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“The Mom Van”

by
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What When her family has no more use for the van, a mom cleans it up and reflects on the joys and struggles of parenting as she prepares herself and the van for a new beginning.

Themes: Mother’s Day, Families, Empty Nesters, Seasons of Life, Parenting, Moms, Motherhood

Who Mom- should be at least 45 years old

When Present

Costumes and Props Mom is wearing blue jeans and a tee shirt. She walks in carrying a small bucket with a rag in it. There are four chairs set up like the seats of a van, with two more facing backwards like the hatch area. They are set up as if the van is facing the audience. There is a pacifier under the rear passenger side seat, a child’s retainer taped to the back of that same seat and an old wrist corsage (could be made of paper or plastic flowers) under the rear driver’s side seat.

Why Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8

How Even though it doesn’t speak the van is a character. The mom should always speak as if she is in conversation with it. It’s also very important that this be practiced until the motions of cleaning the pretend van are fluid and realistic. Practice the act of opening and closing doors and how you will address the audience when you are leaning into the van. Practice significant pauses to give the audience time to think about what you’ve said and make sure to include tonal variety (pensive, joyful, sad, thoughtful). This could be presented live or on-line.

Time Approximately 4 minutes

Mom enters carrying bucket and walks over to "the van." She stands behind it in thought for a moment then says...

Well, I can't put it off any longer.

Addressing the van.

Everything has a season, and there's a time for every purpose *(smiles and pats the van)* and van under heaven.

Walks to front passenger-side door. Sets down bucket and removes rag. Opens door and squats down to polish the seat.

The first time I rode in you, I was sitting here. *(pats seat then leans back out of van, stands up and drops rag in bucket)* All the way to the hospital I kept saying that it felt like we were driving to the hospital to get the very best gift of our whole lives.

Shuts door and moves to passenger side back door.

I am going to give you such a make-over. It's the least I can do for such a good and faithful servant.

Opens door. Pulls cloth from bucket and leans inside the van. Polishes passenger-side back seat, then looks underneath and pulls out a pacifier. Backs out and stands up to consider it.

Oh my! Who'd a thunk I'd find one of these after all these years? *(chuckles)*

Tucks pacifier in pocket, then leans back in and uses rag to scrub back of front passenger seat.

And look at that stain.

Chuckles again as she scrubs, then steps back, stands up, and addresses the van.

You remember, don't you? The night our two-year old started throwing up blood? I had never been so scared.

The emergency room doctor laughed when he told us. All those red chunks? *(studies cloth)* Grammy had fed him watermelon for lunch.

Drops cloth in bucket.

Of course, with three children, that wasn't your first trip to the emergency room. Broken bones, pneumonia, *(with disbelief)* a dime shoved up a nose.

Touches door lightly.

You got me there every time. **You** heard every desperate prayer.

Picks up bucket and walks around to the back hatch and pretends to lift it.

Wonder what I'll find in here?

Pulls rag from bucket and scrubs back of rear passenger seat. Drapes rag over passenger seat and pulls retainer loose, holds it up and laughs.

Oh my gosh! His dentist insisted he wear this, but our oldest hated the way he looked in it.

Puts retainer in pocket, picks rag back up and scrubs top of passenger seat.

And now I know what happened to it. My stubborn son hid it.

Sighs and stands up inspecting job. Then drops rag in bucket and folds arms as she addresses van.

He gave me the silent treatment when I bought him a new one. Arms folded *(looks down at her arms and laughs)* like mine, and big sighs *(exaggerated sigh)* every time I walked close enough to hear.

Closes hatchback.

That was not the first time that I had to stand my ground.

Moves to passenger door behind driver's seat.

But you knew old van, didn't you?

Opens door.

My kids had opinions about everything didn't they? And mostly their opinion was that I should stay out of their business.

Pulls rag out of bucket, leans in to wipe seat. Sets rag on seat and then reaches under the seat and pulls out a dried corsage.

Well, I'll be. I bet you remember this night.

Backs out of van and stands up to address it again.

That dance... the one where girls asked boys. Our middle child was so excited. Her daddy gave her this, *(holds corsage up to her heart)* and I was elected to drive. She gave me very specific instructions before her date climbed in.

Slips corsage onto her wrist and imitates daughter.

Don't look back here. Don't smile. Don't ask ANY questions.

Throws hands up.

Oh my gosh! Stop breathing so much!!!

Reaches in van and takes rag off seat.

We pulled up to the school and her date jumped out...leaving her behind. *(long pause)*

Drops rag in bucket and reaches in one more time to pat the seat.

Your old seats sure did absorb a lot of tears, didn't they?

Stands back up, closes door, picks up bucket.

The day the kids and I drove the family dog to the vet and came home without him. The day we dropped our youngest off at college. The day we buried Grammy.

Moves to front driver's seat.

It's funny how shared tears can bring a family closer.

Sets bucket down, opens door.

Almost done, my friend.

Takes rag out of bucket, leans in and rubs the front seat.

Every spring is sprung here. Three teenage drivers kept you on the go all the time, didn't they?

Backs out and stands up.

The kids begged us to trade you in. They hated being seen in you. Then, our baby called us from the hospital.

When I saw the broken telephone pole... When I saw that huge dent...right where she had been sitting.

Closes door and polishes the outside.

My heart stopped.

Stops polishing, looks up.

I couldn't breathe.

Polishes door again getting faster and faster as her emotions rise.

If you hadn't been so strong and sturdy, there might have been a totally different outcome. An outcome I can't bear to consider.

Stops polishing and steps back to address the van.

I think of it every time I open this new door. Every. Single. Time.

Polishes door one last time then drops rag in bucket. Steps back, hands on hips, to admire her work.

Well. That's it. Your insides are as pristine as an old clunker's can be. I'll wash and wax you tomorrow.

Picks up bucket.

After all, you have a new family to meet. She's a single mom with two kids. I know you'll like them. But even better, I know you'll protect them.

Starts to walk away, then turns back one last time.

Thank you for your service. For being witness to all the things that made us a family. You and my nest are both empty now. I guess it's time for both of us to move on to new adventures.

Runs fingers lovingly down the side of van.

I will miss you, old friend.

Exits. Lights out.