

SAMPLE VIGIL OUTLINE for 30 Minute program

1. Welcome from your organization
2. Provide Context about vigil, about domestic violence and domestic violence awareness month (if vigil is taking place in October)
3. Provide a Prayer of Confession
4. Provide an Opening Meditation
5. Candle Lighting and Naming of Victims:
 - Encourage people to light a candle
 - Read names of those lost to DV
 - Maybe a few snippets of their stories
6. Explanation of Why Lighting Candles
7. A Prayer of Dedication
8. A Blessing
9. Closing: Thank you for coming to our virtual vigil. We are so honored that you decided to spend your evening with us. Go in peace.

EXAMPLES of Context

OPENING: October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Did you know 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experience domestic violence in their lifetimes? Experiences of abuse can be difficult to talk about, and that explains why we often haven't heard about it. Additionally, some communities are more affected by abuse and experience more barriers to safety because of race, age, faith, class, immigration status, language, physical ability, gender, or sexual orientation. Survivors of abuse are often affected spiritually as well as physically, financially, and emotionally. We all have a critical role to play in supporting survivors of abuse. The more that survivors hear from us that abuse of any kind is unacceptable, the more likely it is that they will speak up and reach out for help.

PROVIDE SOME STATISTICS ABOUT DV IN YOUR COMMUNITY/STATE:

Here in **our state**, an average of **XX** people have been killed by domestic violence every year for the last several years. We dedicate tonight to the **XXX** people who were killed by domestic violence in **our state** since last October. Their lives are not forgotten. Our faith and our values call us to build God's world where everyone is honored and respected and no one is abused. We work for a time when every religious and spiritual community can fully embrace their unique and vital role to support survivors, provide prevention education, and speak out with moral authority against abuse and the systemic oppression and injustices that reinforce abuse.

In partnership with many faithful people, we stand with survivors of abuse. We believe that survivors should be able to be both faithful and safe. We believe that faith communities can and should be centers of hope and healing for all survivors.

EXAMPLES of Prayer of Confession

From Reverend Carrie Doehring, "The Darkness of Violence, the Light of God's Healing Presence" in *Glad Tidings*, Vol. 61. No. 10, December 1985.

O God of Truth, we recognize that violence is part of our life, and we name this violence as sin. We confess that for a long time we have called this violence by names we could tolerate. We have called physical abuse, discipline. We have called violence, a family fight. We have called isolation, a need for privacy.

O God of Light, we acknowledge that family violence has been a secret among us for a long time. We have helped to keep this secret. We confess that we shut our eyes to the bruises. We have shut our ears to the cries of fear and pain. We name this silence and apathy as sin.

O God of Light and Peace, there is darkness in our homes, and in our world. We claim our responsibility for allowing this darkness to continue. We seek peace and healing for our homes and for the world.

EXAMPLES of Opening Meditations

“A Personal Meditation” from Prayers for Mourning(n.d.). Retrieved August 18, 2014, from <http://webspaces.webring.com/people/im/margotmhill/prayer.html>

Eternal God, Lover of mercy, give me the gift of remembering. May my memories of the dead be tender and true, undiminished by time, not falsified by sentimentality. Let me recall them, and love them, as they were. Give me the gift of tears. Let me express my sense of loss, my sorrow, my pain, as well as my gratitude and my love. Give me the gift of prayer. May I confront You with an open heart, with trusting faith, unembarrassed and unashamed. Give me the gift of hope. May I always believe in the beauty of life, the power of goodness, the right to joy. May I surrender my being, and the souls of the dead, to Your eternal compassion.

EXAMPLES of Why We Light These Candles:

- “For those who have been lost to domestic violence”
- “For those who continue to experience abuse”
- “For those who still carry the trauma of domestic violence”
- “For the children who experience or witness abuse”
- “For those who look to their faith during instances of domestic violence”
- “For those who feel they have lost their faith because of abuse”
- “And to honor those who have survived domestic violence”

EXAMPLE of Prayer of Dedication

From Reverend Carrie Doehring, “The Darkness of Violence, the Light of God’s Healing Presence” in *Glad Tidings*, Vol. 61. No. 10, December 1985.

We offer ourselves to you, O God our Creator. We offer our hands. Use your healing touch to comfort all people who are afraid. We offer our eyes and ears. May we see and hear the signs and stories of violence, so that all people have someone with them in their pain and confusion. We offer our hearts and our tears as their hurt and sorrow echo within us. We offer our own stories of violence. May we be healed as we embrace each other. We offer our anger. Make it a passion for justice. We offer all our skills. Use our gifts to end violence. We offer our faith, our hope, our love. May our encounters with violence bring us closer to you and to each other.

EXAMPLE of a Blessing

From Reverend Carrie Doehring, "The Darkness of Violence, the Light of God's Healing Presence" in *Glad Tidings*, Vol. 61. No. 10, December 1985.

May the light of God shine in our darkness. May the peace of God dwell in our homes. May the justice of God rule in our community. May the healing of God, our Creator dwell within us and among us, now and forever.