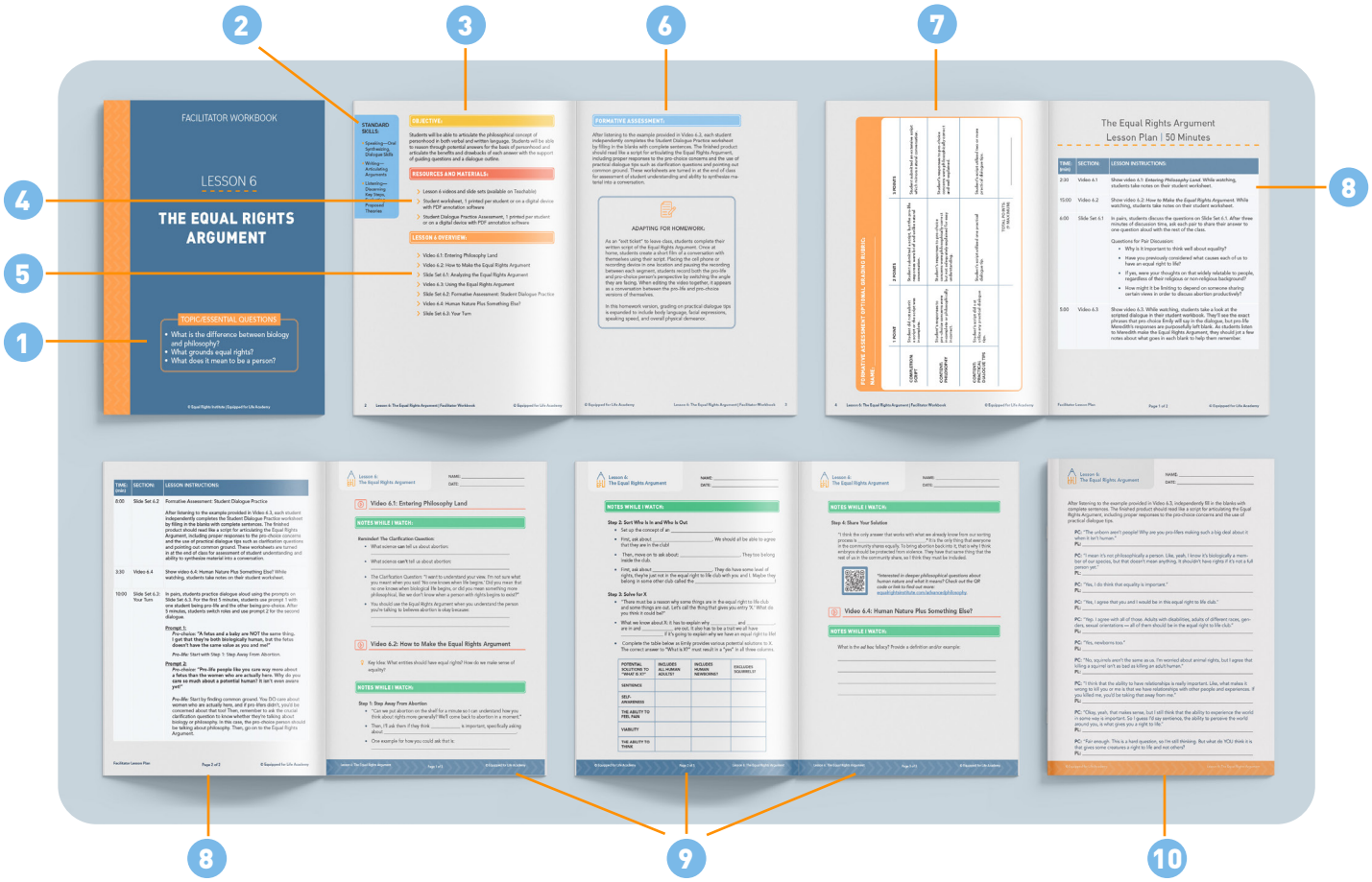
Always remember: whether they are pro-life or pro-choice, you will have students in your classrooms who have been touched, one way or another, by abortion. Nearly one in four women have an abortion by age 45, so the likelihood that many, if not all, of your students are close to an adult who has had an abortion is extremely high. Furthermore, 12% of all abortions—that's about 78,316 abortions per year—are had by adolescents under 19 years old. This is a deeply personal issue for many of your students. Your first goal must always remain to love them and walk with them as they process what is happening in our society and in their own lives. *Equipped for Life Academy* will foster that productive conversational space for students to see the abortion debate in a new light and dialogue about it respectfully, likely for the very first time.

You: The Teacher

Rest assured that you don't need to know anything about abortion or apologetics to effectively teach this material in your classroom. In this curriculum you will go on a journey with your students, guiding them as they dive into the history of abortion, the arguments surrounding all sides of the debate, and the practical ways that both they and our society can foster a culture of life. Core material is taught to students via short video lectures from the pro-life apologists at ERI, guided discussions which you will facilitate in the classroom, and student research projects. With this framework in mind, this curriculum deliberately provides flexibility for you to mix and match, customize, and overall make the curriculum work for the particular needs of your classroom. Here's how:

What You'll Find

Each lesson plan includes the following core pieces:



1 TOPIC/ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Each lesson follows the exploration of two-to-three essential questions. These questions can be posted in the classroom to introduce students to the concepts they'll be covering that day or used for additional discussion questions or assessments of student learning.

2 STANDARD SKILLS

Each lesson incorporates a variety of educational standards which can be related to your state's requirements for the classroom. This box will give teachers a preview of the widely applicable standards covered in this particular lesson for ease of tracking and substantiating the use of this curriculum with students. Standards are intentionally vague to allow for interpretation into teachers' own subject area and the local standards. See the **What Else You'll Find** section for more information on how this curriculum meets Catholic education standards.

3 OBJECTIVE

Written in SWBAT (Students Will Be Able To…) format, lesson objectives outline the end goals for student achievement after completing each lesson along with outlining the support(s) provided to students along the way to foster their success.

4 RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

This list provides a complete checklist of the items teachers and students will need to successfully complete the lesson.

5 LESSON OVERVIEW

The Lesson Overview provides an at-a-glance overview of the lesson's flow.

6 FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

To evaluate student understanding, formative assessments are supplied at the conclusion of each lesson. Formative assessments are designed to be completed in class, but instructions are provided to adapt the assessment for homework to provide teachers the greatest possible flexibility in implementing the lesson. For example, if your class is 45 minutes in length, we suggest assigning the formative assessment for homework. If your class is 60 minutes in length, formative assessments can be completed in class.

7 OPTIONAL GRADING RUBRIC

For teachers desiring to grade formative assessments, optional rubrics are provided to ensure consistent grading criteria.

8 LESSON PLAN

Each lesson plan is designed to be completed in 60-minutes to best accommodate class periods of a variety of lengths. Teachers are encouraged to customize timings for discussions and activities based on their desired length of the lesson. Detailed instructions are provided for teachers to facilitate the flow of the lesson, including the use of videos, slides, discussions, activities, and the formative assessment.

9 STUDENT WORKSHEET

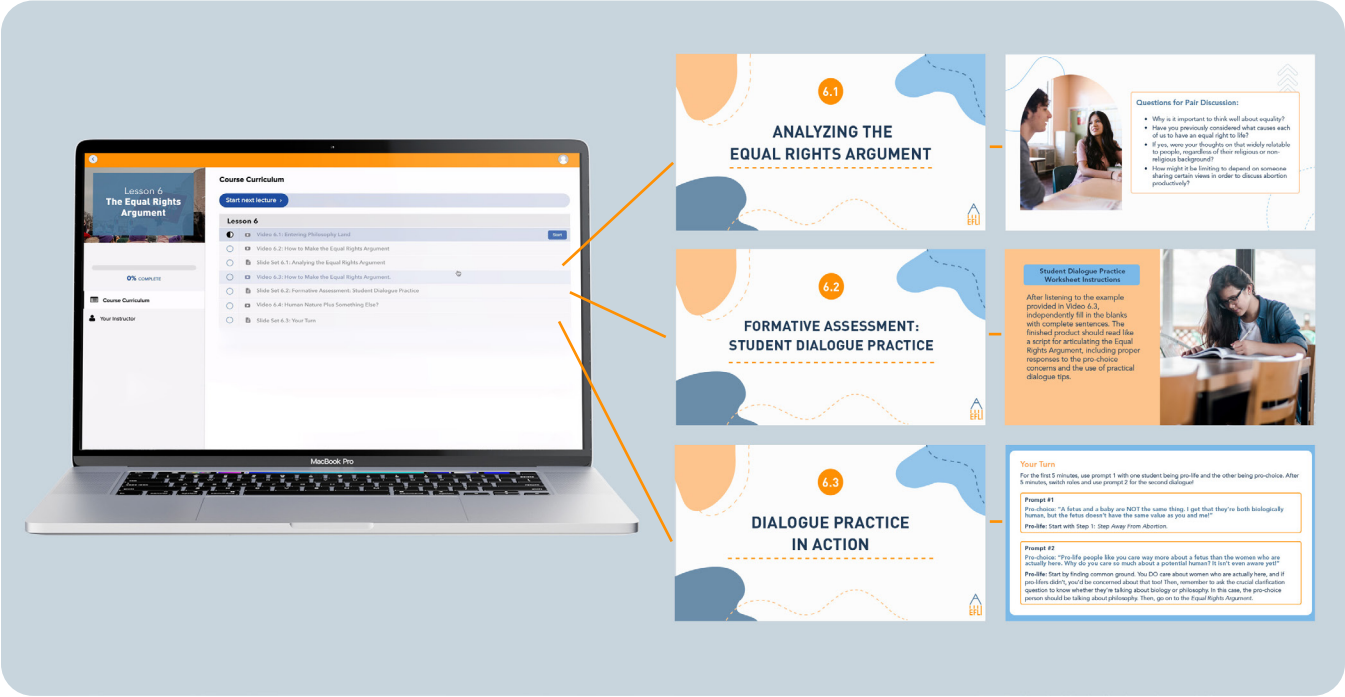
While watching lesson videos and participating in activities, students will compile their notes on the Student Worksheet. Student Worksheets can be printed for each student (no worksheet is longer than two double-sided pages) or downloaded by students on their own laptop devices and completed using PDF annotation software.

10 ADDITIONAL PAGES

Some lessons contain an extra page connected to the formative assessment. In this case, the formative assessment is in the form of a worksheet, which can be printed for each student or completed using PDF annotation software.

THE SLIDES

Each lesson contains slides which are used to guide the flow of learning between the lesson videos. Slide sets may provide instructions and questions for class discussion (as in Slide Set 6.1), give instructions and/or an example to guide the formative assessment (as in Slide Set 6.2), and/or guide students to complete an in-class activity (as in Slide Set 6.3).



CORE LESSONS V. BONUS LESSONS

Equipped for Life Academy is designed to be highly customizable. We know that you have a lot of material to cover with your students, and this curriculum makes it possible to engage students in discussing abortion no matter how much time you have. With this in mind, the curriculum includes eight core lessons and six bonus lessons that you can mix and match to fit both the unit length you desire and the particular interests of your classroom. Core Lessons are focused on pro-life apologetics while Bonus Lessons widen students' perspectives on the abortion debate. You can learn more about these lessons, as well as view our suggested groupings for different classroom scenarios, in the **Suggested Lesson Groupings** portion of the teacher workbook.

WHAT ELSE YOU'LL FIND

In this Teacher Workbook, you will find three additional resources to assist with implementation of this curriculum: suggested classroom prayers for use at the beginning of each class period, a list of sources for additional research if you and/or your students wish to dig further into particular topics or claims made in this curriculum, and a guide to how *Equipped for Life Academy* fits both the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools and The Cardinal Newman Society Catholic Curriculum Standards.

Meet The Authors

JOSH BRAHM

Josh Brahm is the President of Equal Rights Institute. He has worked in the pro-life movement since he was 18, and after 12 years of full-time pro-life work he launched Equal Rights Institute to maximize his impact on the movement. A sought-after speaker, Josh has spoken for more than 23,000 people in six countries and in 25 of the 50 states. Josh's primary passion is helping pro-life people to be more persuasive when they communicate with pro-choice people. That means ditching faulty rhetoric and tactics and embracing arguments that hold up under philosophical scrutiny.

ANDREW KAAKE

Andrew Kaake is Director of Content & Research at Equal Rights Institute. He holds a bachelor's degree in classics and political science, cum laude, from Amherst College, where he wrote a thesis on the topic of C.S. Lewis and natural law philosophy. He holds a Preliminary License in Political Science/Political Philosophy for grades 5-12 from the Massachusetts Office of Educator Licensure. He completed his master's degree in bioethics at Trinity International University, studying the philosophical underpinnings of controversies about life, death, and technology and trying to create ways to communicate that information to others. During his studies at Trinity, he worked as a research assistant for The Center for Bioethics & Human Dignity.

EMILY GEIGER

Emily Geiger is Director of Education & Outreach at Equal Rights Institute. She is the former Co-President of Oles for Life at St. Olaf College, where she worked to transform campus culture using ERI's apologetics to foster respectful and productive dialogues about abortion. At ERI, she is using her educational background to write, develop curriculum, and teach pro-life advocates how to change minds, save lives, and promote a culture of life in their communities. Emily currently holds a Tier 3 Teaching License in K-12 Vocal and Classroom Music from The Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB). A sought-after speaker, Emily frequently presents lectures on college campuses, in high schools, and for churches and conferences, and she regularly appears in interviews and radio/TV/podcasts, including appearances on MSNBC, BBC Newsday, EWTN, Focus on the Family, Relevant Radio, Christianity Today, and Real Presence LIVE.

MEREDITH RASSCHAERT

Meredith Rasschaert is a Club Coach at Equal Rights Institute. She has been a passionate advocate for life since early high school when she began diving into pro-life apologetics. In college, Meredith served as Vice President, then Co-President of Oles for Life. She spent countless hours in dialogue with the pro-choice students on her campus and trained incoming club members on dialogue techniques. Meredith also served as the Client Services Director at the Northfield Women's Center. She is grateful for the privilege of walking alongside women and their families facing unexpected pregnancies.

TIMOTHY BRAHM

Timothy Brahm is the Co-Founder and former Director of Training at Equal Rights Institute. Timothy Brahm is a former training specialist with Justice for All, where he trained students to have good conversations about abortion and not be weird about it. Tim is interested in helping pro-life and pro-choice people have better dialogues about abortion through 1) taking care to understand what the other person means, 2) using more carefully-constructed arguments, and 3) treating eachother with care and respect. He graduated from Biola University with a BA in Philosophy and is a perpetual member of the Torrey Honors Institute. His work at ERI formed the foundation for many of the arguments taught in this curriculum, especially our material on bodily autonomy arguments and our advanced philosophy materials.

RACHEL CRAWFORD

Rachel Crawford is the former Director of Training at Equal Rights Institute. Rachel graduated in 2017 from the University of Michigan with a Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience major and Women's Studies: Gender and Health minor. She was the president of the Students for Life club at the University of Michigan, leading their efforts to educate students on pro-life topics and to advocate for pregnant and parenting students. She had a key role in creating the advanced philosophy materials in this curriculum, especially our material on abortion as self-defense, as well as our teaching methods for the Equal Rights Argument.