

Guarding against Evil

By Julie Hiramine

With the recent shooting in Connecticut, where do we even start to explain what happened to our innocent children? How can we shield them from the evil this incident exposed?

For kids younger than 7, it is important to protect them from the dialogue and images associated with the catastrophic news reports. Kids at this age cannot grasp whether Connecticut is across the country or across the street. They will immediately fear that this will happen to them because their world is so small. An incident like this invades their world. As parents, we need to assure our children that this is not going to happen at their school. Direct them to God's protection of them. Of course there are never any guarantees with our children, and they are in God's hand, but with our little ones we need to focus on building a foundation of security and stability. Be careful about this age group watching news that is frightening or overhearing discussions that may overwhelm them.

Tweens' abstract thought is not fully developed yet either. When it comes to evil and violence this news has a tremendous impact on them. They understand more fully the reality that this shooting affected their age group, and anxious thoughts arise that this could happen to them. Although as adults we realize that this is highly unusual, tweens will project that something like this could happen on Monday when they go to school. Fear invades their heart. This is true for tweens when it comes to natural disasters or manmade tragedies. Parents, we need to help our tweens understand that this is extremely unusual. Also that fear is a tactic Satan uses to make them doubt God and forget His promises. Remember true love casts out fear so a lot of affirmation of love is essential. Go out of your way to tell

your kids they are loved by you and God, and that God has a future and a hopeful destiny for them.

Now for teens this is an event that needs to be discussed. Looking at accurate sources of what happened during this tragedy will be very important. Friends will be blowing the news stories out of proportion and sensationalizing it, so you need to provide accurate information. Another key will be helping them evaluate the situation with a Biblical lens. They need to be aware of the demonic activity that was involved, and that we do not just fight against flesh and blood, but “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph. 6:12) Teens need to see how a person can be influenced by demonic powers and it can result in insanity. This is a time to discuss how little by little the enemy can take over a person to this degree. This didn’t just happen overnight. Explain to your teen this is why you are careful about media influences and video games they immerse themselves in. It is so subtle how the enemy takes a person from their natural God-given mind to someone who could think up and carry out this atrocity. Guarding their minds and hearts against all the unhealthy influences in the media and violent gaming world is so important at this age.

We parents need to do two things in the face of this tragedy: guard our children against the negative and use the opportunity to communicate God’s truth. In other words, “It doesn’t work to just block the messages of this world unless we are pouring in the real truth and power of the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹ Lastly, pray together as a family for those who were the victims of this attack, that God would bring healing and peace in the midst of loss.

There are more questions than answers when it comes to a situation like this. I like Kevin Leman’s advice when he says “The ‘why’ questions are always the hardest, and the answers ‘I don't know’ and ‘I don't have a clue’ are acceptable.” I pray God gives you wisdom and discernment as you address this issue with your children.

1. Take from *Guardians of Purity* by Julie Hiramine

Julie Hiramine is the author of *Guardians of Purity* and the founder of the ministry Generations of Virtue.