

# Drama Ministry®

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## NOW I GOTTA CHOOSE

by STEVEN JAMES

**GENRE:** Drama

**SYNOPSIS:** A teenage girl, confused and hurt by her parents' divorce, struggles to not feel bitter for what she sees as a broken promise

**DIRECTOR'S TIP:** Be careful not to play Jimmy as too over-the-top; he needs to be genuine in order for the ending to carry its weight.

**TIME:** Under 5 minutes

**CAST BREAKDOWN:** 1

**TOPIC:** Youth, Divorce

**SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:** Matthew 19:5-6, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

**CHURCH YEAR SEASON:** Any

**SUGGESTED USE:** Worship Service

**CHARACTERS:** EVA—a fifteen-year-old girl

**PROPS:** A flower that Eva can pull petals from

**COSTUMES:** Contemporary

**SOUND:** One wireless microphone

**LIGHTING:** General stage

**SETTING:** General stage

### Drama Ministry

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ISSN 1084-5917

Drama Ministry is a division of  
**Belden Worship Resources**  
www.beldenworshipresources.com

**Publisher: Regi Stone**

**Executive Editor: Kimberlee Crisafulli / Assistant Editor: Scott Crain**

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### DIRECTOR'S TIP:

**Motivation:** The question of the character's motivation is always important for keeping a scene tight and watchable, and even more so for extended monologues such as this one. Why is Eva choosing this moment to say these words aloud? Who is she talking to and what is she hoping to get from them? Is she looking for advice, sympathy, affirmation, or something more? Allow your actress plenty of time to experiment, and be sure she's clear and specific on what intention she finally chooses. There's often no "right" answer—it just needs to be a strong, actable choice that's clear in the mind of the actress. Many times an actor will be hesitant to make strong choices, but encourage her to play with the role until she feels confident that she knows where Eva is coming from, and then give advice on how she can strengthen that choice in her portrayal.

**Directing Tip:** Every character is always speaking to someone, even in a monologue. In the case of *Now I Gotta Choose*, Eva's "scene partner" is the audience, and they should be addressed exactly as if they're an active part of the scene. When rehearsing monologues, it's often helpful to give your actor someone to talk to—a silent listener who can react nonverbally to what they're saying and thereby provide the give-and-take feedback that happens in real life. Tell the silent partner to listen and respond clearly to what Eva says, and let Eva's performance change accordingly. This is a tremendously helpful tool in developing a solo performance, as an actor given a lengthy monologue can often feel adrift and alone; another "warm body" can provide just the energy necessary to keep the message sharp and alive.

**Props:** The only prop this monologue calls for is a single flower from which Eva can pull petals, and the stage directions call for this to be tossed away at the scene's conclusion. Be aware of a psychological phenomenon that can happen with limited props: when only one prop is used on stage, that item tends to take on huge significance in the mind of the audience. The flower represents more than just something for Eva to do with her hands—it's a symbol of her parents' love and commitment. For this reason, the tossing aside of the flower in the final moment may not seem like a big deal from a blocking standpoint, but it's a small gesture with huge symbolic power. Make sure the action is clear and doesn't get lost in the midst of her exit.

**Sarcasm:** Sarcasm is a means of speaking an uncomfortable (and sometimes nasty) opinion and covering it under the guise of humor, and for this reason can be a tricky device to use effectively in Christian drama. Eva is obviously harboring a great deal of resentment over her parent's divorce and the position it has now put her in, and that bitterness boils up throughout the monologue, even to the point of mocking things her parents told her in the past. The danger is in having her sarcasm and cynicism become so acidic that she loses the sympathy of the audience. One hopes that this monologue cannot only minister to teenagers going through the pains of a parental divorce, but also be an encouragement for married believers to take their commitment seriously. With that in mind, some care should be taken to keep your actress's portrayal as realistic as possible without becoming cruel. It's possible to express Eva's frustration with her parent's