



# How to Talk with Your Child about Terrorism



With the recent increase in terrorism around our world, it is difficult for us to understand and certainly difficult for us to know how to talk with our children about the violence.

Here are a few guidelines:

**Guard young eyes and ears.** In the early years (toddlers to early elementary), shield them from scary news as much as possible. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises that parents limit their child's media viewing which may mean turning off the news when a young child is in the room. Little ones easily pick up on adult emotions so parents must continually guard their words and actions.

**Listen and talk.** As children get older, they hear and see more of what is happening in the world. Be open for conversation, but let them guide it. Don't over share, but share facts when questioned. Listen to their thoughts. Reassure them that it's okay to be upset because scary things do happen. If older children seem over-anxious, talk with them about what they might do in a situation where they feel threatened. Continue to reassure them that you are with them and caring for them.

**Look for the good.** Fred Rogers remembered what his wise mother said to him as a child when confronted with frightening events: "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping'." There are evil people in the world who do terrible things, but there are many more people who love and help others.

**Be pro-active.** Finally, parents need to be very intentional in living out their faith. Children are watching you. Yes, it's natural to be fearful at times, but we should take our fears and doubts to God in prayer. Pray with your children. Share some Bible verses (Psalm 27:1, Psalm 23:4, Psalm 115:11, Deuteronomy 31:6) and possibly memorize them. Look for ways to help by praying for others, donating money, writing letters or volunteering in other ways.