

Family Emergency Discussion

Talking calmly together now about a family plan for emergencies can help create a sense of family solidarity and confidence. It also gets everyone involved in safety awareness. This is a sample listing of discussion topics.



How can we respond in a positive way during and after a disaster?

Where are the areas in our home that are potential dangers during an earthquake?
What areas offer the most protection?

Do we need to rearrange the way things are stored or located?

What appliances and furniture need to be secured?

Are there any structural features that require reinforcing?

Where can we expect falling debris? fire? water damage?

Are we prepared to evacuate our home in one-half hour or less?

If we become separated, where will we plan to rendezvous?

What should we do if a disaster strikes when we are at work? At school? In a high rise building? On the freeway? At a store? At a game? In a theatre?

Which out-of-state relative or friend will serve as our “family contact center?”

How can we be self-sufficient if we are isolated from help?

How often shall we rehearse our disaster response plans? (*Talk over your rehearsals afterwards and how you can improve.*)

How much ready cash will we need if banks are closed?

What emergency supplies do we need and where we will locate them?



Useful Websites:

Redcross.org (*The American Red Cross*)

Ready.gov (*Department of Homeland Security*)

Emergency Planning

By Fr. Dave Heney



“You do not know the time or the hour.” (MT. 25:13)

“Do not be afraid. I will be with you always.” (MT. 28:10, 20)

Our faith is a rich source of practical insights on facing a natural disaster or terrorist event. Jesus affirms that we can successfully face an uncertain future with calmness and confidence because we can plan, prepare, and adapt to new situations. Because of our faith in the Lord, we also have an eternal perspective on events, which gives us the courage to act, to help ourselves, and, especially, help others in the face of danger.

Our life is a gift from God, so we are personally responsible for its safekeeping. In a large event, emergency services may not be available at first. We take responsibility for our own safety by careful, intelligent, and simple common-sense preparation of our mind and attitude, our physical needs, and our soul. Taking care of each will keep us strong even in the most difficult of times.

MIND: Have a positive attitude, a desire to help others, and the courage to act.

BODY: Plan to have food, clothing, and shelter for short and long-term displacement.

SOUL: Constantly talk with God in prayer, which puts all things, especially our life, in an eternal perspective.

Try to live always in the presence of God, and mindful of God’s love for you.

Preparing Your Mind:

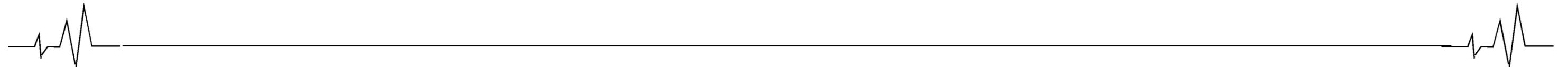
Experts advise having a kit that contains important safety items, but certain items are essential. The first “item” is a positive attitude of hope. How we think about hope is crucial to how we handle disasters. A hopeful attitude means we will think more clearly about solutions, even if others are panicked or immobile with despair at the event. After all, the best emergency equipment is useless if we cannot get moving to use it. The second “item” is a desire to help others. Helping someone else gets us off self preoccupation by making us aware of people and situations around us. Helping others reveals our strength at the moment when we might otherwise feel weak. Helping also gets people working together, which aids recovery. Helping also adds a welcome spirit of gratitude to an awful situation as people respond with thanks to your efforts. The final item is courage. Fear and anxiety are natural reactions to stress, but courage gets us moving despite our fears. Disasters bring traumatic images of devastation, but courage gets us moving precisely when life is difficult.

Protecting Your Body:

Food, clothing, and shelter are standard concerns and helpful to feeling comfortable, but they are very important for thermal regulation of bodily temperature. The right clothing can keep you warm in cold air or cool in hot weather. Getting too hot or cold could be fatal, or at least sap your energy at a time when you need to be active. The right nutrition can keep your metabolism burning and give you energy, and the right shelter will protect you from the elements.

Nourishing Your Soul:

One of the worst feelings in an emergency is the sense of being alone. God designed us to band together in difficult times and that need for others, and especially God, is made more intense in a crisis. This is good time just to start speaking continuously to the Lord. Having God as your constant companion is powerful. Talking with the Lord also helps keep everything in a healthy perspective. Reading scriptures during quiet times will also bring inspiration and hope at a time when you might need it most.



QUICK EVACUATION “GRAB BAG” (FOR 3 DAYS)

A common disaster experience is the need to leave your home quickly to avoid fire, building collapse, or flood. Having food, clothing, and shelter items in a pre-packed bag that you can quickly grab will help to keep you comfortable. Since you might have to walk some distance, use a bag that can be easily carried like a backpack or small “carry-on” luggage with wheels. Always take your cell phone if you have one and have important numbers entered.

CLOTHES: (use layers of clothing)

- Short pants and short sleeved shirt
- Long pants and long sleeved shirt
- Light jacket and wool sweater
- Underwear, socks, t-shirts (3-days)
- Gloves and hat (*debris & sun protection*)
- Rain gear, (*umbrella/poncho/rain suit*)
- Walking shoes



PERSONAL GEAR:

- Wallet, ID, cash (*banks may be closed*)
- Pen and paper, contact numbers
- Flashlight and batteries, matches
- Medications, eyeglasses, sunglasses
- First Aid Kit, small roll of toilet paper
- Toilet articles, soap, small towel
- Energy bars, water, water purifier
- Entertainment (*books, cards, games*)
- Pocket knife and eating utensils
- Small battery powered radio
- Disposable camera

HOME EMERGENCY PREPARATION

Securing your loved ones, securing heavy home furniture from moving, and storing supplies that you can use if the home is unavailable are the areas of concern.

- Rehearse quick evacuation procedures from your home
- Determine a rendezvous point outside in case of separation
- Determine evacuation place (*relative/friend*) in case of long term leave
- Know your home’s main gas/water/electricity shutoff locations
 - Label electric breakers
 - Place wrench next to gas shutoff valve (Don’t practice! Only Gas Co. personnel can restart gas)
- Have fire extinguishers at probable fire hazards (*fireplace/kitchen/BBQ*)
- Install and periodically test smoke detectors at key areas of house
- Copy family records online or flash drive and store away from house
- Check that tall furniture items that can topple over, like bookshelves, entertainment centers, china closets, and water heaters, are secured
- Check that cabinets have “earthquake” latches that prevent contents from spilling out, but are still easily opened (*available at hardware stores*)
- Determine what you will do in each room during an earthquake

HOME EMERGENCY KIT

All these items should be stored in a container located in a place outside the house that will be easy to get to even if there is serious home damage.

- Water Bottles (*approx. 2 quarts per day per person for several days*)
- Non-perishable food supplies sufficient for several days
- Commercially available packets such as Meals Ready to Eat (MREs)
 - MREs are available at online camping stores. (*US Military MREs are not available for resale*)
 - Keep special nutrition needs in mind for children, elderly, etc.
- First aid kit, medications, prescriptions, eyeglasses, sunglasses, etc.
- Flashlights, lanterns, and batteries.
- Battery operated AM/FM radio (*for news and information*)
- Camp stove, fuel, weatherproof matches, candles (*from camping store*)
- Port-a-Potty and sanitation bags (*available in most camping stores*)
- Family tent/sleeping bags (*in case the house cannot be used*)
- Extension cords and large outdoor portable light
- Several large tarpaulins (*for covering broken windows or quick shelter*)
- Duct tape, electrical tape (*good for sealing or securing items*)
 - Large axe, crowbars (*for entering rooms with jammed doors*)
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- Toolkit (*hammer/nails, adjustable wrenches, screwdrivers, saw, etc.*)
- 30-Gallon storage bags (*keeps large items waterproof*)
- Collapsible water bucket and water purifier (*from camping store*)
- Dust masks, gloves, shovel (*for home clean-up after the event*)
- Extra set of house and car keys, whistle (*signaling for help*)
- Extra rain gear, umbrellas, boots
- Gasoline storage and siphon hose (*Only if you can absolutely store safely! Use only state-approved UL listed container in a cool dry place and at least 50 ft. away from any ignition source*)

CAR EMERGENCY KIT

Cars might be stuck in a traffic jam for a long time.



- Energy Bars and Qt. water bottle
- First aid kit, whistle, blanket
- Rain gear, boots, gloves, hat
- Cell phone and contact numbers



Checklists: These checklists and ideas are offered as general suggestions only and not meant to be exhaustive.
You may add or subtract as your specific needs may vary.

