

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT GUN VIOLENCE: TRUST AND PERSEVERE

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With all the recent events related to gun violence, your child may have a lot of questions and fears. Is your child having a hard time understanding why these events occur? Are they apprehensive about returning to school or leaving the house? Our children need to know it's okay to not be okay. Just as David lamented in [Psalm 13](#), they can express their emotions too. As Christian parents, our goal is to help guide our children through their emotions according to the Word of God.



Before talking with your children about this difficult subject matter, keep these tips in mind:

- **Create the space for conversation.** We can create this space by asking questions to gain a sense of their understanding of the event and to gauge their thoughts, feelings, and level of concern. Remember, your child may have difficulty finding the words to express their thoughts or feelings on their own. In the same way that God creates a space for us to come to him, we too must let our children know they can talk to us. God allows us to approach him when we need answers ([Hebrews 4:16](#)). His ears are open to our prayers ([1 Peter 3:12](#)). Let your child know that you are here to listen.
- **Listen.** Active listening is a great way to show our children we care. Actively listen to the hearts of our children before offering solutions ([James 1:19](#)), and take care to reflect what they have shared and validate their concerns. Give them your undivided attention. Be intentional to unplug from your devices and other obligations.
- **Be transparent and share your own feelings.** Being transparent and vulnerable may be difficult as an adult, but it is more valuable than you know to your child. When our children see us open up, it gives them the freedom to do the same. Share your own worries about gun violence. Tell your children about a time when you were afraid or struggling and were able to overcome your trials and turn to the Lord for comfort. Be sure to take into consideration their age, temperament, and emotional maturity level when sharing with your children as it is not uncommon for children to take on the worries of others as their own. You can pray about these things together and offer up your prayers and requests to God ([Philippians 4:6](#)).
- **Acknowledge when you don't have an answer.** God is the only one who is all-knowing. As parents, we put unnecessary pressure on ourselves to have all the answers. When we admit that we don't have the answers but God does ([1 John 3:20](#)), we show our children how to trust him over us.
- **Look to God.** Our responsibility is not to keep our children from experiencing hard times or solving all of their problems. We are to point them to Christ and lead by example. Allow God's Word to guide your conversations and interactions. God assures us that he will be our refuge, help, and security during times of trouble ([Psalm 46](#)). Share your own story when you went through a difficult time. Explain how God gave you security and protection.

Whether your child has questions or your family has been directly impacted by a devastating event, these conversations can be tough to navigate. Pray and ask God to give you the heart and words to help you and your child ([1 Kings 8:39](#)). Trust God to strengthen your family as you persevere through this process together.

For more help with addressing school shootings, check out these articles from *Family Fire's* "[Walking the Valley of Grief: Writing Your Own Psalm of Lament](#)" and *Focus on the Family* "[Talking to Kids about Mass School Shootings](#)."

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