

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS SUNDAY

DRAMA: *Janet's Story*

Time: 7 minutes

Props: 6 white, flat sheets; one chair.

Participants:

1. Narrator
2. "Janet"
3. 11 volunteers to come at each pause to put on or take off one sheet.

Directions:

The Narrator reads the script of Janet's story while "Janet" sits on the chair. At each pause, one volunteer comes and places a sheet over "Janet" and then returns to her seat; after the sixth sheet, the volunteers take off one sheet at each pause.

Purpose: Help people visualize the way in which the circumstances of battered woman's life limit her options and ways those can be overcome.

Script:

Janet is thirty-five years old and has been married for sixteen years. She grew up in the church and is a committed Christian. She has four children, ages seven to fifteen. When Janet was a child, she saw her father hit her mother once or twice a week. Several times, Janet recalls her mother hiding her bruises with makeup before going to Sunday worship. [Pause. 1st person comes forward and places a sheet over Janet.]

When Janet was in high school, her pastor taught a course for the church youth group on marriage. He emphasized that marriage was forever, that it was sacred. [Pause. 2nd person comes forward and places a sheet over Janet.]

Janet quit school in her second year of college in order to marry Bob. He had a good job and he didn't want her to work outside the home. In their premarital counseling, her pastor told her, "You are blessed to have such a godly man who wants to take care of you. [Pause. 3rd person comes forward and places a sheet over Janet.]

Bob began abusing Janet the first year of their marriage when she was pregnant. She threatened to leave. He told her to forget it, saying marriage is forever. [Pause. 4th person comes forward and places a sheet over Janet.]

Five years and two children later, Janet called a domestic violence crisis counselor. She told the counselor that she was a Christian and believed marriage is sacred and forever but she needed help. The counselor told her that the agency was a secular organization and could help her plan for her safety. Janet said, "Oh, I'll call back another time." [Pause. 5th person comes forward and places a sheet over Janet.]

Bob threatened Janet with a gun. Janet thought about going to her minister, but her husband was a well-liked active leader in their church. She didn't think her minister would believe her stories of abuse. Instead she fled to a restaurant with the kids where she called the shelter, but there wasn't

any room. Janet went back home. [Pause. 6th person comes forward and places a sheet over Janet.]

[Address the person under the bed sheets.] “Janet, why do you put up with this? Why don’t you just leave him?”

[Janet, from under the bed sheets, replies non-verbally by attempting to move but cannot get up because of the weight of the bed sheets.]

Janet remembered her grandmother used to tell her that the church was a place to feed the hungry, care for the sick, help the poor and protect the weak. [Pause. 7th person comes forward and removes a sheet from Janet.]

One Sunday Janet’s pastor preached on healthy families. She/He had learned recently that women are more at risk in the home than on the streets. She/He said this was a shame and a sin. She/He was going to learn more about domestic violence and would share it with the congregation. Janet decided to speak with her pastor after the service. [Pause. 8th person comes forward and removes a sheet from Janet.]

Janet went to the shelter’s website. In the women of faith section she read that violence destroys the covenant of marriage and that God does not hold the sanctity of marriage over the sanctity of life. She also saw the list of local Christian pastors trained to help her with any questions regarding her faith and her abuse. [Pause. 9th person comes forward and removes a sheet from Janet.]

While waiting with the kids to see their pediatrician Janet found brochures on the effects of domestic violence on children. [Pause. 10th person comes forward and removes a sheet from Janet.]

At Janet’s monthly Mothers of Teenagers meeting a member shared she had grown up in an abusive home and was afraid it was affecting the way she was raising her children. Until then Janet thought she was the only one. Janet shared her experience too. The next day one of the members brought her cash and an envelope full of gift certificates from a hotel, grocery store, and gas station. She told Janet whenever she was ready to leave, MOTs would be there to help her. [Pause. 11th person comes forward and removes a sheet from Janet.]

Janet read in her Bible: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.” (I Cor. 3: 16-17). Janet called the crisis counselor and developed a safety plan to leave. [Janet removes the last sheet on her own.]

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