

# Foster Care: A Life Worth Living

## First Place – High School

By Sadie Silcox, Lutheran High North, 12th grade

Psalm 139:13-14 states, “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” This bible verse emphasizes the essential value and uniqueness of every individual as seen through God's eyes. Foster care, a system designed to provide temporary homes for children who cannot live with their biological families, resonates deeply with the nature of this verse. The concept of fostering children can be viewed as an extension of God’s love and care for His creation, acknowledging the worth and dignity of each child.

This act of love has been demonstrated in my home from a very young age. When I was just 7 years old my parents chose to be foster parents and daily affirmed the importance of not only my life but of others in our community.

Psalm 139:13-14 reminds us that each child is “fearfully and wonderfully made” by God. This understanding is crucial for foster parents, as it calls them to recognize the divine craftsmanship in every child, despite their difficult pasts. It is a call to look beyond the behaviors and challenges that these children may exhibit and to see the inherent beauty and potential within them. Foster Care, therefore, becomes a ministry of presence and patience, where God’s love is demonstrated through the daily interactions and nurturing provided by the foster family.

Knowing that each child is “knit together” by God reassures foster parents that they are partnering with the Creator in His redemptive work. This partnership involves not only providing for the physical needs of the children but also tending to their emotional and spiritual well-being.

Furthermore, the verse magnifies the importance of identity and self-worth. Many children struggle with feelings of abandonment and low self-esteem. By embracing the truth that they are “wonderfully made,” foster parents can help these children develop a positive sense of self. This affirmation of their value can have a transformative impact, empowering them to overcome their past and envision a hopeful future, knowing they were created for a purpose.

In conclusion, foster care is a profound expression of God’s love and care for His children. Inspired by Psalm 139:13-14, it calls us to recognize the divine worth in every child and to respond with compassion and dedication. Foster parents, through their selfless service, become vessels of God’s grace, affirming the identity and value of the children in their care. As a community, we are called to support and uplift foster families, ensuring that every child experiences the truth that they are “fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Today that little baby my parents fostered when I was just seven years old, I proudly call brother. When he was two years old my parents adopted him into our family. He is now 11 and most certainly is “fearfully and wonderfully made.” I am so happy his biological mother knew his life was worth living. My family and I are forever changed due to Psalm 139:13-14. His works are worth celebrating!

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## **The Effects of Abortion on Mental Health**

### **Second Place – High School**

By Fiona Rohde, Trinity, Reed City, 9th grade

Most sanctity of life essays highlight the importance of the unborn child, and rightly so, but there is another human involved in an abortion. The mother is also fearfully and wonderfully made, and an abortion can have adverse effects on her as well. Mental and physical health are both deeply affected by the act of abortion, but most women are told that there are no adverse effects for the mother.

Pro-abortion advocates often say that childbirth is four times more dangerous than an abortion. Data sets in Finland show the opposite, that abortion is four times more dangerous than childbirth. The pro-abortion advocates also have been pushing the abortion pill, saying that it is even safer than surgical abortion. The abortion pill was responsible for 63% of the abortions in 2023. The same data sets from Finland show that the abortion pill is four times more dangerous than surgical abortion. (Clark 11:39-11:40, 14:40-15:36)

Mental health is important. Although moms have been told that abortion does not affect their mental health, science says otherwise. The most common pro-abortion book to cite is “The Safety and Quality of Abortion Care in the United States”. This book includes only 4 pages on the correlation of abortion and mental health. Between 1993 and 2018, 75 peer-reviewed studies on this subject were performed. Of the 75, 50 determined an association between abortion and future mental health issues. “The Safety and Quality of Abortion Care in the United States” cited only 7 of the 75 total studies. All 7 were from the 25 that did not determine an association between abortion and mental health. 5 of the 7 studies cited came from the Turnaway Study. (Clark 24:52-24:53, 25:17-26:23)

The Turnaway Study is a study commonly cited by pro-abortion advocates. Its premise is that women who try to secure abortions but fail or are turned away have worse mental health in the future. The problem is, when they tried to recruit people, only 37% of people approached agreed. During the study,

44% of the 37% who agreed to the study dropped out. The study was published with 17% of the total number of participants they needed to make the study successful at the start. 5 years later, they went to the participants, and 95% of the women who did not secure abortions were grateful that they did not abort their child (Clark 26:24-28:40). For these reasons, the Turnaway Study is not a reliable source.

One other study on this topic was conducted by Priscilla Coleman with the British Journal of Psychiatry. Priscilla Coleman took a meta-analysis of 22 studies, 36 measures of effect, and 877,181 participants. She found that women who received an abortion received an 81% increased risk of mental health in the future, and almost 10% of the people who had mental health problems had an abortion as their only risk factor. (Coleman sec. 3-4)

There is much more evidence for a connection between adverse mental health conditions and abortion, more than could fit in this essay, but not many people know about it. "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well."- Psalm 139:13-14. We need to inform women about this fact, and that they too are affected by the action of intentionally killing an innocent, unborn child.

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## A Good Death in Christ

### First Place – Elementary School

By Christiana Klamer, St. Paul, Fowler, 7th grade

The word euthanasia comes from the Greek roots *eu* and *thanatos*; *eu* meaning good, and *thanatos* meaning death. The word itself implies that euthanasia is a good death. The practice of euthanasia, however, is not good. Euthanasia is the purposeful killing of people who wish to have a peaceful death instead of risking a painful death. This may sound like a better alternative, but it directly contradicts God's Law: "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). With or without consent, euthanasia is murder.

A part of euthanasia that appeals to some people is the ability to control when they die. Having control over a stressful situation can potentially relieve the worry. Unfortunately, they do not realize that the time of death is God's choice only. As we read in 1 Samuel, "The Lord kills and brings to life" (1 Samuel 2:6). Because God gave us life, He has control over death. God knows our time of death; it is not our decision.

Euthanasia is remarkably similar to putting pets to sleep. When a pet gets miserable near the end of its life, the owner may choose to put it to sleep. Similarly, when a person nears death or is in pain, they may seek to have their life ended. God gave mankind dominion over animals, which we read about in Genesis, "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth" (Genesis 1:26). This dominion includes the authority to humanely end an animal's life. We do not however have the authority to kill people in this respect. The act of euthanasia is treating a valuable life as that of an animal. Only God has such authority, because He is the Creator of all life.

Even though it may be difficult, in death we are guaranteed comfort; as sung in a beloved hymn, "In death Thy comfort still afford" (LSB 708). Since God is present with people from their conception, surely He will be with them in death. "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well" (Psalm 139:13-14). With God by our side, we need not fear death. He will not forsake us. Because God created us, we are fearfully and wonderfully made. This is truly good!

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## **I Just Want a Family Who Loves Me**

### **Second Place – Elementary School**

By Calah Keup, Trinity, Reed City, 8<sup>th</sup> grade

I want to be loved...I just want to have a family. When the youth at Eagle Village were asked what they wanted for Christmas, phrases similar to these were sprinkled across the page of the Eagle Village Christmas Letter. Eagle Village is a facility that protects, educates, and gives love and emotional therapy to abused, neglected, orphaned, and emotionally unstable kids and teens before they are adopted or are able to return to their families. The Eagle Village staff believe that protecting children and properly educating them is an important daily goal with every student in their care. They teach them about Christ's love.

To share Christ's love, every year for Valentine's Day, my sister, and I, along with a few friends, pack goody bags for the Eagle Village residents. This year, a resident told an Eagle Village staff member that she was excited for tomorrow. When asked why, she replied that every year she had been there, she had gotten a goody bag for Valentine's Day. This remark showed me how something so simple could make such a difference in one child's life.

I personally know kids who are adopted. They attend our Lutheran school, which provides good role models and people who care about them. They know that they are loved, and not just by their adopted family, but by others, and most importantly, by God. Psalm 139:13-14 says, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well" (ESV). This verse shows God's love of everyone, including an abandoned or orphaned child because He has created them. If a child does not have a family, he or she might not feel like they are anybody; as though they are not worth anything to anyone. Adoption shows these kids that they *are* cared about. Everyone has value, especially in the eyes of their loving Creator.

When I grow up, I hope to adopt children of my own. I want to teach, love, and tell them that God loves them and that they are fearfully and wonderfully made. Adoption is a beautiful thing, and through it, God shows kids that He is caring for them, and that they are not alone.

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