

Vigil Etiquette

40 Days for Life Reno/Tahoe

Please remember, we come to the sidewalk of the abortion site to bring Christ's Love. This means that if someone approaches you and attempts to provoke you, do not respond in kind. If you feel at all threatened, which has not occurred in recent years to my knowledge, you are encouraged to call the police immediately, but do not respond to a threat with a threat in return. Ensure that the video camera is capturing anything that is going on for your protection if it is later needed and continue with your prayer if you can. Know that the 40 Days for Life campaign has made arrangements that if anyone is harassed, there is legal assistance available for us, without a cost to you or our local campaign. It is our hope and prayer that this will not be needed, and we ask that you do everything in your power to not provoke a situation. But if something comes up, know that you will have the support you need to handle the situation properly and if need be, legally.

Do NOT block the entrance to the abortion site. If you feel called to attempt sidewalk counseling, we have fetal development pamphlets with an insert containing local Pregnancy, Parenting and Post-Abortive Resources, along with local Pro-Life contact information. You may also want to attempt to begin a conversation with the vehicles as they approach the site by offering them one of our free rosaries. Standing away from the entrance to the site, while holding out a gift makes an excellent opportunity to start talking. Once they have stopped and open their window to talk or receive what you have held out to them, you are welcome to approach the vehicle. Use caution but be friendly. Remember, even if they don't indicate they are going to choose life, you have the opportunity to make an impression that will last once they are inside. Make it a good impression! Share with them a taste of Christ's love for them, even at this moment of turmoil.

Do NOT block the sidewalk. While there is no bubble law or other restriction to prevent us from being on the sidewalk outside the abortion site, we must allow pedestrians to pass using the sidewalk. Please do not obstruct the sidewalk.

You may not be called to Sidewalk Counsel. Not everyone is. But as with the couple who were turned away by the sight of a sole woman kneeling in prayer, so too can your prayerful witness work miracles. Use your time in vigil to pray.

Bring your cell phone. If you have one, it is a good idea to bring your cell phone whenever you come to pray in vigil at the abortion site. If you feel threatened in any way, please call the police and report the incident.

Do NOT engage in a verbal battle. If anyone attempts to engage you in an argument, please do not participate. Do what you can to stay focused on prayer. If there is the opportunity for civil dialog, by all means do what you can, but if it becomes heated, do your best to smile and brush off any insults. We cannot convince those who close themselves off from the truth, so as soon as it is apparent that they are not open, disengage and return to prayer.

Bring your video camera. Unless or until we have a dedicated camera at the site of the vigil, please bring your camera with you when you come, along with tape (or other media) and charged batteries. It is a good idea to have it in the car across the street from the abortion site, pointing towards where you will be standing vigil. If anything inappropriate happens, you will have a record of what has occurred. We are looking for a camera to leave there at all times. This will work best if we can ensure that we have full coverage, 24 hours a day, so sign-up for the hours when you can help.

Wear layers and be prepared for the elements. Before you come out on vigil, review the [weather forecast](#) and dress accordingly. Know that you will not be alone in standing out in the winter weather. Our colleagues in Michigan are braving -20 degree temperatures, with roaring winds. They report that they accomplish their shift by dressing for the weather, with layers and the necessary protection. Wearing a pair of ski or snow board pants is an excellent way to protect your legs from the cold. For more tips on staying comfortable, see the 40 Days for Life article "[It's not cold, It's just inadequate clothing.](#)"