

Safety steps for children and guns

Many of us played Cops and Robbers with toy guns when we were children. Cap pistols, water pistols, and toy six-shooters were innocently used in friendly neighborhood games, with no thought given to any ill effects. Those were the days when real guns were seldom, if ever, seen in the hands of children.

Today, however, nearly 6,000 children are killed each year, both accidentally and intentionally, by real guns. It is a shocking statistic but comes as no surprise in a nation where there are over 200 million firearms, and where a gun can be found in about half of America's homes.

Gun violence won't go away soon, unfortunately, but there is much that parents can do to reduce the tragic toll of children.

Guns in Homes

Many authorities, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, urge parents not to keep a gun in the home at all. However, if you do have a gun at home, it should be stored in a locked box or drawer, with the ammunition locked in a separate location. Both keys should be carried by an adult at all times. There have been a number of reported incidents in which young children have unlocked, loaded, and used guns that were not stored securely, and many states now have laws that can impose stiff penalties on the parents of these children.

If your family has rifles or shotguns for hunting, you can obtain information of hunting safety for your children from your state's fish and game agency.

Even if you don't own a gun, it's possible that your child may encounter one while visiting at the home of a friend or relative. You should ask the adults there if and

how firearms are stored. If you are uncertain, don't let your children visit.

Despite these precautions, it's still possible that your children may find themselves in a situation where a gun is present. That is why you must explain to them that real guns can kill, and that if they see one they must not touch it. They should leave the area immediately and report what they have seen to a responsible adult.

Guns in Schools

School safety experts say that many of the guns that children bring to school are taken from homes where they were not stored securely. Educators have responded to this crisis by taking a "zero tolerance" approach, calling for automatic suspension or expulsion of any student found with a gun in school. In fact, the federal Gun-Free School Zone Act of 1994 requires the expulsion of such students for a minimum of one year. Schools that don't comply risk the loss of all federal funding.

Toy Guns

Recently there have been a number of incidents in which children were shot in self-defense because the toy guns they were carrying looked real. As a result,

several toy store chains have stopped selling realistic-looking toy guns and many elementary schools have expanded their "zero tolerance" policy to include toy guns. Some schools also have instituted voluntary turn-in programs for toy-guns.

Even if you see no harm in allowing your children to play games like Cops and Robbers, it is not necessary to give them authentic look-alikes of real weapons. Whatever your decision about letting kids play with toy guns at home, you should not permit them to bring the toys to school.

Guns and the Media

Most experts agree that the gun violence that children see on TV, in the movies, and in video games increases violent behavior. Many young children don't understand that guns really can kill because they have seen so many cartoons in which characters escape unharmed by outrunning or even catching speeding bullets.

Although violence permeates the visual media, parents can reduce its impact by helping children choose non-violent TV programs and video games.

"Report to Parents," a publication serving elementary and middle school principals.

Dream workshop registrations open

Registrations are now being accepted for a "Dreams & Visions" workshop to be held Saturday, May 20, at River of Life Fellowship, 194 N. Memorial Highway, Shavertown.

The day-long workshop is designed to train and equip anyone who has a desire to hear and respond to the voice of God. Learn about dream interpretation and word meanings and how dreams and visions can make a world of difference in your life.

Pastor/Teacher Mary Ann Kotch will present the workshop. There is a registration fee of twenty dollars. For information phone 674-5459.

Choral Society presents spring concert

The Orpheus Choral Society will present a spring concert at the Maple Grove United Methodist Church, Pikes Creek, on Sun., May 21 at 7 p.m. The Choral Society is made up of 35 male and female voices.



POST PHOTOS/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Communion anticipation

Young people in St. Therese's Parish participated in their First Holy Communion last weekend. Several classes received for the first time Saturday and Sunday. Children tried to relax before the late Sunday morning service. In top photo, Msgr. Peter Crynes tried to loosen up Nicholas Strzeletz, Kayla Shovlin, Andrea Carr and Sarah Hughes-Blaum. Buck Taylor, above left, helped his friend Tony Bevevino by playing a tune on his head. Julia Clements, left in other photo, and Jacqueline Eury were appropriately serious.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

BACK MOUNTAIN HARVEST ASSEMBLY - 340 Carverton Rd., Trucksville. 696-1128. Pastor, Daniel S. Miller. Christian Education for all ages, 10:00 a.m. Worship 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. Wed., 7 p.m., "Genos" youth service. Midweek home groups; call for days and times. Weekday prayer 6:30-7:30 a.m. Visitors welcome.

DALLAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - 4 Parsonage St., Dallas. 675-0122. Rev. William D. Lewis, Pastor. Morning Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday School at 9 a.m.

PRINCE OF PEACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 420 Main St., Dallas, 675-1723. The Rev. Robert A. Nagy, Rector. Sunday Holy Eucharist 8 & 10 a.m. Adult Forum 9:15 a.m.; Sunday School pre-K thru high school 10 a.m. Midweek Holy Eucharist Tues. 7 p.m. & Thurs. 10 a.m. Both are healing services on the second Tuesday and Thursday of the month. Bible Study Tues. 7:30 p.m. All are welcome!

SHAVERTOWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - 163 N. Pioneer Ave., Shavertown. 675-3616. Pastors: Rev. Douglas and Janet Bryant Clark. Music Dir., John Vaida. Saturday Services: 5:30 p.m.; Sunday Services: 9 a.m., Family oriented Service; 11 a.m. Traditional Service in the Sanctuary. Sunday Child Care Provided. Visitors expected. PHONE-A-PRAYER 675-4666.

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH - 196 N. Main St., Shavertown. Sat. Worship 5:30 p.m.; Sunday Worship 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Phone 675-3859 or e-mail: stpaul@epix.net for more information. Everyone welcome! Rev. Charles H. Grube, Pastor.

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Mark your calendar for Summer at Sem 2000

<p>Academic Programs for ages 3 to 18 June 26 to July 21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary - for ages 3 to 10 • Middle School - for students entering grades 5 through 8 • Young Academics - for gifted students entering grades 7 or 8 • Secondary - for students entering grade 9 through the postgraduate year 	<p>Sports Programs for ages 8 to 18 June 12 to July 28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer Camp - for boys and girls entering grades 3 to 8 • Field Hockey Clinic - for girls ages 11 to 17 • Basketball Clinic - for girls entering grades 5 to 9 • Sports Camp - for boys and girls ages 8 to 14 	<p>Performing Arts Institute for ages 7 to 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Makers - ages 7 to 9 July 3 to 15 • Young Artists - ages 10 to 13 June 26 to July 16 • Junior PAI - ages 10 to 13 July 17 to 28 • PAI - ages 12 to 18 June 25 to August 5 • Dance - ages 10 to 18 June 25 to July 23
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