

4 Ways Your Sunday School Can Combat Domestic Violence

Anybody who has ever had two or more children consuming food at the same time knows that such moments constitute a recipe for family disaster.

Picture a pizza. Picture two kids. Picture one knife. Who will cut? That is the question!

Let us assume that the chief justice of the United States is busy elsewhere. Ditto for the head of the National Bureau of Measures and Standards. And your phone call to the nearest judge yields nothing but a busy signal.

So with all the parental objectivity you can muster, you take the knife. You make the cuts. You serve the pieces. And then you wait for the wails you know will follow.

Wails issue forth about “the bigger piece” – who got it, who didn’t get it. Even though a mathematician with a micrometer can’t discern the difference, your kids can. Or they think they can.

So you learn a little technique to avoid such confrontations in the future: You refuse to make the cut.

Assuming only two kids are at the table, you assign one to be the slicer. But before they fight for control of the knife, you say, “Yes, one of you gets to cut the pie. But once it’s cut, the other one gets to choose the first piece.”

Children are big on fairness. Not only can they spot unfairness a mile away, but also they can smell it even when their noses are stuffed. “No fair, no fair,” they cry. And they expect the adults in their lives to rush in and rectify the inequity.

The fact that those same adults will, one day, have to teach them that life isn’t fair

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is lost at that moment. Because to whatever degree fairness can be ordained and orchestrated, the adults are charged with making it so.

As pastors, we need to have a prophetic word, speak about justice and deal with social issues from time to time.

Violence - and how Christians respond - are today's topics. We have an example with Stephen Paddock and Las Vegas. I have been praying for the victims ever since I heard the news. We don't know why it happened.

While gun violence usually makes headlines, another widespread and destructive form of violence is overlooked far too often - domestic violence.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Ten million people have been abused this year, [according to reports](#). One in five women has been sexually assaulted in their lifetimes, and domestic abuse hotlines receive 20,000 calls every day.

Jesus gives an interesting take on violence in Luke 10:25-37. A lawyer wants to justify himself about who his neighbor is. Read the passage as a listener in Jesus' day.

They would want to identify with one particular character in the story. They would not want to be the priest or the Levite. They didn't understand the common plight of common people and would be seen above them.

They couldn't identify with the innkeeper, because he took money from a Samaritan. Only someone lower than a dog would take money from a Samaritan.

The only character left is the person in the ditch.

Jesus was trying to help the lawyer understand that anyone in need is the neighbor, which is something our discipleship groups should remember. Every Sunday school class or small group should have an ongoing service project.

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This is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, so how can your class or group help?

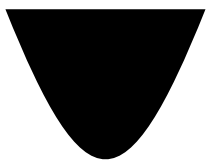
Here are some ideas:

1. Listen to the victim. Believe her when she says she has been battered. Avoid victim blaming. Get her in touch with the local safe shelter.
2. Accept your limitations and get expert help. Hold the abuser accountable. The only way to stop the problem is for the abuser to get long-term professional help. Hopefully, the abuser has been arrested, and we must encourage the legal system to hold him accountable.
3. Don't try mediation. Trying to counsel the couple will only put the victim at more risk.
4. Help a local shelter. Often, they need personal items, support groups and care.

Martin Niemoller was a German Lutheran pastor during the Holocaust. One of his most well-known statements is a lament about his inaction until it was too late.

“First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me.”

Who will speak up for those affected by domestic violence?



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