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Many Christian churches active in contemporary Russia take a stance against abortion as part of their agenda for a moral transformation of society. Compared to their western counterparts, they face the special problem that many of the middle-aged women who make up a large part of their active membership have had multiple abortions during their reproductive years, since abortion was among the most widely available methods of birth control in the Soviet Union. Churches thus face a problem of retrospective penitence as well as one of didactically influencing current behavior. This paper looks at the way the Russian Orthodox Church deals with this dilemma in adapting didactic materials from the North American anti-abortion movement. I suggest that while western anti-abortionists (as well as western academics) often construct the issue of abortion as a matter of moral choice and debate, this focus sits uneasily with the Orthodox Church's perceived need to retroactively transform women's ways of engaging with memories of abortion. Materials produced in Russia thus tend to be liturgical texts offering practices of penitence, rather than argumentative interventions. By investigating the tensions between didactic persuasion and constructions of embodied memory, I ask how the Russian case challenges widespread scholarly understandings of the issues at stake in abortion activism.