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RAC Reads Guide

Students from Parkland and Chicago Unite to Expand the Gun Control Conversation, Vox A Discussion Guide Prepared by the Religious Action Center and Zoe Turner

[“Students from Parkland and Chicago unite to Expand the Gun Control Conversation”](#) from Vox, published less than a month after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, addresses the role of race in the national gun violence prevention debate. It shares the story of Parkland students who met with high school students from Chicago to discuss gun violence in their respective communities, and start a dialogue about the different platforms that the two groups of teens are given; while students from Parkland, a predominantly wealthy, white suburb, quickly received national attention, black students from areas like Chicago have long been ignored in their calls to action on gun violence.

RAC Reads is a program by the Religious Action Center to encourage reading groups that explore contemporary social justice topics in the context of Jewish teachings and values. The discussion guides are designed for families, congregations and communities. As such, not all of the facilitation tips and discussion questions may be applicable in all cases. Feel free to take from and adapt the information provided here as you structure your own conversations. We hope that this guide will spark engaging and challenging discussions among Reform Jews about the complexities of gun violence. For more information about the RAC’s current work on gun violence prevention, visit our website at www.rac.org.

1. Students from Parkland decided to sit down with students from Chicago to start a discussion and build community, as a first step towards opening up the conversation about race and gun violence. What do you think is the most effective way to build coalition and work across lines of difference? What do we need to do to make sure that our activism is for everyone?
2. Many say that the way that the public responded to the Parkland shooting was different than what we typically see as a “normal” national response to a mass shooting. Do you agree? Why do you think this might have been so? What about this tragedy caught people’s attention, and galvanized them into taking action?
3. Did you know that there have been students of color fighting for gun violence prevention for decades before the Parkland shooting? Why do you think we don’t hear as much about their efforts? As a Jewish community, how can we work to amplify their voices, and add our own?
4. After the Parkland shooting, some legislators proposed arming teachers as a solution. Do you think that this might disproportionately have negative consequences for students of color? What other policies have you heard proposed that might also have negative effects for communities and students of color? How can we make sure that our policies and solutions work for everybody?