

# **Belton church broadens scope of sanctity of life focus**

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**By George Henson**

*Staff Writer*

BELTON—Annual sanctity of life emphases are common in many Baptist churches, but Suzanne Besser led First Baptist Church in Belton to broaden its scope beyond discussions of abortion and euthanasia.

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The finger printing of children for identification purposes was combined with crafts to make for a non-threatening experience at the Sanctity of Life Fair held at First Baptist Church in Belton. (Photo by George Henson)

Besser acknowledges her passion for the sanctity of human life has its roots in a friend's decision to have an abortion more than 20 years ago, but she feels it's important to not make abortion the central focus for her church's Sanctity of Human Life Fair.

"We're focusing on what God is doing, rather than what the enemy is doing," she said. "We use this time to spotlight life-affirming organizations.

"God has taught me that we can be much more effective when we bring the peace that passes understanding into our conversations with people who have strong opinions about sanctity of life issues. We're not to share with others about sanctity of life issues with closed fists but with open hands that God fills with his peace and love."

The "Celebrate Life with a Show of Hands" theme around which the Belton

church based its recent Sanctity of Human Life Fair bears that out. Ministries spotlighted at the Sunday afternoon event included resources for people with disabilities, an exhibit about chiropractic health, a chemical dependency rehabilitation clinic, a grief and support group, child placement centers, a criminal justice ministry, a maternity shelter, assisted living centers and the Ronald McDonald House for parents of hospitalized children.

The fair included an exhibit dealing with abortion issues, but down the aisle was a booth where volunteers fingerprinted children for identification purposes. Workers helped the children incorporate their fingerprints into artwork that made the experience totally non-threatening.

Another table offered information on setting up living wills, funeral arrangements and other end-of-life topics.

“For 20 years, I’ve been asking people to think rationally and in non-polarizing ways about sanctity of human life issues. The Sanctity of Human Life Fair is a big step toward rational, non-polarizing approaches to these complex issues,” Besser said.

“Some of the people I’ve talked to about the fair are a bit skeptical at first, but once they realize that this is something completely different, they are excited about the concept.”

Pastor Andy Davis insisted the event has been a good thing for his congregation.

“We believe in the celebration of life and the sanctity of life. Some of the groups that participate in the fair are ministries that we support financially and others we don’t, but they are all excellent ministries,” he said.

“The fair has exposed our people to some of these ministries and we’ve have several people in the last year get involved with them. And that’s a

good thing.”

Besser would like to see the fairs spread across the state, and she has prepared a notebook of materials to help other churches organize their own fairs. For more information, call Miracle You Ministries at (254) 939-8420.

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