

Our kids and families are exposed to so much brokenness in our world. Use the following tips to prepare your own hearts to lead as you talk and listen to kids who are mentally and emotionally processing recent events.

TIPS FOR READINESS

- Be calm and model that calmness in your voice, facial expressions, and body language. Reinforce that this is a safe place for kids to process their emotions and feelings.
- Be sensitive, knowing that some kids will be carrying heavier emotions than others.
- Engage in conversations in doses. A child’s capacity for staying in a difficult conversation is often shorter than an adult’s. Look for signs of when a child is ready for the conversation to be over and allow the conversation to be short if needed.
- Let kids lead the conversation. Children often frame questions in ways to indicate they are ready to hear the information for which they are asking. Answer questions factually, honestly, and in an age-appropriate way. Be mindful that kids in different age groups and stages of learning will process information and emotions differently.
- Allow kids to feel *their* emotions, but don’t process *your* emotions with them.
- Maintain routine and structure.
- Be receptive and listen to kids who are struggling and have questions.
- Be honest. Admit when you don’t have all the answers, and lead kids towards trusting God’s character, not our circumstances.
- Help move kids toward purpose by being a helper and praying for those helping. Examples may include writing cards of encouragement to EMT workers, first responders, or local doctors.
- Be ready to pray with kids.

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HELPFUL PRAYER PROMPTS: Pray for the physical needs of those who are suffering and comfort for those who are hurting. Pray that God would be with those who are helping. Pray for peace for the victims and their families.

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