

Steps Toward a Process of Living After the Gunfire

By Randy Kuss

This discussion process is suitable for middle school through adult settings. It allows participants to listen for and follow God's leading without pre-set agenda for where God might take them.

Setting the Scene: If possible, set the room up with chairs in a circle to allow participants to see and hear each other well. Create a worshipful atmosphere for the discussion with a worship center in the middle (a small table with perhaps a cloth covering, candle, Bible, and whatever else you feel appropriate).

Openers:

Begin with prayer or song and a time of silence then use the following as a guide for discussion.

- Where were you when the Virginia Tech shooting began?
- Where were you when you first heard about the shooting?
- Outline together the events at Virginia Tech as you understand what happened (leaders should research the details from the news media and be prepared to help the group put the timeline together but the process of recalling together is important – do not do the timeline for them!)

Art-forming the memories:

Think through those memories of hearing about the shootings at Virginia Tech, seeing the pictures and images, hearing stories and news. With those in mind, answer the following questions:

- What colors do you remember?
- What textures do you remember?
- What sounds do you remember?
- What words do you remember?
- What phrases or dialogues do you remember?
- What were the life-changing moments you remember?
- Who was the Christ figure in the events? in the days after?

Going Deeper:

What other school shootings do you remember? (Here is a sampling from the United States in the past 10 years:

- Nickel Mines, PA (Amish school) – Oct 3, 2006 – 6 killed, 4 wounded
- Red Lake, Minnesota – March 21, 2005 – 10 killed
- Littleton, CO (Columbine) – April 20, 1999 – 15 killed, 23 wounded
- Springfield, OR – May 21, 1998 – 2 killed, 22 wounded
- Edinboro, PA – April 24, 1998 – 1 killed, 2 wounded
- Jonesboro, AR – March 24, 1998 – 5 killed, 10 wounded
- West Paducah, KY – December 1, 1997 – 3 killed, 5 wounded
- Pearl, MS – October 1, 1997 – 3 killed, 7 wounded)

– Which ones would you consider the same sort of shooting? Which ones

are different? How are they the same or different?

– As you think about the Virginia Tech shootings (and similar incidents?) what do you learn about people?

– What songs (or movies?) come to mind as you think about the Virginia Tech shootings? What do you hear from them?

– What phrases or stories from the Bible come to mind? What do you hear from them?

– What would you like to say to or do with or for the victims of the Virginia Tech shootings?

the rescue workers?

the families?

the counselors?

the shooters?

the places in the world where others are shot and killed?

the places in the world where they are not?

the church?

to God?

– What would God say or do with (select from above)? with you (us)?

– How has the Virginia Tech shootings affected your life? What from all this gives you despair? What gives you hope?

– It is said that “wisdom is knowing what to do next.” Assuming you are wise, what will you do differently now after all this?

Closing:

– What shall we pray for now? Let us pray