



We encourage school leaders to find ways to allow students of a certain age an opportunity to express concerns, fear, anxiety, frustration, etc. with current events. Whether you teach children of color who perceive the current climate and the police force to be enemies, or you teach students whose parents are police officers and are worried about their safety, or you teach both...our Catholic schools should be places where issues of social justice live and breathe every day in the building and in classrooms.

Below are some good resources you may want to explore yourself or share with your staff while preparing for the upcoming school year.

- Teaching About Race, Racism and Police Violence | Teaching Tolerance - Diversity, Equity and Justice
<http://www.tolerance.org/racism-and-police-violence>
- What kids need to hear about race and violence — but many schools won't touch - The Washington Post (with embedded access to further resources)
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/07/12/what-kids-need-to-hear-about-race-and-violence-but-many-schools-wont-touch/>
- How to Talk to our Kids about the Tragic Shootings in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Dallas
<https://psychologybenefits.org/2016/07/12/how-to-talk-to-our-kids-about-the-tragic-shootings-in-louisiana-minnesota-and-dallas/>

The good news is even in a heated political environment, we can help kids stay cool and learn important lessons about character and faith with a few simple strategies:

1. Model respect and tolerance. It's our job to teach kids respect, acceptance and tolerance because life will be full of people from every color, religion, culture, and persuasion. We have to teach not just with our words, but our actions and our behavior.

When kids see parents/teachers mirror the rants they see on television or slip into the same kind of name-calling, bullying, or ugly rhetoric that's coming off the campaign trail, we send the message that that kind of speech and behavior is acceptable. Our kids in turn might feel it's fine to confront other kids in classrooms or on playgrounds who

think differently, look differently, or speak differently with aggression rather than kindness.

2. Listen before speaking! Before sharing your opinion about the current state of politics, seek to understand what your kids have heard and how they feel about it. Ask:

- What have you heard about the candidates?
- What do your friends have to say about the election?
- Who do you support?
- Why do you support him/her?

4. Do your research *with* your kids! Don't depend on the media for all of your political information. Help your kids do age-appropriate research on the candidates. Talk about the importance of having all the facts and not simply jumping on a bandwagon and repeating what you've heard. Discuss how voter's backgrounds, upbringing and even geography can affect their political allegiance.

5. Take time for training on empathy. Just because kids see adults behaving badly, name calling, and being unkind to others, that doesn't mean it's okay. Use the opportunity to teach kids about empathy by asking questions like: How do you think he/she felt when that was said? How would you feel if someone said something like that about you? What can you do if you hear someone saying unkind things about a friend at school?

6. Turn it into a civics lesson. Use the election to teach kids about the political process – how presidents get elected, the party system and the importance of voting. For older kids, explain how the Electoral College works – if you can figure it out yourself!

7. When it comes to your kids, seize the day. *This election season will be a treasure trove of teachable moments – if we seize the opportunity.*

In all of these teachable moments, we will raise kids who will hopefully make more educated decisions, treat each other fairly and with dignity, and perhaps even become leaders themselves one day. And that – is something that EVERYONE can cast a vote for!

(McCready, Amy. 7 Ways to Help Kids Stay Cool in a Heated Political Climate. June 14, 2016).