

Why Pray for Our Schools?

The worst massacres we've seen in this decade have happened at schools. The most recent is the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting that left 26 people dead, 20 of whom were 6 to 7 years old. Officials are still trying to wade through the onslaught of questions, such as why Adam Lanza committed the crime on Dec. 14, 2012.

If that one crime isn't enough, there are facts such as the dramatic rise of bullying. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 28 percent of students ages 12 to 18 reported being bullied during the school year. Instead of anticipating meeting new friends or wearing new school clothes, most students return to school under a cloud of fear and dread.

With safety being a major issue and more schools closing or shutting down programs because of a lack of funding, the only hope we have for a turnaround is prayer.

A music teacher in England, Michael Philip, began a prayer movement in England because of the widespread vandalism on school grounds. The children began to pray about it, and the vandalism stopped immediately.

If you're still not convinced your school needs prayer, here are more facts and statistics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

- In 2010, there were about 828,000 nonfatal victimizations at school among students 12 to 18 years of age.
- Approximately 7 percent of teachers report they have been threatened with injury or physically attacked by a student from their school.
- In 2009, about 20 percent of students ages 12 to 18 reported that gangs were present at their school during

the school year.

School-associated violent deaths are rare, according to the CDC, but 17 homicides of school-age youth ages 5 to 18 occurred at school during the 2009-2010 school year.

My son Alex was verbally bullied at school when he was in the third grade. He dreaded going to school. He didn't tell us until he was more than halfway through the school year. When he told us, I immediately called the principal and his teacher. With that response, Alex learned to not be afraid to come to me with any of his fears. He learned his parents would act quickly on his behalf.

The student was confronted, but we increased our prayers for the school. Every night before we went to bed, we prayed for the teachers, the safety of the school and that God would give the principal wisdom in leading and dealing with student issues. We saw results of that continued prayer with a safer school atmosphere.

With that in mind, I'm encouraging everyone to pray for three things as we transition into a new school year. And I've started a page on Facebook where you can post the name of your school so your school can be covered in prayer. If you would like to be a prayer partner, please join the page and post your desire to be a prayer partner.

Here are three things you can pray for your school:

1. Protection

Declare over your children, "This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease. He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection" (Ps. 91:2-4, NLT).

Then pray: "I declare that school will be a place of safety! God will protect the school, teachers, staff and students from every deadly disease. Our school will not have to shut down because of the flu. I pray that God would be an armor and protection for the teachers, the staff and the children. I speak protection over my school. No child will be harmed, and no teacher or staff person will experience danger. My school will be one of the safest schools in the district."

2. Provision

Declare that your child will not lack in any good thing they need at school. No vital program will be cut because of funding: "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19, ESV).

And then pray: "We ask for provision for our schools. We declare no lack for fine arts, technology or sports programs for our schools. We thank You that You give good gifts to your children (Matt. 7:11)! We ask for provision for our staff and teachers, that they will not have to pay out of their own pockets for needed school supplies. And we ask for provision for our students, that they will have the supplies they need to go to school."

3. Peace

Pray the following: "I pray that the Christians that work and teach in schools would be carriers of the peace of God, that the peace of God would reign over the schools. John 14:27 states, 'I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid' (NLT). We pray against fear and speak peace over our schools."

Let's believe for a 2013-2014 violent-free year for our schools. Pray and decree these Scriptures as a pre-emptive strike against the plans of the enemy for our schools.

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