

“What should I do when a topic is brought up at school that goes against gospel teachings, such as abortion?”

There are many ways to respond—or not—depending on the situation. First, think about what might happen if you do or don’t say something. If your silence would cause others to think you agree with something you know to be wrong, you may want to find a simple way to make your disagreement known. If you think your comments would only cause contention, then you could find another occasion to comment. However, if your class is respectful to one another and the teacher is asking for participation, you could pray for inspiration and then explain your beliefs.

You can also prepare ahead of time if you know your class is going to discuss a certain topic. In addition to the scriptures and conference talks on the topic, take a look at *True to the Faith*, *Gospel Principles*, or *For the Strength of Youth*. You could also practice explaining the topic in family home evening. When you’re ready, talk to your teacher or your classmates.

How you respond is as important as *what* you say. Be respectful and try not to use Church jargon. Your classmates will be lost as soon as you say, “A Young Women adviser in my ward taught me that . . .”

What’s most important is for you to know what the Church teaches and what the Holy Ghost is telling you so that you will not be deceived by errors you might hear or read in class.

Remember Whom You Represent

When dealing with these situations, try to remember that others may not share the same feelings toward the subject as you. Do not be overbearing or pushy, but don’t be afraid to defend your beliefs. Remember that you represent Christ.

Madeline K., age 16, Wyoming, USA



Be Polite

I feel like I should share my views in a polite way and also state why I believe them. I don’t think I need to make others share my views, but I think that they should know where I stand on certain topics and understand my point of view.

Sabrina S., age 16, Oregon, USA



Be Respectful

It’s important to let ourselves be heard, but it’s also very important to be respectful of others’ beliefs. Don’t argue. Arguing creates enemies and confusion. If an idea is brought up that is against our religion, stay calm, focused, and respectful, and don’t forget to listen to the Spirit. There are things we don’t understand that God does. We should listen to and learn from His Spirit.

Hannah M., age 18, Utah, USA

Share What the Church Teaches

I try to answer such questions to the best of my capabilities because my friends and teachers don't know, unless I tell them, what the Church's stance is on such topics. By doing so, they are able to know for future reference, and you will benefit spiritually. Remember: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Joshua M., age 16, Manchester, England



Help Others Think about What Is Right

Share your feelings honestly. Many topics in school, like abortion, are highly debated, so don't be embarrassed to speak up. It is a good chance to share the gospel and the standards we believe in. If you share your beliefs, you can help people think about what is right.

Madison R., age 14, North Carolina

Correct the False Doctrine

We belong to a missionary-minded Church in which we are all called to preach; therefore, we cannot allow false doctrine to spread. In such situations, we must speak up in order to correct any false doctrine and help the people understand the restored gospel's viewpoint on the subject.

David M., age 16, Kasai-Occidental Province, Democratic Republic of Congo



Know the Church's Stance

I was in a course where controversial topics were often discussed.

The first thing to do is to respect others' beliefs, as you would expect from your fellow classmates. If the topic is in direct conflict with the Church, feel free to state your opinion. You do not have to mention the Church in your response. Nevertheless, be sure to know the Church's stance on these things.

Joseph Z., age 18, Maryland, USA

Avoid Contention

I would explain my opinion, defending my principles and doctrines of the Church, respecting the ideas of others. I would not be contentious, which will drive away the Spirit, who could influence others in a positive way.

Daiana V., age 15, Buenos Aires, Argentina



STAND FIRM

"Ours is to explain our position through reason, friendly persuasion, and accurate facts. Ours is to stand firm and

unyielding on the moral issues of the day and the eternal principles of the gospel, but to contend with no man or organization. Contention builds walls and puts up barriers. Love opens doors."

Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "No Time for Contention," *Ensign*, May 1978, 8.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"How can I become comfortable enough to talk to my bishop about issues or concerns?"

Send your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by May 15, 2014, to liahona@ldschurch.org or by mail (see address on page 3).

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

The following information and permission must be included with your response: (1) full name, (2) birth date, (3) ward or branch, (4) stake or district, (5) your written permission, and, if you are under age 18, your parent's written permission (email is acceptable) to publish your response and photograph.

