

Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day 2011

Resource Packet

“Loved and Empowered”

Written by
Mable C. Dunbar

**Prepared by the General Conference
Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day Committee**

Composed of representatives from:

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

Adventist Review

Children's Ministries

Education Department

Family Ministries

Health Ministries

Ministerial Association

Women's Ministries

Youth Ministries



SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

General Conference
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March 17, 2011

Dear Sisters:

Joyful greetings to you in Jesus. How many people do you know who are loved? This year our Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day packet is titled *Loved and Empowered*. On this special day our prayer is that God will love our hurting sisters, and brothers, through us and that He will empower us all as we recognize our value in God's eyes.

Our author is Dr. Mable C. Dunbar. She is one of the few people in this world who have the privilege and responsibility of working with women and their children as they deal with the problem of domestic violence. Dr. Dunbar manages three safe homes for abused women in the United States and has years of experience and training in the area of violence against women.

The enemy of our souls, Satan himself, does not want to see those who are hurting healed and nurtured. God calls us to be His hands and feet to help others. He has given us, the women of the church, an awesome responsibility to help those in need, reach out to those in pain, and love those who yearn for tender compassion. Join with us as we say, "Use me Lord, I am ready to love others in pain." As we do this, God will empower that person so that they too can answer the call.

Joyfully,


Heather Dawn Small, Director

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter.....	2
About the Author.....	3
Suggested Order of Service.....	4
Scripture Reading: “A Litany of Thanksgiving”.....	5
Children’s Story: “When Your Load is Heavy”.....	6
Activities for Children.....	7
Sermon Outline: “Loved and Empowered”.....	10
Sermon: “Loved and Empowered”.....	12
Friday Evening/Sabbath School Program (Skit: “Just Suppose”).....	20
Sabbath Afternoon/Vespers Program.....	25
Adventist Youth Program.....	27

About the Author

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**Suggested Order of Service
Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day, August, 2011**

Call to Worship

*“Inside Your Temple, O God, we think of Your constant love.
You are praised by people everywhere,
and Your fame extends all over the earth.
You rule with justice; Let the people of Zion be glad!
This is our God forever and ever; He will lead us for all time to come.”
(Seventh-day Adventist Church Hymnal, Scripture Reading #849)*

Invocation

Hymn of Praise: “Redeemed! How I Love to Proclaim it”
(Seventh-day Adventist Church Hymnal, #337)

Prayer

(Prayer is offered for those in our communities who are suffering because of domestic violence or losses as a result of abuse and for those who help and support them)

Offering

Children’s Story: “When your Load is Heavy”

Special Presentation

(Recognition or Award to a local organization or individual who has been outstanding in supporting and advocating for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse)

Scripture Reading: “A Litany of Thanksgiving”

Special Music

Sermon: “Loved and Empowered”

Closing Hymn: “Draw Me Nearer”
(Seventh-day Adventist Church Hymnal, #306)

Benediction

**Scripture Reading
“A Litany of Thanksgiving”**

Leader: God, we thank You for the precious gift of life. We are grateful that You love and empower us to be, to have our own individuality, to think, feel and do.

People: We thank you for keeping us safe all of the days that You have given us the privilege to be here.

Leader: Many have died as a result of domestic violence and sexual abuse.

People: We pray for their families and friends who still grieve and mourn their loss.

Leader: There are those who live with domestic violence and abuse, not knowing what to do or where to go for help.

People: We thank You for providing people who have devoted their life's work to the prevention of domestic violence, sexual abuse and other forms of abuse.

Leader: There are those who help to provide support for people who are abused, battered and broken.

People: We thank You for these partners, friends, and advocates who have been steadfast in their love and commitment; for those who have overcome fear, indifference, opposition, prejudice, pride or burnout to embrace a life of caring compassion for the oppressed.

Leader: There are those who want to change their abusive nature and experience healing and wholeness in You.

People: We thank You for giving them hope and the realization that if they believe in You all things are possible.

Leader: Inspire us to challenge injustice and stand strong against the forces that cause domestic violence and sexual abuse.

All: We thank You for granting us the love, courage, and determination to make a difference in a world where domestic violence and sexual abuse exist even in Christian homes, churches, schools, and communities. Our dream is to live in a world of peace where all are accepted, respected, loved and empowered. This dream can be a reality because You have not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of a sound mind.

Children's Story
"When Your Load Is Heavy"
(Adapted from www.Sermon4Kids.com)

THEME: Jesus will help you carry the load.

OBJECTS: Several items that are not too heavy, such as a brick, a ten pound stone, and a tire.

SCRIPTURE: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."* Matthew 11: 28 [NIV]

How strong are you? Do you think you are pretty strong? How many of you think you could pick up this brick? How about a stone like this one? Well, you must be pretty strong then. How many of you think you could pick up a tire? Well, I think you could if you had some help.

Some of you might have some pretty heavy burdens to carry in life, or you know someone who does. Perhaps you have a physical handicap that makes your life difficult. Or perhaps your father has lost his job and your family doesn't have a lot of money. Maybe someone in your family has cancer or some other serious illness, or someone has been hurt in other ways and you are worried about them. You may be having a hard time making good grades in school. I don't know what the burdens are that you have in your life, but maybe there are some things that you just can't handle by yourself. But you don't have to!

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest." There is no reason for you to struggle with burdens that are too heavy for you. There are two things that you can do when you have a big problem. One is that you can pray to Jesus and trust in Him; He will help you. It is important also talk to a teacher, a relative, your Sabbath school teacher, or some other adult who can help you.

When you have burdens, remember to ask an adult for help. And we can all learn to trust in Jesus. When the load is heavy, He will help us to carry it.

Dear Jesus, we are thankful that when we have problems and burdens, we can talk to someone who cares about us, and you will also help us carry the load. Amen.

Activities for Children

Coloring Page (www.sermons4kids.com)



Thank you, God, for helping me.

Word Search (www.sermons4kids.com)

“Come Unto Me”

Matthew 11:28-30

N I Y V A H E A R T J G U Y N
L P P N U U O M L H X A H T W
I E V N V M V B W W E A R Y R
P Z U I R R C K S I E L B Y T
R R Q G O G J T G T O T Z S H
S T O Q Y H G K F M E P A B N
B J N S O C L Q R E S T X C C
U L A F T O S W G W Y W T H K
R E I O M M Q A H U M B L E X
D E T G F E F Z K H X Y K M E
E M E Y H I R U R Y E O V L K
N F E L Z T F G L E Y P T D R
Y D J J U W S B W O S N C A A
H K P L E A R N Y P E T Q V N
H K C I I J J J E G I J C Y E



**COME
WEARY
BURDEN**

**GENTLE
YOKE
LEARN**

**HEART
HUMBLE
REST**

Ongoing Activities for Children

1. Posters/Pictures (grades K-2)

Encourage children to make posters or draw pictures of children doing kind deeds and helping people who need help. Posters can be exhibited throughout the church. Each child that participates may be given a small gift.

2. Poems/short stories (grades 3-5)

- Ask children to write poems or stories about why it is never nice to make fun of someone.
- Invite children to help by collecting clothing, toys, games, etc., for local shelters

3. Essays (grades 6-8)

Children can write a page about ways that churches and communities can work together to help victims and their children

4. Community Projects (Grades 9-12)

- Collect clothing, toys, games, etc., for local shelters
- Do fundraising events to raise funds to help victims and their children
- Learn how to become a big brother or sister to an abused child
- Prepare and perform skits or plays about abuse prevention
- Hold forums on abuse prevention
- Model non-abusive behaviors
- Encourage peers to create and maintain healthy relationships
- Talk with church leaders and help them address the issue in schools and churches
- Participate in group sessions and create other ideas to help prevent abuse and domestic violence

Sermon Outline

“Loved and Empowered”

A. Introduction

God's image is male and female, created to be in perfect harmony with one another, and with Him.

B. The Destructive Agenda

Satan has almost achieved his evil agenda by controlling, deceiving, manipulating and destroying humanity through domestic violence and abuse.

C. The Facts

Domestic violence is a serious problem world-wide. It violates the fundamental rights of human beings and often results in serious injury or death

D. The Real Issue

Domestic violence is a sin issue! Satan wants to keep men and women blaming, shaming and fearing each other to prevent them from uniting against him, the real enemy of our lives and our souls.

E. The Loving and Empowering Agenda

We need to work together as a team, in partnership with each other.

F. How did Jesus Love and Empower Abused Women?

1. *He forgave them.* (Luke 7:37-48; Mark 14:3-9)
2. *He did not condemn them but showed them mercy.* (John 8:1-11)
3. *He showed them love, understanding and tenderness.* (John 4:6-26)
4. *He healed, cleansed, and made them strong.* (Mark 5:25-34; Matthew 9:20-22)

G. How are we Loved and Empowered?

1. Jesus forgives us
2. Jesus shows us love and tenderness
3. Jesus heals, cleanses and makes us strong
4. Jesus does not condemn us, but shows us mercy
5. Jesus restores our souls and makes us whole
6. Jesus raises us from spiritual death.
7. Jesus gives us the opportunity to be saved. The way of salvation is the same for man and woman. Each is forgiven, each receives eternal life and becomes a son or daughter in God's family (Romans 8:16-17).

8. Jesus gives us limitless power and opportunities. “Every human being created in the image of God is endowed with power akin to that of the Creator: individuality, power to think and to do” (*Education*, p. 17).
9. Jesus promises to be with us: “I will never leave you or forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)
10. His love for us is everlasting and continues to draw us to Him even when we wander away! “I have loved you with an everlasting love and have been faithful to you in the past; I will continue to love you and draw you to me” Jeremiah 31:3. (The Clear Word).

H. Conclusion

We cannot continue to deny that domestic violence occurs in Christian homes, churches and communities. We have an obligation to appropriately address this issue as often as we can, and in as many ways as we can. In doing so who knows whose life we could save?

I. Story

By resolving to risk our lives for others, we will discover the true meaning of love, the amazing power and force of the will transformed by Christ. In setting out to do good deeds for others, we will do wonderful deeds for ourselves. God wants all of us to work together to stop abuse in its many forms and the intergenerational cycle of violence. When we determine to do so, we will draw strength, courage and wisdom from Him.

J. Our Response

“Draw Me Nearer,” Hymn #306

K. Benediction

Sermon

“Loved and Empowered”

Introduction

Genesis 1:16, 17 and Genesis 2:18-24 record the special and sacred creation of humanity. From the beginning of time woman and man were made to rule and have dominion over the earth. And God said, "Let us make [human beings] in Our image, after Our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them."

God created male and female to be in perfect harmony with one another and with Him. Man and woman were created to function as His representatives on earth. They were to share equally in everything: in obedience, in blessings, in ruling, and in reproducing.

The Destructive Agenda

Lucifer was created as an anointed Cherub. Eventually he became full of pride and wanted to be as God. He said to himself, "I will be great in the heavens...I will sit next to God on the sacred mountain...I will dwell in the highest heaven far above the clouds, I will be like the Almighty, the Most High God" (Isaiah 14:12-4 The Clear Word). He convinced many other angels that his cause was just. Soon war started in heaven. Satan and his sympathizers were defeated. They were cast out of heaven and onto this earth. Satan's spirit of revenge and his desire for power and control intensified. When Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, he used tactics of fear, shame and blame to try to destroy the image of God in them. Satan still works to destroy humanity; one method is through domestic violence and abuse.

Domestic violence, sometimes called battering, relationship abuse, or intimate partner violence, is a pattern of behaviors used by one individual to establish power and control over another without consideration for his or her individual rights. The abuse may be physical, sexual, religious, verbal, emotional, economic, or psychological; it may be actions or threats of action. The abuse is meant to frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, shame, or wound.

The Facts

Domestic violence is a serious problem world-wide. It violates the fundamental rights of human beings and often results in serious injury or death. Domestic violence is not gender specific. However, women are more often the victims.

Globally, various social, economic, political and religious forces impact women's human rights in different ways. Women may also experience human rights violations that do not fall within the commonly understood definitions of these four types of violence. Such violations may include forced and early marriages, female genital mutilation, honor killings, dowry-related violence, rape as a weapon of war, female infanticide, and enforced sterilization. Some forms of violence

may be in response to governmental policies or laws, such as the one-child only policy in China, which has led to an increase in female infanticide.¹

“Social traditions and religious beliefs play a role in female genital mutilation and honor killings. The effects of forced and early marriages include reproductive health costs, a greater risk of domestic violence, and limited educational and employment opportunities. In cultures that perceive women’s purity as embodying a community’s honor, rape has been increasingly used as a warfare tactic in conflict areas.”²

Violence against women in the family occurs in developed and developing countries alike. It has long been considered a private matter. But statistics paint a horrifying picture of the social and health consequences of violence against women. For women aged 15 to 44, violence is a major cause of death and disability. Worldwide, 40-70% of all female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner. In Peru, 70 per cent of all crimes reported to the police involve women beaten by their husbands. In the United States, a woman is beaten every 18 minutes. Indeed, domestic violence is the leading cause of injury among women of reproductive age in the United States.

Female genital mutilation is another horrific type of violence against women. According to the World Health Organization, 85 million to 115 million girls and women have undergone some form of female genital mutilation and suffer from its adverse health effects. It is estimated that more than 130 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM, mainly in Africa and some Middle Eastern countries, and two million girls a year are at risk of mutilation. There is a growing consensus that the best way to eliminate these practices is through educational campaigns that emphasize their dangerous health consequences.

Dowry-related violence and early marriage also threaten lives. Studies indicate that dowry demands play an important role in women being burned to death and in deaths of women being labeled suicides. In India, an average of five women a day are burned in dowry-related disputes—and many more cases are never reported.

Acts of violence against women in the setting of the community include rape, sexual assault within marriage, sexual harassment, prostitution and trafficking, pornography, and mistreatment of women migrant workers.

In the United States, national statistics indicate that a woman is raped every six minutes. A report of seven different countries found that more than 60% of sexual assault victims know their attackers. In South Africa, a sex crime happens every twenty seconds.

¹ *One Child Policy in China Designed to Limit Population Growth* by Matt Rosenberg, About.com Guide

² *Advocates for Human Rights*, February 1, 2006.

Many women are forced into prostitution either by their parents, husbands or boyfriends—or as a result of the difficult economic and social conditions in which they find themselves. They are also lured into prostitution, sometimes by "mail-order bride" agencies that promise to find them a husband or a job in a foreign country. As a result, they very often find themselves illegally confined in brothels in slavery-like conditions where they are physically abused and their passports withheld.

An estimated two million women are caught each year in the worldwide sex industry while countless children and other women are forced into low-wage jobs. The UN said there are no accurate statistics, but the number of women trafficked across borders each year could be twice as high if the count includes those forced into domestic situations. The extent of trafficking in women and girls has reached alarming proportions, especially in Asian countries. More than 100,000 women are trafficked annually in South Asia.

Perhaps most appalling of all the gender-based violence is that which is perpetrated or condoned—or at the very least ignored—by those responsible for upholding the law and providing protection. Examples include custodial violence against women, violence against women in situations of armed conflict, and violence against refugee and displaced women.

Violence against women affects women of all ages, ethnicities, races, nationalities and socio-economic backgrounds. Some forms of violence are gender-based and impact women more excessively, such as physical violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and human trafficking. Such violence occurs in many homes, including Christian homes. We must never think abuse can not occur in Seventh-day Adventist homes. A study conducted in one North American conference “surveyed 1,431 adults—men and women—and found some startling results. Nearly 34 percent of women and more than 20 percent of men reported being assaulted by an intimate partner.”

We cannot ignore this issue. We can no longer ignore an evil that crushes the spirit and destroys lives. We must remember that we have a responsibility, as our sister’s—or brother’s—keeper.

The Real Issue

Is the real issue regarding the prevalence and devastating effects of domestic violence a gender issue? No! Domestic violence and abuse in its many forms are evidence of “Satan’s kingdom at work destroying order, love and happiness in human relationships... We cannot dismiss evil as some vague spiritual force that presides outside of human behavior. Evil is rooted in a superhuman personality: Satan... Acts of evil are acts of sin. They are assaults on God’s moral laws. They separate the evildoer from God and from fellow human beings.”³ Domestic violence is a sin issue!

³ James and Phyllis Alsdurf, *Battered into Submission*. Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986, pp. 61-62.

Satan wants to keep men and women blaming, shaming and fearing each other to prevent them from uniting against him, the real enemy of our souls. Our fight is not with each other—men vs. women; members vs. leaders; parents vs. children. The battle is against the enemy of souls.

The Loving and Empowering Agenda

We must use our gifts to serve God, each other, and the world around us. It is essential that we teach unity and mutuality in relationships, and act as role models for future generations.

Women and men need each other, and neither can serve the Lord effectively with an attitude of independence, superiority, or inferiority toward the other. We need to work together as a team, in partnership with each other. George Craig says that “partnership is not a principle, but a relationship between persons who share in common enterprise, involving common risks, common privileges, and common responsibilities. Everything depends on the reality of our partnership with each other and each of us with God.”

First Corinthians 12 tells us that each individual receives spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of the church. These gifts are given by the Holy Spirit as He chooses, without discrimination based on gender. They are given to edify the church. The church is blessed when the role of both women and men is not only acknowledged, but also utilized and strengthened. When this happens, relationships are strengthened. Marriages are strengthened. Our churches, conferences, and communities are strengthened. We will foster a system of worship and service that will help stop the cycle of domestic violence and sexual abuse. We help to create a safe, loving and empowering environment for all to live and thrive.

How did Jesus Treat Abused Women in the Past?

I often wonder what a woman experienced two thousand years ago in the presence of our Lord. What did she learn as she interacted with Him? What did she see in His eyes as He looked at her, or hear in His voice as He spoke to her? Did the sound of His voice release her from fears associated with brokenness, victimization, abuse, rejection, and suffering? Did her thoughts of abandonment or insufficiency melt away when He placed His hand on her shoulder? Did His presence reveal compassion and acceptance? How did Jesus treat women?

1. *He forgave them.* (Luke 7:37-48; Mark 14:3-9)

One day a Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner. When a woman who had lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume. She bowed at His feet weeping. She began to wet His feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and poured perfume on them. The other guests were horrified, but Jesus said to her, “You have loved much. Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

2. ***He did not condemn them but showed them mercy.*** (John 8:1-11)

What were the thoughts that raced through Jesus' mind and the feelings that must have flooded His heart the day when a prostitute was dragged to him, a woman manhandled, terrorized and thrown at His feet? She was accused of adultery, and her accusers wanted Jesus to say what should be done with her. She was terrified. One word from Jesus would mean her death. Silence filled the courtyard as He knelt and wrote in the sand. When He finished, He asked her, "Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, Sir!" He reassured her and commissioned her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and leave your life of sin."

3. ***He showed them love, understanding and tenderness.*** (John 4:6-26)

The Samaritan woman came from a race despised by Jesus' countrymen. In addition, as a woman, she was considered inferior, as women were in that era. When she approached the well that day, Jesus was waiting patiently to speak with her. He knew that she had been with many men and was searching for love and security. He knew her heart's cry when He told her with tenderness, "I am the Messiah." He was not there to fill her with guilt. He was there to show her love, kindness and tenderness after she had experienced so much suffering and rejection. He was there to offer her eternal salvation.

4. ***He healed, cleansed, and made them strong.*** (Mark 5:25-34; Matthew 9:20-22)

Another woman came with a severe medical problem. She had been bleeding for twelve years. No doubt she had been abandoned, rejected by her family. She had seen many doctors. Her resources were gone. One day she sat in the dust of a Galilean street waiting for Jesus to walk by. Desperate, she purposed in her heart, "I only need to touch the hem of His garment and I will be healed." Pressing through the crowd towards Him, by faith she reached out. One touch of His garment and those 12 years of suffering were gone. Then there was the moment that He looked at her. His glance let her know that He knew of her suffering; that He understood how weary she had been. He rejoiced with her that she was healed, that she was cleansed, and that His strength was made perfect in her weakness.

Truly Christ sympathized with all humanity, including women. He threw over the attitude of His day, that women were inferior, of no value except as property and laborers. From these incidents in the Bible record, we see that He did—and still does—value women.

How are we Loved and Empowered Today?

- Jesus forgives us
- Jesus shows us love and tenderness

- Jesus heals, cleanses and makes us strong
- Jesus does not condemn us, but shows us mercy
- Jesus restores our souls and makes us whole
- Jesus raises us from spiritual death.
- Jesus gives us the opportunity to be saved. The way of salvation is the same for both man and woman. Each may be forgiven, each may receive eternal life and become a son or daughter in God's family. (Romans 8:16-17).
- Jesus gives us limitless power and opportunities. "Every human being created in the image of God is endowed with power akin to that of the Creator: individuality, power to think and to do." (*Education*, p. 17)
- Jesus will be with us: "I will never leave you or forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)
- His love for us is everlasting and continues to draw us to Him even when we wander away! "I have loved you with an everlasting love....I will continue to love you and draw you to Me." (Jeremiah 31:3 - The Clear Word).

Conclusion

Domestic violence in its many forms is an assault on God's character and moral laws. It occurs behind closed doors and results in withered souls, drooping spirits, and permanent physical, emotional, and sexual injuries that can lead to death. It is not a gender issue, but a sin issue. It is Satan's attempt to destroy the image of God in us.

It is therefore imperative that we as Seventh-day Adventist believers do all that we can, individually and corporately, to end domestic violence and abuse in its many forms, to assist victims, to direct abusers to services, to nurture children, and support the healthy functioning of families in our congregations and communities.

Many people have been turned off by religion because of the inconsistency they see between a people who believe that Jesus came to set the captives free (Luke 4:18) and the continued lack of support and services for women, men, and children who suffer wherever domestic violence shows its ugly face.

We must continue to speak out against it in both our private conversations and public forums. We cannot continue to deny that it is occurring in our homes, churches and communities. We have an obligation to address this issue as often as we can, and in as many ways as we can. In doing so, who knows whose life we could save? The following story will illustrate the importance of having the courage to be involved.

"I was walking down a dimly lit street late one evening when I heard muffled screams coming from behind a clump of bushes. Alarmed, I slowed down to listen, and panicked when I realized that I was hearing the unmistakable sounds of a struggle: heavy grunting, frantic scuffling, and the tearing of fabric. Only yards from where I stood, a woman was being

attacked.

Should I get involved? I was frightened for my own safety, and angry with myself for having suddenly decided to take a new route home that night. What if I became another statistic? Shouldn't I just run to the nearest phone and call the police? Although it seemed like an eternity, the deliberations in my head had taken only seconds, but already the girl's cries were growing weaker. I knew I had to act fast. How could I walk away from this? No, I could not turn my back on this unknown woman, even if it meant risking my own life.

I am not a brave man, nor am I athletic. I don't know where I found the moral courage and physical strength—but once I had finally resolved to help the girl, I became strangely transformed. I ran behind the bushes and pulled the assailant off the woman. Grappling we fell to the ground, where we wrestled for a few minutes until the attacker jumped up and escaped. Panting hard, I scrambled upright and approached the girl who was crouched behind a tree, sobbing. In the darkness, I could barely see her outline, but I could certainly sense her trembling shock.

Not wanting to frighten her further, I at first spoke to her from a distance. "It's O.K." I said soothingly. "The man ran away. You're safe now."

After a long pause I heard her words, uttered in wonder, in amazement. "Dad, is that you?" And then, from behind the tree, stepped my youngest daughter, Katherine.'⁴

By resolving to risk our lives for others, we will discover the true meaning of love, the amazing power and force of the will transformed by Christ. In setting out to do good deeds for others, we will do wonderful deeds for ourselves. God wants all of us to work together to stop domestic violence, abuse in its many forms, and the intergenerational cycle of violence. When we determine to do so, we will draw strength, courage and wisdom from Him.

Our Response

It is my prayer that you will determine to do all you can to end domestic violence and sexual abuse whenever and wherever you can; that you will recognize how much God loves and cares for every person; that you will daily seek His power to do justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with Him.

Please stand and join me in singing hymn # 306, "Draw Me Nearer"

Benediction

⁴ Greg O'Leary, in *Small Miracles*. by Yitta Halberstam. Holbrook, MA: Adams Media, 1998.

(Pray for victims of abuse and for the courage to speak out and to work against abuse and violence against women.)

Friday Evening / Sabbath School Program

ROLE PLAY

(Suitable for High School Students, Young and Older Adults)

Suggested Order of Service

Opening Prayer

Introduction of Program (Share information about domestic violence and dating violence)

Skit: “Just Suppose”

Questions for Irene/Messengers

Group Discussion

Closing Song: “I Believe in a Hill Called Mount Calvary” (Optional)

Closing Prayer

Skit: “Just Suppose”

Participants

“Irene”

Narrator/Moderator

Eight (8) Messengers

Scene 1

Irene tells of her shame

Narrator – Scene 1

Eight Negative Messages are given to Irene

(Each message is written out and given to a Messenger to read to Irene)

Messengers walk away

Scene 2

Narrator – Scene 2

Eight Positive Messages are given to Irene

(Each message is written out and given to a Messenger to read to Irene)

Messengers surround Irene

Irene recites her Praise

Methodology

1. The objectives of this role play are to: (1) Identify the positive or negative messages we give to individuals who have experienced or are suffering from domestic violence or abuse; (2) Learn how we as a body of believers can provide safety and healing for victims as well as perpetrators.
2. Scene 1: Irene sits in a chair facing the audience. She stands with bowed head and recites her shame and then sits. The Narrator reads Scene 1. Eight individuals then walk up to her and read a negative message to her. After doing so they walk away from her.

3. Scene 2: The Narrator reads scene 2. The same eight individuals again walk up to Irene and this time read positive messages to her. They form a semi-circle around her as if to protect her. Irene then stands, faces the audience and recites her praise.
4. The narrator or another designated person then asks Irene and the Messengers the questions provided. Irene and the Messengers then sit with the larger group and join in the discussion.

JUST SUPPOSE

IRENE'S SHAME

My heart is in anguish within me,
The terrors of death have fallen upon me.
Fear and trembling come upon me and horror overwhelms me.
And I say, "O that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest;
Truly, I would flee far away
I would lodge in the wilderness;
I would hurry to find shelter for myself from the raging wind and tempest."

It is not an enemy who taunts me,
I could bear that;
It is not adversaries who deal insolently with me.
I could hide from them.
But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend with whom I kept pleasant company;
We walked in the house of God with the throng. (Psalm 55:4-8; 12-14)

SCENE ONE

Narrator: You may or may not recognize Irene among your circle of friends or church members. Irene has been married to Jack for 12 years. They have three children. Irene came from a very conservative Christian home. Her parents were devout members who demanded total obedience from her and her older siblings. She recounts the times when she was severely punished because she did not recite her Bible verses perfectly. She remembers having to go to church when she was sick. She remembers having to attend every church function and sit still for hours in a hard seat because her parents were determined to make her a "good" Christian. In spite of the abuses she encountered as a child, Irene *refused to tell anyone* about her life because she thought that no one would believe her. After all her father was a well-known pastor and her mother "obeyed" him, no matter what!

When Irene was 22, she met Jack, 26, who swept her off her feet. In a few months they were married. Jack was also a “good” Christian and promised to take good care of her. Six months into the marriage Jack began abusing her physically and sexually. But *she told no one*. After six years of marriage, and regular church attendance, Jack began to physically and sexually abuse their two daughters. Irene finally decided that it was time to reach out to some of her church members for help. When she did, she received the following negative messages:

NEGATIVE MESSAGES

- PRAY ABOUT IT. GOD WILL GIVE YOU STRENGTH TO ENDURE.
- YOUR CHILDREN NEED A FATHER
- KEEP YOUR FAMILY TOGETHER AT ALL COSTS
- MARRIAGE IS A PRIVATE AFFAIR
- WHY DON'T YOU JUST FORGIVE HIM? HE'S SUCH A GOOD MAN!
- WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY ABOUT THE CHURCH IF YOU LEAVE HIM?
- WHAT DID YOU DO TO MAKE HIM ACT THAT WAY?
- IF YOU CHANGE, HE'LL CHANGE!

SCENE TWO

Narrator: Irene's church is innovative, creative, and dynamic. The members believe that in order to help its members and attract people to their church, they must address the emotional and physical as well as the spiritual well-being of each member. Their pastor, who attended a special conference on the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual abuse, encouraged the church leadership to do an anonymous survey to find out if any members had experienced or were suffering from domestic violence and/or sexual abuse. The church leadership discovered that at least a third of the members, (men as well as women) had been abused or were dealing with abuse issues, but were fearful of sharing this information because they felt that they would not be believed or accepted if they shared their story. Some felt that they would lose their position in the church, or their influence in the community.

The leaders were shocked at the survey results and decided to learn more about the dynamics of domestic violence and abuse. They wanted to know how they could help their abused and/or

abusive members. They explored Scripture passages that had been quoted out of context regarding male/female roles and submission. They made plans and began some programs to help victims and perpetrators.

They soon discovered that more abused individuals (Christian as well as secular) were coming to them for help, and that the community also became more receptive to some of the other programs the church offered. They also realized that more church members were ready to help in other specialized ministries that developed as a result of their ministry to families experiencing domestic violence. Their reputation as a caring church began to spread in the community. Within a few months Irene's church leadership realized that the members were revitalized, energized, and more zealous in helping others. Their membership grew steadily. When Irene came to them for help, they gave her the following positive messages:

POSITIVE MESSAGES

- GOD LOVES YOU AND DESIRES THAT YOU LIVE IN PEACE.
- YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEEK SAFETY FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN.
- I WOULD LIKE TO HELP YOU. WOULD YOU PERMIT ME TO CONTACT A PROFESSIONAL?
- I BELIEVE YOU.
- FEEL FREE TO SHARE YOUR FEELINGS WITH ME. I'M WILLING TO LISTEN.
- WHAT ARE YOUR NEEDS?
- I WANT THE BEST FOR YOU.
- YOU ARE ONLY RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN BEHAVIOR.

IRENE'S PRAISE

I will bless the Lord at all times.
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.
The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.
O magnify the Lord with me,
And let us exalt His name together.
I sought the Lord,
And He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.
The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. (Psalm 34:1-4, 18)

Questions for Irene

1. How did you feel when you heard the negative messages?
2. How did you feel when you heard the positive messages?

Questions for Messengers

1. How did you feel when you delivered the negative message?
2. How did you feel when you delivered the positive message?

Questions for Group Discussion

1. In what ways does the religious community ignore or deny the existence of domestic violence and sexual abuse in our homes and churches?
2. How do we as a church treat victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual abuse?
3. What are some specific ways that we, as a faith community, can help end the cycle of domestic violence and sexual abuse?
4. What is our statement of action and our level of commitment to accomplish these initiatives? What is *my* church doing?
5. What can I do?

Sabbath Afternoon Program or Vespers

Case Study and Panel Discussion *(Suitable for Young and Older Adults)*

Suggested Order of Service

- Opening Prayer
- Introduction of Program
- Introduction of Panelists
- Special Music
- Panel Discussion
- Questions from the Audience
- Closing Prayer

Case History

Don earned \$85,000 a year. He gave his wife Beth \$30 each week to buy groceries and incidentals for herself and their 5-year-old daughter. Don believed that because he paid all the bills while his wife stayed at home, he was doing his part to take care of the family. One day when Beth told him that she needed more money to take care of household expenses, Don got angry and slapped her across her face. He told her that she was stupid and mentally unbalanced. Over the next few months, he frequently yelled at her and called her dumb, and several times he hit her when a meal displeased him.

Finally Beth decided she could no longer tolerate her husband's abuse. She wanted a divorce. She sought advice from her minister, asking him to keep the matter confidential. He told her that Don was one of the finest Christians he knew, and a credit to the church because he was providing funds for many church and community projects. He suggested that she seek mental health counseling. He suggested that her husband might be suffering from burnout, so she should try to be more submissive. After all, she did not want to do anything to break up the marriage. He reminded her that "God hates divorce."

A few days later, Beth received a visit from Lorene D., the Community Services Director and Head Deaconess of her church, who told her that she should not embarrass the church by spreading false accusations about her husband. She also told Beth not to consider divorce because she did not have Biblical grounds to do so.

When Don discovered that Beth had talked to the pastor about their relationship, he again abused her and their daughter verbally and physically. Beth decided to leave the relationship and found refuge for herself and her daughter in a secular domestic violence shelter.

She became disillusioned and disappointed with the church and its leadership. There was no confidentiality. She could not understand how her husband was able to convince some of the leaders that she was the cause of the broken relationship. So she decided that she did not want to

be a part of a congregation that refused to believe her and provide safety and support for her and her daughter. Because of her love for the Lord, she did not blame Him for her suffering, but decided to join another denomination.

Methodology

1. **Moderator:** Have a moderator read the case history.
2. **Panelists:** Select individuals who have understanding and expertise in domestic violence. They can represent various entities that work in this area: Medical, Legal, Advocate, Survivor, Recovering Perpetrator, and Clergy. Have them discuss the following points from their perspective.
3. **Discussion Points:**
 - a. Define forms of abuse
 - b. What were the messages to Beth from the pastor?
 - c. What were the messages to Beth from the Community Services Leader?
 - d. What were the underlying unspoken messages to Don?
 - e. What should the response to Beth have been?
 - f. What should the response to Don have been?
 - g. What is the church's responsibility to Beth, Don and their daughter?
 - h. How can the church work with community agencies/services to help this family?

Adventist Youth Program
(Suitable for High School Students and Young Adults)

Suggested Order of Service

- Song Service
- Opening Prayer
- Introduction of Program: (Share information about domestic violence and dating violence)
- Special Music
- Activity

Activity

1. If possible give each participant a copy of the sheet “Myths and Negative Attitudes Regarding Dating Violence” (page 30). Give each one a copy of the questions.
2. Separate participants in groups of 3 to 5 to discuss the list of “Myths and Negative Attitudes” and especially why they are not accurate. (Groups can consist of all young men or all young women.)
3. After discussion, encourage large group discussion to share ways in which young adults can be more respectful of each other in dating relationships.

Myths and Negative Attitudes (young men)

1. A guy needs to be in charge of the relationship.
2. The girl is to blame when the guy hits her.
3. Some girls ask for it; that’s why they stay.
4. It’s understandable to hit her; maybe next time she’ll learn not to make me angry.

Myths and Negative Attitudes (young women)

1. I love him. I’m the only one who can help him.
2. When a guy gets angry, he can’t help it.
3. I shouldn’t have nagged him. It’s my fault he got angry.
4. If I change, he’ll change.

Ongoing Activities for Young and Older Adults

1. Develop and maintain a referral list/directory of resources for victims as well as perpetrators.
2. Organize and participate in educational community initiatives and activities.
3. Develop a church response to assist victims and perpetrators.
4. Support local shelter programs.
5. Provide opportunities to conduct workshop/seminars/presentations in your local church and community.

6. Hold community forums and invite representatives from the criminal justice system, advocates, educators, social services providers, etc., to participate.
7. Work together on creative ways to develop resources, education, and prevention strategies for victims, perpetrators, church members, and community leaders.