

Moral issues raised by surrogacy

Issue concerning Surrogacy	?	1	2	4	8	16
Husband may bond with the surrogate (esp. if not AI) – she’s growing his baby						
Wife may feel jealousy, inadequacy etc.						
Surrogate mother may bond with the baby - feels first kick, gives birth etc.						
If not IVF, surrogate has biological ties with the child						
Open to exploitation, esp. if poor or in countries where payment is greater than expenses						
Mother decides whether to smoke, exercise, work, travel, eat junk etc.						
Mother can decide whether to have an abortion						
Mother might become ill and need support						
If something happens to the couple now or in the future, surrogate may be the only living relative						
Any payment reduces the value of a child and commercialises humanity						
The child may want to contact the surrogate mother						
The child may have a lower status if other children are born to the couple or the surrogate						
The law won’t enforce any contract, even in IVF, so the surrogate can always keep the child						
The couple are open to manipulation and blackmail						
The couple can’t prevent the surrogate from damaging the foetus by smoking etc						
The baby might have a disability						
The couple might split up						
The couple could change their minds						
The surrogate might be unable to have another child						
The surrogate might decide to keep the baby						
The couple could have their own child						
The couple could become ill or die						
Gay couples could be able to have children through surrogacy						
‘Payment for expenses’ isn’t enough – we have a minimum wage						
No exchange of money is appropriate						

- ?
- In the first column, students simply add a tick to show they understand the issue. If there are words they don't understand, or they can't see why it's an issue for anyone, they leave it blank. The teacher then explains any of the un-ticked rows until everyone understands why this would be a concern.
- 1
- The '1' column is for students to complete on their own. It is important that they don't discuss the issues at this stage, as this column reflects their starting point, and may be referred back to later. They should enter a number from 0 to 10. 0 suggest this is not an issue at all. For example, many people think that gay couples being able to have children raises no moral issues at all, it's a great thing and there are no problems with it. 10 suggests it's a real concern, and would make it completely wrong to choose surrogacy as an option.
- 2
- Students now pair up, and have to reach an agreement on which number to put in the '2' column. It's vital this is done properly. Some students will just want to treat this as a Maths exercise. "You put 9, I gave it a 1 – shall we say 5?" You need to pick up on this, and get them to see the importance of the numbers. "I gave it a 10 because if the parents die, the surrogate won't want the baby." "Yes, but what are the chances of a couple in their 30s both dying? What if any couple died? You'd have the child adopted. That's why it should be a 1." After discussion, a person might completely change their mind.
- 4
- Two pairs come together, and you have to reach an agreement as a group. Remind students to look back to their original answer, and tell them to argue their corner before the group reaches a consensus.
- 8
- This is where you need an artefact – a board marker, Pritt Stick or whatever. Give it to one member of each group. They are in charge for the first issue. They need to take comments from different people and gauge the group's overall leaning. What they decide, everyone writes down in the 8 column. They should then pass the board marker to the person next to them as they discuss the second issue, and so on.
- 16
- This tends to be the whole class by this stage, particularly if you had a few groups of 3 at the beginning, or if it's a smaller group. Time is usually up by now, so you could use this as a starter for the next lesson. Alternatively, get each group of 8 to choose their most contentious issue, and try to reach a consensus as a class. You can really draw out the issues and ask searching questions at this point. It's an excellent plenary.