

## Tips for Helping Children Following a Crisis

1. **Be sensitive to what children already know** and take your cues from them; recognize that some parents may have chosen to protect their children from this tragedy or the details. With young primary aged children, allow them to introduce the topic first.
2. If children ask about it, **find out what they know before answering**; (ask, What do you know or understand? how do you feel? How can I help?)
3. When offering prayers, use simple language, such as **“We lift up in prayer all people who have died as a result of violence”**, rather than identifying specifics that might be too much information for young children.
4. **Limit the amount of exposure your children have to the coverage** on TV and other forms of media. Pre-school age children will have a limited understanding of what they see and hear, and may draw conclusions that are fearful to them. This also applies to older children and adults who may have mental limitations.
5. **Offer children opportunities to discuss their feelings**, perhaps in a family discussion. Let them know that all of their feelings are OK to have.
6. **Give simple, honest answers to questions, based on the level of understanding for each child.**
7. **Encourage older children to think and talk about their beliefs** about what this means to them, or what action they might take.
8. **If they ask, “Will this happen here?”** Let them know the safety measures that are in place at your school.
9. **Children need reassurance.** Let them know that you love and cherish them and that we can handle whatever happens.
10. **This event may stir up similar events** for students who have experienced the violent death of a family member or close friend and they may need to talk or write or draw about that; encourage them to do so. If there are young children who may not have been exposed to the TV coverage, make arrangements to talk with the student individually, or have them speak with the school counselor or social worker.

***PRAY!!! for yourselves, your families, the first responders and their families, our world, and PEACE!***

For more information regarding programs, services or supportive options please contact:  
***Catholic Charities SouthWestern Ohio, 100 East Eighth Street  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202, (513) 241-7745***