

Drama Ministry®

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WHY WE'RE HERE

by John Cosper

GENRE: Comedy

SYNOPSIS: A friend visiting a new church building sees it as a symbol of affluence, while the church member is reminded why the church exists.

TIME: Under 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 3

TOPIC: Church Life

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Ephesians 2:19-22

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: New Building Dedication, Church Anniversaries

CHARACTERS:

CRAIG—a church member

SAM—Craig's friend

JERRI—a woman in need

PROPS: None

COSTUMES: Modern dress

SOUND: Three wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: A church

Drama Ministry

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WHY WE'RE HERE *by John Coper*

Director's Tip:

Blocking: This scene could be most effective if played in the actual audience as opposed to on stage, but be aware that this presents some unique blocking challenges. Not only will you need to be sure that Craig and Sam have seats reserved, but you'll also need to ensure that they're visible (and audible) to the rest of the congregation, and that Jerri's entrance and prayer do not become such a distraction that the dialogue of the two actors is lost.

Sounding Corny: Lines tend to sound cheesy for one of two reasons: either they're written in such a way that no human being would ever actually say them, or they're being delivered in a manner that seems disconnected and therefore phony. Short scenes are especially susceptible to this phenomenon because they have to communicate their point in such a short time: sometimes they can't afford to be subtle.

For this reason, take special care that the closing lines of *Why We're Here* are delivered with genuine compassion, and that your actors are really "connecting" with that moment. Likewise, make sure the actress playing Jerri is communicating true desperation with her prayer. "Less is more" is a good rule of thumb: any kind of huge emphasis, either with line delivery or gestures, can come across as showy and take the wind out of the moment.

Back Story: Many actors find it helpful to establish some degree of "history" for their character in order to fill their role. While this may seem like needless homework for a short scene, it may at least be useful to decide what the specific nature of Sam and Craig's relationship is. Are they coworkers? Old high school buddies?

A second step would be to then ask how they feel about each other. Do they genuinely enjoy each other's company? Do they confide in each other? Does Sam's attitude bother Craig in other areas too?

The same issues of back story apply to Jerri as well. The script isn't specific as to what her difficulties have been, but gives some clues toward the nature of her struggles. Encouraging the actress to make some definite choices can add a degree of depth to her portrayal.

Living in Oblivion: Part of the beauty of this scene's dialogue is in the fact that Sam and Craig are having such a frank and casual conversation, owing to the fact that they're alone in an "empty" church sanctuary. It would probably be helpful to rehearse your actors as much as possible in the sanctuary or auditorium when it truly is empty, and pay attention to what mannerisms and positions they assume. Bring those elements into the actual performance as much as possible to heighten the feel of the scene.