

# STANDING OUR HOLY GROUND



## Study Guide

### A Conversation with Sandy Hook Promise

#### Timestamps

#### Opening Remarks

[1:19](#) - Common Understandings

#### Panelist Presentations

[4:29](#) – Donald Gaffney, Pastor & Author of [Common Ground: Talking About Gun Violence in America](#)

[17:50](#) – Nicole Hockley, Managing Director, [Sandy Hook Promise](#)

#### Q&A

[29:50](#) – What advice do you have for faith formation leaders in congregations so that our faith formation does not perpetuate a belief in redemptive violence?

[38:44](#) – How can a Christian own a gun and still be in keeping with the gospel of nonviolence?

[40:12](#) – How does the work of Sandy Hook Promise intersect with churches trying to prevent gun violence?

[45:22](#) – How does Sandy Hook Promise persevere as school shootings continue?

[52:47](#) – With the recent escalation of gun sales due to fears related to the corona virus, has your focus or approach changed? Are there particular responses that speak to our current reality?

#### Helpful References

[Common Ground: Talking About Gun Violence in America](#)

[Presbyterian Peacemaking Program](#)

[Presbyterian Peace Fellowship](#)

[Sandy Hook Promise](#)

[Say Something Program](#)

[Start with Hello Program](#)

[Standing Our Holy Ground Webinar Series](#)



## General Questions

1. How did this webinar engage your **mind**? What thoughts came to mind as you heard from the panelists?
2. How did this webinar engage your **heart**? What emotions and feelings did you experience while hearing from the panelists?
3. How did this webinar speak to your **soul**? What spiritual wonderings emerged while listening to the panelists?

## Guided Questions

1. What do you think of Donald Gaffney's description of America's culture of redemptive violence? Do you agree that this culture exists? If so, how do you think it could be changed? How does your identity as an American and a Christian influence the way you navigate our nation's prevailing culture?
2. Nicole Hockley describes Sandy Hook Promise's efforts as an upstream gun violence prevention strategy, focused on changing people's behavior. *"Policy and politics are two important elements of social change, but they don't usually create the change. They come after to enforce the change we've already created."* Therefore, the Sandy Hook Promise prioritizes programmatic behavioral change first, and then supporting policy that complements those changes. However, mainstream discussions around gun violence often jump immediately to a policy-focused solution. Why do you think that occurs? Why doesn't our media and society focus on behavioral change? What role do you think policy plays in preventing gun violence?
3. Both panelists emphasize the importance of listening respectfully, finding common ground, and striving for connection with people who have different views than ourselves. The purpose of the conversation should not be to scare someone into action or simply share opinions. Where have you seen good examples of respectful dialogue in society, your congregation, or your own life? Where have you seen poor examples?
4. Nicole Hockley states her concern about children being apathetic about gun violence in their schools with attitudes such as *"Well, I was just wondering about when it was going to happen at my school"* or *"nothing has changed, this is just the way it is"*. What do you think is the problem with these attitudes? How can we give kids the inspiration and examples that change is possible?
5. A theme of this webinar is that children have the power and agency to take control back over their lives, if given the proper tools and training. They can learn to recognize signs of troubling behavior in others and tell a trusted adult. They can help each other overcome situations of isolation and individualism and create community. How does your congregation empower children and young people? Does your congregation provide any training or guidance to help kids recognize problematic behavior and tell a trusted adult? Do the adults receive any similar type of training? Why or why not?

