



War Stories: How you can help children cope with war in the news

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The tragedy and trauma of war is raging in several parts of the world right now. With headline news and conversations filling the air, children can feel like war is just outside their door. Here are some tips for parents and caregivers who wish to provide kids with an extra dose of love and support in the face of heightened awareness.

- First, actively listen to children and talk with them about their concerns. To respond appropriately, first ask what they have seen and heard about things going on in the world. Explore their thoughts and feelings about this information. Then provide perspective and clarification in an age-appropriate manner.
- Validate and normalize sadness, worry, fear, and anger in response to war. These are appropriate emotions in light of such events. Help the child to find healthy ways to cope with these emotions, such as drawing or writing about them.
- Offer reassurance of their safety. Share information about all of the individuals who help to keep them safe every day, such as soldiers in the various branches of the military, government officials, police officers and fire fighters. Talk about steps they can take at home to feel safe, such as leaving on a light at night. Talk about how all of these measures of protection are ways that God cares for His dear children. We are so loved by our Dear Father in heaven, who is ruling the universe.
- Maintain a consistent routine. In the face of crisis and chaos, a sense of control over one's own world can be calming. Focus on the basics such as a healthy diet, adequate sleep and exercise.
- Give extra doses of love and support. This can take many forms, such as extra hugs, special quality time or words about how special the child is.
- Pray together. Pray for peace and protection at home and abroad. Pray that God's will is ultimately accomplished in conflict. Pray that God's love will help all in need of healing and hope.
- Meditate on Scriptures about how God is still in control, even when it may appear this is not the case. Remember, "The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." (Deuteronomy 31:8)

continued

- Seek professional assistance from a counselor, doctor, or pastor if a child's mood, behavior, sleep, appetite, grades or friendships change significantly due to their distress. Finally, caregivers need to care for themselves as well. Children take their cues from adults. Balance being informed with being overwhelmed by the latest news reports. Connect with others. Take time for relaxation and hobbies. Meditate on daily devotions. Find strength, encouragement and comfort in God's Word.

As always, our Christian counselors are a resource to hurting individuals and families, and counseling services can be provided in person at one of our [locations](#), or [via secure video](#) from anywhere in the country or world. Contact us at [800-438-1772](tel:800-438-1772).



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