

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT WAR: INFORMED AND IN PRAYER

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"Dad, why are they fighting?" "Mom, what's happening to them?" "Is anybody going to help them?"

With all the recent news, your child may have lots of questions. What *should* we do when we learn about wars or persecution that is happening? How do we learn about our neighbors around the world and advocate for their justice? How do we pray for those in trouble?



When discussing tough topics with our kids, we should be sensitive to their ages while also keeping them informed. As they learn about the world, their awareness will create empathy, understanding, and knowledge, and they'll learn to seek out and pray for God's justice. The best way to know our neighbors is to learn about them; and the best way to love our neighbors is to pray over them and walk alongside them.

Try these ideas to help your family stay informed, talk openly, and think about the news using a Christian worldview:

- What are important international stories of the day? What countries do we need to pray for? Go to a news source and pray for the people and places involved in each headline you see. (For younger kids, you may want to choose the news stories ahead of time to screen out things that may be too hard for them to hear.) This helps open kids' eyes to what is going on in the world around them, helps develop Jesus-like empathy for others, and shows them that we believe in the power of prayer to help a hurting world.
- Today, the world's eyes are on the Middle East and on Ukraine. We cannot predict what will happen next but we can be sure that false information will continue to spread. We should stay alert and be ready to use our media literacy skills to help our families navigate these complicated situations.
- Bring a world map to the dinner table, and choose a country for each week or month. Ask questions and explore the country. Where is it? Who are its neighbors? How do you spell it? Learn about its geography, the people, their culture, and problems. Is the Christian church growing there? As a family, pray for God's justice and mercy in the country every day.
- Learn the shape of countries by playing the daily [Worldle](#) quiz. As a way to pray for each country, trace your finger around the borders and ask God to protect the people within those borders.
- Though God is just, his mercy triumphs over judgment. When there is a person or group that is considered an "enemy," pray for them. Jesus told us to pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:43-48). Why do you think he said that? Is it challenging to possess that depth of mercy? How deep is God's mercy?

- Make a list of places, leaders, people to pray for. Write it out and tape it in your kitchen. Before meals, pray specifically for someone on that list.
- Point out those organizations that help people internationally, like the [Red Cross](#), [World Vision](#), and [World Renew](#). Pray for their staff. Pray for those they meet. Research organizations that help spread the gospel globally or deliver Bibles to persecuted Christians. Perhaps you would like to make a family donation to help provide for their needs. [Wycliffe Bible Translators](#) and [Voice of the Martyrs](#) provide enlightening, kid-friendly resources to help families dive into these topics.

Never cease praying. Prayer is the best way to put our faith in action. After all, God wants us to ask for help, “You will turn back to me and ask for help, and I will answer your prayers” (Jeremiah 29:12). Remind your children that God is in control, and because of Jesus there is always hope.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out [this article](#) from the National Association of School Psychologists about talking to children about violence.

written by Areo Keller-Donahue

<https://kidscorner.net/parent-blog/talking-to-kids-about-war>
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