

Ten Ways Your Church Can Reduce Gun Violence



1. Find your people

- The work of gun violence prevention is emotional and overwhelming, and we simply cannot do it alone. Join Episcopal Peace Fellowship's Gun Violence Prevention Action Group or another national GVP group like Moms Demand Action or the Brady Campaign that has local chapters.
- EPF works with dozens of GVP groups around the country & can connect you with one in your area.

2. Join EPF's Peace Partner Network

- Over 60 Episcopal institutions have committed themselves to striving for justice and peace through becoming an EPF Peace Partner. Find out more at epfnational.org/become-a-peace-partner/

3. Preach about gun violence

- Gun violence disproportionately affects our country's most vulnerable citizens. Our Bible is full of calls for a just social and political order in which the innocent, weak, and vulnerable are protected. We must issue that same call to our congregations and remove the stigma of talking about guns in public.
- Churches must change the narrative which claims gun violence is strictly a political issue. Gun violence is a matter of life & death, which makes it a faith issue.
- Preach with your words on Sunday morning. If you need inspiration, visit epfnational.org/sermons-2/
- Preach with your feet whenever there is a local march, demonstration or vigil.

4. Offer your space

- Gun Violence Prevention groups are always looking for spaces to hold meetings and vigils. Churches are perfect resources for this sort of collaboration.
- You can also host public vigils in your church. EPF has sample liturgies for a variety of services that you can reprint or adapt for your own use. <http://epfnational.org/liturgies/>

5. Declare your church a gun free zone

- Our churches must be sanctuaries to all who pass through the doors. When guns are present, the risk of danger dramatically increases. We cannot succumb to the fear rhetoric that claims an armed society is a safer society. Display signs at all entryways stating that guns are prohibited on church grounds.

6. Learn more about gun violence in America from lawcenter.giffords.org

- Did you know that while homicide rates are decreasing in our country, suicide rates are increasing? Do you know about the boyfriend loophole when it comes to domestic violence? Do you know your own state's gun laws? Are guns allowed in churches where you live?
- The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence website offers fact sheets on laws, bills and even a gun law report card for all 50 states.

7. Pray

- Whether privately or corporately, we must pray for an end to gun violence.
- Pray for victims, survivors and those who love them. Pray for our elected leaders, that they find the courage to place the needs of our children's right to life over the wants of the gun lobby. Pray for the coming of the peaceable kingdom, in which everyone is safe from gun violence. There are infinite ways to pray for this issue.

8. Educate your church

- Use EPF's six-week curriculum that covers areas like suicide, ministering to victims of gun violence and illegal sales. Buy it online at epfstore.myshopify.com
- Offer a book club in your church that allows participants the opportunity to learn, ask questions, share concerns and stories. Suggested books are *Fundamentalism* by Rev. James Atwood; *Reducing Gun Violence in America* edited by Daniel W. Webster & Jon S. Vernick; *The Second Amendment: A Biography* by Michael Waldman; *Stand Your Ground* by Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas

9. Support National ASK Day on June 21st, the first day of summer

- ASK = Asking Saves Kids
- Order ASK brochures from askingsaveskids.org and pass them out to every parent in your church, encouraging them sign the ASK Pledge stating they will always ask about *unlocked* guns before their children enters someone else's home.
- Include them in take home folders of children at your day school and in registration materials for summer's Vacation Bible School.

10. Encourage your bishop to join Bishops United Against Gun Violence

- Bishops United explores means of reducing the appalling levels of gun violence in our society, and to advocate for policies and legislation that save lives.
- If your bishop is already a member, ask him or her how you effectively can work together in your state.