

JACK'S CORNER

QUESTION: My ten-year-old son has been asking a lot of questions about ISIS and war. He has seen some video clips on the news. I don't want him to be scared, and I don't want him to be exposed to those videos and other horrors on the news. His father has a much more cavalier attitude about the whole topic. Can you give us some guidance?

ANSWER: As Christian parents, we will always agonize over **how much** and **when** to expose our children to the realities of life. We cannot protect or isolate them from the dark side of life forever. In the name of love, we can neither send them into the world naïve, nor can we indiscriminately violate their innocence. Jesus said, "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (MT 10:16).

We parents walk a fine line — a dangerous line. Our parental agony in this area of life is a by-product of our fallen world. We would like to spare our children the hurts and pains of life, but we know we cannot. Evil will find our children and us. We must prayerfully and wisely guide them, teach them, and expose them to life, always keeping in mind each child's age, cognitive and emotional development, spiritual maturity, and life experiences.

The godly purpose of such exposure is to **equip them** to either overcome **evil with good** or to know when to **avoid evil and flee** from it. Remember, in the scheme of life, equipping is better than protecting. (Although, of course, there are times we must protect.)

I believe that by age 10, most children will reap godly benefits from watching (or listening to) world news **WITH** their parents **to answer questions, pray for situations, and offer biblical hope**. Will you have to be selective, and at times, edit certain stories? Of course! But, the opportunities the news daily presents for our suburban kids are abundant and include: developing empathy and compassion, real-life prayer situations, a shift in thinking about self to thinking about others, a safe context in which to discuss difficult and scary topics, a time for Mom and Dad to express their godly views, and chances to reinforce Christian morals and values. Milk these opportunities!

Dad, don't just sit back and let your son try to figure out things on his own with a "He'll have to learn about it sometime..." attitude. **Seize this opportunity to give him direction, to interact with conviction, and to demonstrate some mature guidance!** Believe you have some good gifts to offer your son by supervising his exposure to the darker side of life. As a man, show him strength, courage, and sacrifice!

Mom, help your son develop the strength and conviction he will need to survive in a deadly, fallen, and perverse world. **Equip him as well as you have protected him!** You probably know his heart better than Dad; your input and intuition will be essential in the exposure process. Show him compassion, involvement, and integrity!

Both you and your husband should have on-going conversations and prayers about when and how the equipping process happens. This will also be an opportunity to solidify your marriage as you both agree on how situations are to be handled.

As to your specific question about war, do some Bible searching and discover how God at times both uses and commands war. Be able to explain "just" and "unjust wars." Talk about our moment-by-moment spiritual war (EP 6). Begin the process of helping him understand that in a fallen world **there are times when there is no good answer**; there is only the "best" answer. Sometimes we must choose between the "lesser of two evils." Don't forget to include our sure promise — that one day, the coming of Christ will eliminate war of any kind!

Walk that line with confidence, conviction and Christ!

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