

Putting violence and fear in perspective



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It seems our teens are not safe anywhere they go. From the highly publicized October shooting at a Pennsylvania Amish school to the senseless violence that happens at our area malls and stores, our world is spinning out of control. Parents of teens today grew up in a society where it was safe to play outside and where the school grounds were a safe place. Now, not only do schools have fire drills, but they also have to practice "lock-down" procedures in case of any sort of a threat. While this is a concern to parents, there are a few things to keep in mind. God has shown us in the Bible (Matthew 24) that our world is only going to get worse. What is happening in our world is disheartening, but not surprising. As Christians, we must take action, get out into the trenches, and share the love of Christ to a hurting world. We also must put these violent circumstances in perspective. According to the Department of Education, the chance of being killed in a school is less than one in a million. While the media will obviously draw attention to a tragic event, students and parents need to understand that schools are typically a safe environment. Parents must be proactively involved in the school or community in which your teen participates. This allows you to be informed about what is being done to establish and maintain a safe environment. While we know the world is not safe, it's comforting to know that Christ promises to be "our Rock, our Fortress, and our Deliverer." (Psalm 18:2a) This reminds us where our trust should be placed...Who we should rely on to keep our teens safe!

UPDATE

Greeting Parents

We at VCF Phoenix are excited to inform you that our youth group is thriving and doing well.

This month we invited our youth to be a part of our corporate prayer meeting that takes place every month. We focused on praying for our youth specifically. A few of the young faces among us showed up and cried out with the body. We had an exciting time worshipping and interceding. What an encouragement to see our youth standing with us corporately.

In the Month of November we have talked about friendship in hopes to give our youth the language to understand and ability to evaluate authentic, biblical friendship. We took a pulse of our youth's values and found they have a deep desire for friends. The question, is how God defines a friend?



Here are some interesting polls about school shootings and zero tolerance. Do you agree?

What factor is most responsible for school shootings?

- 15% - Mental illness/the copy cat syndrome.
- 18% - Easy access to guns and/or violent media.
- 32% - Poor parenting and problems at home.
- 20% - "God" is missing from the classroom.
- 15% - Trouble with teachers and classmates.



familyeducation.com

Should all schools adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards any type of violence?

- 50% - Yes, violence of any type cannot be tolerated.
- 42% - No, zero tolerance does not take individual circumstances into account.
- 7% - Not sure...this one is tough.

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The Parent POV

(point of view)

Here are some questions to help start the conversation with your teen about their thoughts and opinions on school violence. Their answers just might surprise you.

1. Do you feel safe at your school? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever witnessed a fight at your school? What did the teachers do to break it up? What did the students do to break it up?
3. Have you ever been threatened at school? If you were, who would you go to on the school campus?
4. What do you think could be done to keep your school safer? Do you think your ideas could really happen? Why or why not?



Focus on Prayer

Pray that:

1. God will place a hedge of protection around your teen as they continue to live in a world spinning out of control.
2. God will give you a supernatural peace and assurance that He will take care of your teen at home, at work, at play, or at school.
3. God will meet the needs of the families affected by the recent school shootings in our country.
4. God will bless and give wisdom to your teen's teachers and administrators as they teach, encourage, and assist you in the growth and maturity of your teen.

...UPDATE Continued

In this present evil age our youth are molded by a multitude of influences. God created friendship to be a mutual improvement activity that makes one ready for life. Friends should influence one another in a way that leads them closer to the heart of the Father. We are aiming to give them God's definition of friend.

We are beginning to make disciples by teaching them about a wholehearted attitude and giving them language and ability to evaluate friendship. The Holy Spirit is stirring this group with a desire to find out a little more about who Jesus really is. We encourage you to pray that they wholeheartedly befriend Jesus.

John 15:15 says I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father

These are the disciples that Christ is building in our youth those whom He can call His friends

We are making, maturing and mobilizing our youth to this end



Did you know...

* 35% of parents with children/teens said they fear for their safety when they're at school. That percentage was the highest since March 11, 2001, when 45% of parents voiced such concern after a shooting at a suburban San Diego high school killed two students and injured 13 others. (usatoday.com)

* Although one-third of parents said they're anxious about their child's safety, 88% said their adolescents expressed no worry about safety at school. (usatoday.com)

* There were a total of 27 reported school-related violent deaths in the 2005-2006 school year. (schoolsecurity.org)

* Federal funding for a grant program that helps U.S. schools pay for programs to prevent substance abuse and violence has declined significantly. Funding was \$439.2 million in 2001 but has fallen to \$346.5 million this year, with \$310 million recommended for 2007. (cnn.com)

