



# 40 DAYS FOR LIFE

*The beginning of the  
end of abortion.*





Baby Rayna was saved from abortion during a 40 Days for Life vigil in Columbus, Georgia.

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# From the Campaign Director



Abortion isn't just a political issue or a "social issue." It's the greatest human rights crisis of all time.

This crisis is a profoundly local one. After all, abortions don't take place in the White House, the Supreme Court, the halls of Congress, or your state capitol building. They take place in communities just like yours—more than a million times every year in the United States.

**But the women having abortions aren't statistics.** They're our friends. Our family members. Our coworkers, neighbors, classmates, and even the people next to us in church are having abortions.

That's the bad news.

The good news is that **in the midst of this national tragedy, there's hope.** God is ending abortion in America one woman at a time through the power of prayer...and He's using people just like you to do it.

40 Days for Life is a movement that aims to end abortion through a simple, internationally coordinated campaign that comprises three simple components:

- **prayer and fasting** for an end to abortion;
- **community outreach** to educate the public on the tragic reality of abortion;
- **peaceful, all-day, every-day vigil** in front of the facilities, hospitals, and pharmacies that sell and perform abortions.

This simple campaign has been repeated thousands of times in cities ranging from College Station, Texas, to New York City, Buenos Aires, London, Sydney, Nairobi, and even Hong Kong.

Peaceful, prayerful 40 Days for Life vigils have saved tens of thousands of babies, helped convert hundreds of abortion workers, and led to the closure of nearly 200 abortion businesses.

## **What does all of this mean for you?**

Perhaps, God is calling you to join—or even lead—a 40 Days for Life campaign where you live. It doesn't require any special skills or knowledge—just a relentless trust in God. Professionals, retirees, students, and stay-at-home parents have all led successful 40 Days for Life campaigns.

In the pages that follow, we'll share what hosting a 40 Days for Life campaign entails...and encourage you to **prayerfully discern your role** in ending abortion in your community.

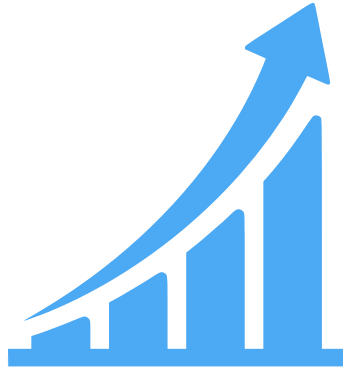
In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Karlen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Karlen  
Campaign Director, 40 Days for Life

# A CRISIS

God created mankind in His image; in the image of God  
He created them; male and female He created them.  
—Genesis 1:27



Abortion is the leading cause of death in the United States...and it's not close. Since 1973, abortion has ended **70 million** American lives.

While pro-life Christians have made tremendous progress in recent years, saving many lives, **we still lose a little boy or little girl to abortion every 30 seconds.**



DEATH FROM  
ABORTION

ALL OTHER  
CAUSES OF  
DEATH

Worldwide, abortion **ends more lives** than all other causes of death combined.

Every abortion leaves in its wake a devastating trail of heartache and destruction:

- a child's life lost;
- a mother scarred;
- a father wounded;
- four grandparents who will never hold their grandchild;
- aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, surviving and future siblings... an entire society hurt—directly or indirectly—by the crisis of abortion.



# THE SOLUTION

If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

—2 Chronicles 7:14

How do you begin to address a crisis of this magnitude?

When Planned Parenthood opened an abortion center in Bryan/College Station, Texas, four Christians came together for one hour to pray that God would show them a solution.



During that one hour of prayer, those individuals discerned that God was calling them to organize a 40-day campaign of:

- prayer and fasting;
- community outreach; and
- all-day, every-day peaceful vigil in front of the Planned Parenthood abortion business.

The prayer campaign worked, as **the local abortion rate suddenly dropped by 28%.**

A blue square with rounded corners containing a white downward-pointing arrow and the text "28%".

↓ 28%



Five years later, Planned Parenthood employee of the year **Abby Johnson** left her job in response to the 40 Days for Life vigil. Her best-selling book, *Unplanned*, exposed her former employer, and in 2019, the *Unplanned* movie became a surprise blockbuster. In 2013, the Planned Parenthood location went out of business.

# RESULTS

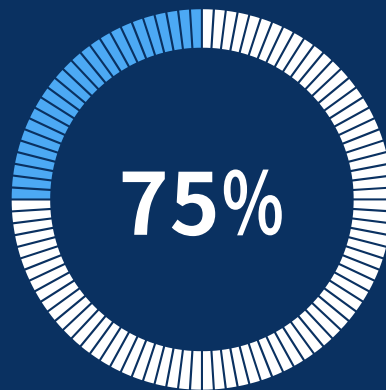
I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse.  
Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live.  
—Deuteronomy 30:19



When the Bryan/College Station 40 Days for Life campaign succeeded, the world came knocking.

In 2007, the first nationally coordinated 40 Days for Life campaign was held in 89 cities across 33 states. 40 Days for Life vigils have now been held in all 50 states and in countries around the world, bearing tremendous fruit.

Former abortion workers report that when people pray in front of an abortion facility, the no-show rate for abortion appointments goes as high as 75%.



**26,000** lives have been saved from abortion... that we know of.



More than **275** abortion workers have experienced conversion and left their jobs.



**187** abortion facilities went out of business following a 40 Days for Life campaign.

# EQUIPPED FOR SUCCESS

Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these  
least brothers of Mine, you did for Me.  
—Matthew 25:40

When your application to lead a 40 Days for Life campaign is approved, we'll provide you with:



Comprehensive, on-demand video-based training modules that guide you through the process of leading a campaign.

Access to a 40 Days for Life headquarters team member who will coach, mentor, and support you along the way.



Online tools, templates, documents, presentation materials, talking points, checklists, news releases, and multimedia resources so you don't need to reinvent the wheel.

Exclusive opportunities for free, in-person training from the 40 Days for Life headquarters team, abortion industry insiders, doctors, attorneys, and other experts.



A local campaign webpage and vigil calendar scheduling tool to help manage your campaign.

Legal support and advice from the 40 Days for Life Institute of Law & Justice.



Material supplies, including vigil signs, apparel, and promotional materials.

# ENDORSEMENTS

Take one or two others along with you, so that “every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

—Matthew 18:16



I am in this movement today because of ordinary people who took on an extraordinary task. My former abortion clinic is closed because of their sacrifice. Babies are alive because of them. Women are no longer being hurt by abortion in their community. You can do this. You can save a life. I now stand alongside you in this 40 Days for Life movement.

—Abby Johnson, former Planned Parenthood employee of the year



The Holy Father greatly appreciates the dedicated work that you and everyone involved in 40 Days for Life are engaged in to promote respect for the lives of all unborn children. His Holiness assures you of his prayerful support for you, your colleagues, and all those whose prayer, fasting, and sacrifices are saving countless lives and giving glory to God.

—Pope Francis via Vatican Secretariat of State



40 Days for Life is a testimony to the power of prayer and what can happen when we're consumed by a magnificent obsession, namely that life is sacred. If you're growing weary over the increasing level of disrespect of the most innocent among us, I would urge you to remember that situations are not always as they appear. God is on the move even amidst the darkness.

—Jim Daly, president, Focus on the Family



Historians will write about the crucial role that 40 Days for Life played in the demise of legal abortion. We encourage each young activist that we train to become involved or lead a 40 Days for Life campaign in their community because we believe it is one of the most effective ways for our movement to abolish abortion.

—Kristan Hawkins, president, Students for Life of America

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Inquire and search, seek and find...  
—Sirach 6:27

## IS LEADING A 40 DAYS FOR LIFE CAMPAIGN HARD?

Leading your community into spiritual battle requires sacrifice and a lot of prayer. The tragedy of abortion might break your heart. People will disappoint you. You'll sometimes find yourself frustrated. You'll face adversity. If this was easy, it wouldn't be God's work.

## HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE TO LEAD A 40 DAYS FOR LIFE CAMPAIGN?

It depends on how many team members help you shoulder the load.

## WHY IS THERE A FEE TO LEAD?

The application fee is a contribution toward the overall costs of the campaign, including (but not limited to) training, resources, national team mentoring, national promotional efforts, online systems, material supplies, and helping to meet the ongoing expenses of international outreach. The actual cost to the national team for overseeing each local campaign is in excess of \$1,000. Our donors cover the majority of it, but we do ask for a local commitment as well. That's the application fee. While we have steadily increased the support to local campaign leaders, we have never raised the application fee.

If finances are a barrier to hosting a campaign, scholarships are available. It has been our long-standing policy never to let money be an obstacle to campaign leadership.

## IS LEADING A 40 DAYS FOR LIFE CAMPAIGN WORTH IT?

Absolutely. More than 90% of 40 Days for Life participants experience spiritual growth. Taking on a campaign brings the satisfaction of answering God's call, growth in community with others, confidence, and leadership skills. Plus, God will use you to save lives and souls.

## WHY DO WE NEED TO HOLD VIGIL AT LEAST 12 HOURS A DAY OR ON DAYS WHEN THE ABORTION FACILITY IS CLOSED?

We ask 40 Days for Life leaders to strive to achieve vigil coverage at least 12 hours a day (safety permitting) Monday-Saturday. Sundays are optional. Even though the abortion facility will likely be closed some of these hours, the goal is to cover the abortion facility in prayer. Some campaigns pray around the clock, 24 hours a day!

We pray when the abortion facility is closed because the primary audience for our vigil isn't abortion facility clients or staff (as important as our witness to them is), but almighty God, who refuses to be outdone in generosity. Pharmacy campaigns can hold vigil eight hours per day.

## WHEN ARE THE CAMPAIGNS HELD?

The spring or Lenten 40 Days for Life campaign takes place from Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday each year. The fall campaign begins the fourth Wednesday of September.

## HOW MANY HOURS DO I NEED TO STAND VIGIL PERSONALLY?

It's up to you! Regular participation at the vigil is an excellent sign of servant leadership that inspires others to make sacrifices.



# Family Bonds

A last-minute phone call delayed a pregnant teen's abortion appointment...and brought her the peace, joy, and family she'd been missing.



STEVE KARLEN  
CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR, 40 DAYS FOR LIFE

**K**ayla was a high school sophomore sitting in the parking lot of a North Carolina abortion facility when the phone rang.

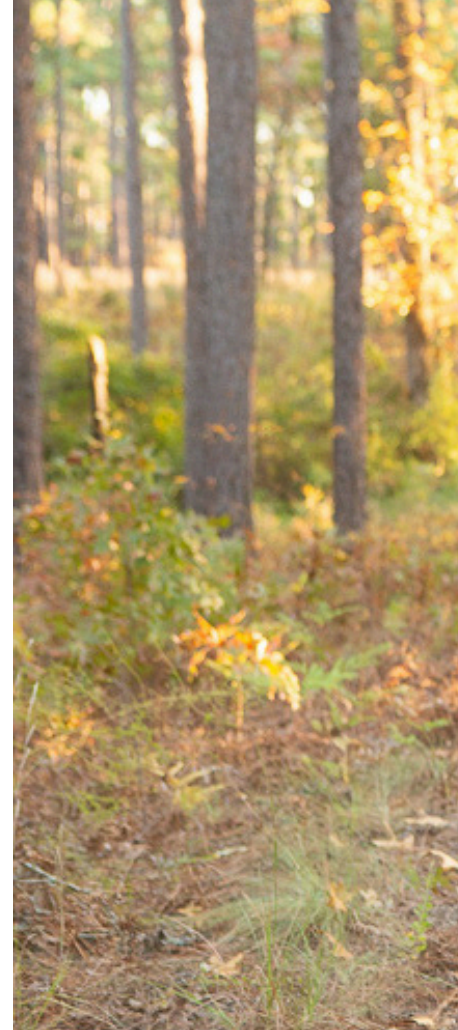
It was her case worker calling to let her know that if she waited just a little bit longer before going through with the abortion, investigators would be able to collect the DNA evidence they'd need to confirm the identity of the rapist—a family member—responsible for her pregnancy.

"I was just sitting in silence in the back seat while they decided what to do with me," Kayla said.

She and her family decided abortion was the right decision for her...even if she didn't really know what abortion was. "I thought it wasn't a baby until—I don't even know—maybe 15 weeks? And I wasn't that far along, so..." she trailed off.

A family member assured Kayla that the pregnancy wasn't her fault, so the abortion wouldn't be either. She was convinced. And she was looking forward to getting it over with as soon as possible, which meant the case worker's suggestion to delay the abortion created a nervous tension in the car—a tension Grandma broke by suggesting, "Why don't we go to church?"

The family made a pact that if the preacher talked about abortion or babies or anything of the kind, they'd take it as a sign and back out of the now-rescheduled abortion appointment. Nearly an hour into the service, Kayla thought she was in the clear.



"The sermon wasn't over, but in my head, it's almost over," she remembered. "He hasn't said anything about abortion. This time tomorrow I'll be done. This will be behind me. I'll be fine."

But Pastor Tony at Rockfish Church in Fayetteville wasn't done speaking, and neither was God.

The preacher suddenly recounted how he had been driving down the street where the city's Planned Parenthood is located and saw someone on the sidewalk holding a 40 Days for Life "Pray to End Abortion" sign in the middle of a torrential downpour.

"He basically yelled that abortion is wrong—no matter the circumstance," Kayla said. "It caught us all off guard. We were just completely distraught because we all wanted for me to go get an abortion and just be done with it."

Kayla and her family had intended to leave church quickly and quietly and certainly without talking to anyone. But having been hit by a spiritual two-by-four, they lingered until one of the Rockfish pastors approached them to ask what was wrong and how he could help. Kayla and her family shared everything.



"Have you considered adoption?" the pastor asked.

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40 Days for Life participants Felisha and Wayne Mims had been married for years, but God hadn't yet blessed them with a child. So they continued to pray and hope and trust, until one day an inaudible voice assured Felisha that her request would soon be granted.

"God has told me that we will have a baby within nine months," Felisha told Wayne on the drive to Rockfish Church one Sunday morning.

Wayne didn't respond, and Felisha suspected he thought she was out of her mind. But after they arrived at church, a Rockfish pastor approached Wayne to tell him about a teenage abuse victim who was pregnant and looking to place her baby for adoption. The pastor handed him a business card with a handwritten phone number on it and told Wayne that if he and Felisha were interested in adopting this child, Kayla and her family would like to hear from them by the end of the day.

After the service, Felisha—unlike Kayla a week earlier—wasn't intending to leave church quickly or quietly, certainly not without talking to anyone, but Wayne beat a hasty path toward the exit. "We've got to go," he said.

On the drive home, he explained everything. And he prepared Felisha to call Kayla.

"Lord, please let there be something in my voice that tells this young girl that we're the family for this baby...that I'm supposed to be this child's mom," Felisha prayed before dialing Kayla's number.

The phone call went well and quickly led to a face-to-face visit in which Felisha gave Kayla a book she had prepared to introduce herself and her husband to any birth moms considering placing a baby for adoption. The back of the book listed several promises the Mimses would make to the prospective birth mom and baby—vows to love the child, to teach the child about God, and to care for and protect the child no matter what. Felisha noticed Kayla rubbing her hand over the cover of the book that bore those promises.



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## I DON'T THINK ADOPTION CAN GET ANY MORE OPEN THAN ADOPTING YOUR DAUGHTER'S BIRTH MOM.

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Before parting ways, Kayla moved her hand from the book to her womb and announced, "Hey, little one in there. This is your new mom."

She then turned to address Felisha. "I don't know what it is, but there was something in your voice when we talked on the phone the other night that told me that you're supposed to be the mama for this baby."

"I held myself together the best I could," Felisha remembered.

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Felisha and Wayne supported Kayla throughout her pregnancy, driving her to her prenatal visits, ultrasounds, and birthing classes. They soon became inseparable.

"Felisha and Wayne basically took care of me," Kayla said. "I spent weekends with them. I went to church with them. They treated me like family, not just someone who would be there temporarily. I felt more at home and safe with them than I ever had."

They also watched movies and baked cookies together, and Kayla had her own room at the Mimses' house.

One night, they finished watching a sad movie that made everyone cry, so Wayne suggested an ice cream run. The seemingly ordinary moment prompted an extraordinary realization.

"At that moment I realized that I just loved them as people and as my family," Kayla said. "That's who they were to me. They were my family."

Felisha was in the delivery room for the birth of Abigail Hope, an experience that reaffirmed Kayla's adoption decision. "Watching them hold her and love her—and the way they looked at her—I just knew that this was the best choice I could have made for

Abigail."

But Kayla's story wasn't "happily ever after" just yet. After the birth, Felisha and Wayne continued to involve Kayla in their family's life. But certain members of Kayla's biological family planted seeds of doubt.

"They told me now that Felisha and Wayne have what they want, the Mimses didn't want me any more," Kayla said. Family members also steered Kayla away from spending too much time with Felisha and Wayne, suggesting she was getting in their way. Kayla, still just a teenager, began to isolate herself.

"I went down a really dark path," she said. "I started drinking and smoking. I started cutting. I stopped going to church."

Finally, her life became so miserable that she went back to the only place she'd ever encountered love and joy: Felisha and Wayne's house. "I was tired of living a life where I didn't feel anything, a life of not being happy," Kayla said. "I needed something that wasn't temporary. Wayne and Felisha made me feel safe, and they loved me like I had never been loved before." This time, she'd make the relationship permanent. After coming back to church, she got baptized. Shortly thereafter—on Father's Day—Kayla asked Felisha and Wayne to adopt her. They tearfully accepted the request, meaning that Abigail is Kayla's daughter by blood and sister through adoption.

"I don't think adoption can get any more open than adopting your daughter's birth mom," Felisha quipped. "But that's what happened, and it's been a blessing."

The adoption provides a storybook ending, but is the day-to-day experience of being the sister to your biological daughter awkward?

"Absolutely not," Kayla said. "Abigail could not be more my sister. She irritates me like a little sister. I love her and I protect her. I would die for her."

That last sentence packs a little extra punch given that Abigail was a phone call away from dying for Kayla just a few short years ago.

That is, until God used a 40 Days for Life volunteer praying in the rain to inspire a pastor to preach about abortion. Until God gave Kayla and her biological family the courage to keep their end of the bargain they had made with Him at RockFish Church. Until God moved Felisha and Wayne to open their hearts and their home to a pregnant teenager.



Felisha's daughter Abigail and baby Saylah, who was saved by the Fayetteville 40 Days for Life team



"Behold," says the Lord. "I am making all things new."



Spend enough time at a 40 Days for Life vigil and a heckler is bound to ask, "Hey! How many children have you adopted?" It's an attack Felisha—now the 40 Days for Life and 40 Days for Life 365 campaign leader in Fayetteville—has heard plenty of times over the years. And she's got an answer.

"Two...plus one of the birth moms," she responds.

"They look at us like we're crazy. They don't really have anything else to say after that. The conversation's over."

While Felisha dismantles one pro-abortion talking point, Kayla takes down another: the myth that abortion benefits rape victims. Indeed, abortion advocates exploit sexual assault survivors as something of a rhetorical kryptonite they can use to paint pro-lifers as uncompassionate—or even to suggest pro-lifers side with rapists.

It's an argument the dissent was quick to make in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* case that overturned *Roe*

*v. Wade*.

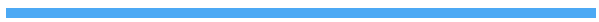
Under [pro-life] laws, a woman will have to bear her rapist's child or a young girl her father's," the justices wrote. "No matter if doing so will destroy her life."

But that's not the way Kayla sees it.

"Even in rape, that baby hasn't gotten a chance; the baby did absolutely nothing wrong," she said. "There is always another choice. There are people who are more than willing to give you the shirts off their backs and help you in any way you need."

And Kayla is proof positive that it's not just abortion-vulnerable babies who deserve better than abortion. Abortion-vulnerable women do too.

"Looking back, abortion would've stripped me completely of anything I had left," Kayla said. "It would've taken away more than it would've given me. Because seeing Abigail run around, hearing her laugh, her running up and hugging me—oh my goodness! I would've missed out."



Steve Karlen serves as the campaign director for 40 Days for Life and the editor of *Day 41* magazine. He authored *This Is When We Begin to Fight* and co-authored *What to Say When: The Complete New Guide to Discussing Abortion* and *What to Say When 2: Your Proven Guide in the New Abortion Landscape*, all available at [40daysforlifegear.com](http://40daysforlifegear.com) or on Amazon.



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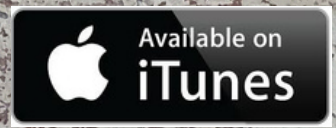
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# WHAT NOW?

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

—Jeremiah 29:11

**Now, it's decision time.** Pray for God to reveal your unique role in this historic effort, and then take courageous action.

We accept applications to lead the spring 40 Days for Life campaign every December and applications to lead the autumn campaign every June.

Visit [40daysforlife.com/apply](https://40daysforlife.com/apply) to put your city on the map as part of the largest mobilization of pro-lifers in history.

Will God use your “yes” to save a baby? Convert an abortion worker? Bring healing and mercy to a woman or man who has suffered the trauma of abortion? Even close your local abortion business?

**There's only one way to find out.**



Saylah was saved from abortion during a 40 Days for Life vigil in Fayetteville, North Carolina



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