



Dominican
Sisters *of Peace*
Sisters and Associates
in Mission

February 22, 2018

TO OUR SCHOOLS, MOTHERHOUSES, FOUNDED MINISTRIES AND MINISTRY PARTNERS

“Speak as if you had a million voices, it is silence that kills the world”.

Thus St. Catherine of Siena leads us to provide these *Suggested Guidelines on Responding Recent Gun Violence*.

We have been deeply disturbed by the growing gun violence in our country, most recently brought to a head by the death of 17 people in Parkland, FL on Ash Wednesday.

Our hope is that you will use the attached materials to participate in a public way, wherever possible, to pray and intercede on behalf of the students and staff who were killed. We hope that as far as possible your school, or motherhouse or founded ministry will give voice to a call for common sense gun control as we express it in our corporate stance.

*“In the US, we will advocate for common sense gun control laws such as requiring universal background checks before purchasing arms; banning assault weapons and high capacity magazines; promoting strategies to prevent gun violence; and providing adequate financial resources to establish mental health programs for victims and perpetrators and prevention programs for at risk people.”
(2013)*

A public prayer is easy to organize using this material and you can adapt the suggested guidelines to your particular circumstances. Be creative, be courageous. Thank you for every way in which you preach as if you had a million voices.

Be peace,

Leadership Team Justice Liaison

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES ON RESPONDING TO RECENT GUN VIOLENCE

2/22/2018



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Be Peace.

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SUGGESTED GUIDELINES ON RESPONDING TO RECENT GUN VIOLENCE

“The goal of this effort is to respond to this time in our nation, when the tragedy of gun violence is at the forefront of our minds. Our goal is to advocate for non-violence and support those who are working for sensible gun control legislation.

Although this plan is intended for school settings, any motherhouse or other ministries can readily adapt parts of it for their own circumstances.

The elements of this effort and necessary support resources include:

1. Statement of belief based on our own public statement:
 - a. *“In the US, we will advocate for common sense gun control laws such as requiring universal background checks before purchasing arms; banning assault weapons and high capacity magazines; promoting strategies to prevent gun violence; and providing adequate financial resources to establish mental health programs for victims and perpetrators and prevention programs for at risk people.”*
2. Educational public events:
 - a. Guidelines for events:
 - i. Outside if possible
 - ii. To include a prayer
 - iii. To include a spokesperson to address the Congregation’s commitment to sensible gun control
 - iv. To be held on one of the following dates or any date prior to April 20.
 March 14, 2018 (National School Walkout Day)
 March 24, 2018 (National March For Our Lives)
 April 20, 2018 (National High School Walkout) National Education Association National Day of Action Against Gun Violence in Schools
 19th anniversary of Columbine shooting.
 - v. Please inform your (Arch) Diocesan Media Relations or Social justice office of any event that you plan to hold.
 - b. Resources
 - i. Talking points for spokesperson
 - ii. Media alert template
 - iii. Safety services alert template
 - iv. Letter to parents template
 - v. Local representatives/Senators list template
 - vi. Representative call script
 - vii. Representative letter

Sample Prayer Service Template

Prayer in solidarity with Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL

Please inform your (Arch) Diocesan Media Relations or Social justice office of any event that you plan to hold.

Practical elements:

1. Students, faculty and staff meet outside in a safe area of school property.
2. Microphones and podium as needed
3. Try to include banners and placards from students.
4. Whenever possible, have students lead the prayer and speak
5. Hold crosses or other visual symbols or have students form a large circle
6. Timeframe might be 17 minutes, to memorialize the number of students and staff killed in Parkland, FL.

Opening/Welcome: Principal or student leader

State the purpose of the event and invite everyone to join prayer

Opening Song:

Suggestions:

Lord, I Need You- Matt Maher

How Great Is Our God - Chris Tomlin

Opening Prayer

Scripture passages that might be helpful in writing this prayer;

- Isaiah 2:1-5 turn swords into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks.
- Luke 10:25-37 Who is my neighbor?
- Isaiah 43: 1-3 Be not afraid
- James 2:14-17 Faith and Action

Student reflections

Principal/Administrator comments

Include some symbolic action at this time:

Examples:

- Ring a bell and announce the names of those who were killed
- Have everyone present form a large circle and announce the names of those killed
- Release balloons, plant 17 crosses in the lawn, or hang 17 ribbons or banners
- Plant a tree in the name of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School

Intercessions

Closing Prayer

Closing Song

Suggestions for Closing Song:

- I Send You Out - John Angotti
- We Are Called – David Haas

After Your Event:

Please take advantage of school, student and staff social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, website) to document and publicize the event. Please tag the Dominican Sisters of Peace in all social media posts so that we can share and help spread this important message.

Sample letter to school administrators and students or organization leaders:

Dear (Name of administrator)

No matter who we are or where we live, as Dominicans, we share a common goal - **to be a clear voice for peace and justice and pursue the Truth. We share that truth through our words, our study, and our actions.**

The Dominican Sisters of Peace corporate stance on gun control is as follows:

*We will advocate for **common sense gun control laws** such as requiring **universal background checks** before purchasing arms; **banning assault weapons and high capacity magazines**; **promoting strategies to prevent gun violence**; and providing adequate financial resources to establish mental health programs for victims and perpetrators and **prevention programs for at risk people.***

Given the tragic murder of 17 innocent people in Florida on Ash Wednesday, and so many other tragic instances of gun violence, it is imperative that we speak up and demand sensible gun control from our elected officials.

We are asking our educational ministries, our motherhouses, other founded ministries, and any of our sisters who can participate, to honor those lost at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School by holding an event to advocate for sensible gun control in order to help ensure the safety of the children and young adults in our schools.

In order to help you participate in this effort, we have created an event plan and all the resources that you will need to inform parents, safety officials, ministry partners and the media. Should you have additional needs, please feel free to call the congregational Communications Office staff at (614) 416-1046.

Please discuss this with your staff and students, and prayerfully consider joining us on this issue. Safety in our schools is so important. We hope that this present moment will generate a change of heart in Congress and a meaningful national dialogue on common sense gun control.

Thank you,

Sample Letter to Parents of Students in Sponsored Schools:

Dear (Parents name)

Why did you choose to educate your child in a school founded by the Dominican Sisters of Peace?

No matter who we are or where we live, as Dominicans, we share a common goal - **to be a clear voice for peace and justice and pursue the Truth. We share that truth through our words, our study, and our actions.**

We have been deeply disturbed by the events of Ash Wednesday, in which 17 innocent people were tragically killed in Parkland, FL. And no matter what your position on gun ownership, we believe that this event calls all of us to engage in more meaningful public discourse on the safety of our children. Moreover, our sponsors, the Dominican Sisters of Peace advocate for sensible gun control:

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(School name), along with the Dominican Sisters of Peace, is committed to sensible gun control in order to help ensure the safety of the children and young adults in our schools. We will be holding an event to honor those lost at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, and to raise awareness of the need for sensible gun control in our community on (DAY, DATE, TIME). The event will include: (include brief outline of event)

As a student at (name of school), your child will have the opportunity to stand with his or her classmates, teachers, and **the Dominican Sisters of Peace to pray for and help create a more peaceful world.**

We appreciate your support and your prayers as we work to ensure peace in our schools, our communities, and our nation.

Thank you,

Sample Media Alert:

MEDIA ALERT
(SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION NAME)
(ADDRESS)

In solidarity with the students and staff of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, who lost 17 people to senseless gun violence on February 14, 2018, the students, faculty and staff of (SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION NAME) will hold a demonstration and prayer service on (DAY, DATE, TIME, PLACE.)

Principal (NAME) will lead the event, which will be held (DAY, DATE, TIME, PLACE.)

Student representatives will speak and lead the prayer and other memorial activities.

Media inquiries should be directed to:

(NAME)
(PHONE NUMBER)

Sample Safety Alert to be sent to Local Law Enforcement, Fire Department, etc.

(SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION NAME)
(ADDRESS)

In solidarity with the students and staff of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, who lost 17 people to senseless gun violence on February 14, 2018, the students, faculty and staff of (SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION NAME) will hold a demonstration and prayer service on (DAY, DATE, TIME, PLACE.) The event is expected to last no more than (00) minutes

Inquiries should be directed to:

(NAME)
(PHONE NUMBER)
(EMAIL ADDRESS)

Suggested Talking Points for Event Presenters/Media Spokesperson

What We Want:

We are NOT calling for a ban on guns. We are calling for RESPONSIBLE gun ownership. Those who wish to take advantage of the right to own a firearm should be responsible for the safety of these machines.

Our platform calls for:

- Requiring *universal background checks before purchasing arms*
- *banning assault weapons and high capacity magazines*
- *promoting strategies to prevent gun violence; and providing adequate financial resources to establish mental health programs for victims and perpetrators*
- *Providing prevention programs for at risk people.*

Why Do We Want This?

1. There have been 208 school shootings since Columbine
2. Since Columbine, nearly 455,000 people have been directly affected by a school shooting, creating a class of trauma victims that would fill Madison Square Garden 21 times.
3. Assault weapons are legal and unregulated in 41 states.
 - a. 220+ people have been killed in mass shootings with an AR 15 assault rifle since Columbine
4. 41 states do not require universal background checks for the purchase of fire arms.

Action Steps:

Contact your Lawmakers to Demand Responsible Gun Control

- How to find your Senator: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/index.htm>
- How to find your representative: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

SAMPLE LETTER:

Dear Lawmaker—

The most recent mass shooting in Florida has again broken the hearts of many Americans. As a person of faith, I believe in prayer, but I also believe in action. I am writing you to demand that you act by standing up for sensible gun reform in the (House/Senate.

Specifically, I ask that you support the following:

- Mandatory universal background checks before purchasing arms
- A ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazines
- Support of strategies to prevent gun violence
- Funding to establish mental health programs for victims and perpetrators and prevention programs for at risk people

These are simple, common-sense steps that honor the rights of gun owners while making our schools, churches and communities safe.

Thank you for your support of sensible gun control.

SAMPLE CALL SCRIPT:

Hello, my name is _____, and I'm calling today from _____ to urge Senator/Representative _____ to support mandatory universal background checks before purchasing arms; to support a ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazines; to help to promoting strategies to prevent gun violence; and to commit to proving funding to establish mental health programs for victims and perpetrators and prevention programs for at risk people.

I believe that these common-sense measures will help to prevent future mass shootings and create a safer environment for our children and families.

Thank you for sharing my message.