

JACK'S CORNER

QUESTION: How do I talk to my kids about all the tragedies that have happened recently?

ANSWER: Lutheran Hour Ministries has recently published a pamphlet on just that topic. It includes 13 "rules of thumb" for talking to your kids:

1. CREATE AN OPEN ENVIRONMENT where your kids can feel free to talk about whatever is bothering them.
2. CONSIDER YOUR CHILD'S TEMPERAMENT as you respond to his questions.
3. RESPECT YOUR CHILD'S FEELINGS by allowing him to say how he feels without judging the validity of those feelings.
4. UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION your child is asking. Don't assume she has reached a certain level of understanding.
5. BE HONEST within your child's capacity to understand
6. IF YOU DON'T KNOW SOMETHING, ADMIT IT. Have a "let's find out" attitude.
7. DON'T LEAVE BIG GAPS in your explanations or your children will fill them in with their own fantasy.
8. USE AGE-APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE. This will test your ability to REALLY explain something.
9. GET FEEDBACK from you child about what they understand about what you just said.
10. BE PATIENT and let them respond to your words.
11. SAY IT AGAIN AND AGAIN so your child can absorb a little more every time.
12. GIVE HIM/HER YOUR UNDIVIDED ATTENTION so she knows you are serious about what you say.
13. SPEAK SEPARATELY TO CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT AGES because each is at a different level of development.

Children are experts at perceiving your heart. **Make certain YOU know what you believe is true** about how God acts, how he loves, and what his plans are for us **BEFORE** you talk honestly with your children

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