



Episcopal
Relief & Development

U.S. Disaster Program

Preparedness Planning Guide

For Congregations and Parishes

Facilitator's Guide

(For use with the Comprehensive Version of the planning guide)



Introduction

Episcopal Relief & Development's *Preparedness Planning Guide for Congregations and Parishes* is designed to help a church disaster leadership team create a plan for responding to a local disaster. It's a comprehensive process, from inventorying the congregation's valuables, to matching the congregation's many gifts with potential needs in the community. This *Facilitator's Guide* will help you lead the team through the process of filling out the sections of the guide, and it will help prepare the team to be ready to use its plan in an emergency.

Compiling the Plan

More than filling in the appropriate spaces in the guide, the work of this team is to generate a plan that is known and understood by staff and key leaders. A team member should be designated to compile the entire document, making sure that flip chart pages or handwritten notes from planning sessions are transcribed and that individual pieces completed by others are collected and added to the document. The *Preparedness Planning Guide for Congregations and Parishes* is available electronically as a Microsoft Word document that can be easily edited. (Find it at www.episcopalrelief.org/resourcelibrary.)

Also, as the team completes sections of the document, it might wish to share them with other church leaders for their review or feedback. Ensure that the compiler has access to any new input so it can be incorporated into your final document. When the document is complete, copies should be stored both in hard copy form and electronically, onsite and offsite. Team members and staff should be able to access the plan quickly and easily.

Finally, the plan should be reviewed annually and should be regularly updated to reflect changes in staff, programs, members and space use.

General outline of the planning process:

1. **Team selection.** Church leaders can use the Leadership Section (pgs. 9-11) of the Preparedness Planning Guide to discern members for the disaster leadership team. This group should be in place before work on the planning document begins. Depending on the size of your congregation, a five to six-person team would be ideal.
2. **Planning process with facilitator.** The following sections of the plan can be completed by the entire team in a half-day retreat session or in up to four individual meetings, lasting about 60 to 90 minutes. Do not let the work get too spread out. Aim to complete a first draft within four to six weeks.
 - a. Introduction and goals (60-90 minutes)
 - b. Risk assessment (60 minutes)
 - c. Response and recovery (60 minutes)
 - d. Developing responses and assessing knowledge (60-90 minutes)
3. **Sections that others complete.** The following sections should be completed separately by appropriate staff or volunteers. The team determines whom to assign, assist and follow up with, so that the section is submitted in a timely way.
 - a. Property Assets (pgs. 24-30): inventory of property that must be protected.
 - b. Communication and Outreach (pgs. 41-48): lists of essential contacts.

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- c. Member Questionnaire (pg. 35): survey that captures congregation members' needs and gifts in responding to a disaster.
4. Testing the plan. A Disaster Response Game is provided at the end of this resource to test the team members on their working knowledge of the first steps in responding to a crisis and to make sure proper processes are in place.

Beginning and Ending in Prayer

Our work of disaster preparedness and response is done in the name of the church, and thus in the name of Christ. It reflects particular values that flow out of our faith: stewarding what has been entrusted to us; reaching out to those who suffer; responding in love and humility; bringing our God-given gifts to those who need them, and acknowledging that the grace and love of God fuels our work. The prayers at the beginning and end of each session come from the New Zealand Prayer Book. You may use these or others that resonate with your team. Additionally, leave some time to add prayerful intentions, joys and concerns that reflect your particular community.

Session 1: Introduction and Goals

What Does This Have to do With Us?

Objectives:

- To illustrate the importance of disaster preparedness planning and to provide an overview of the planning process for team members.
- To connect the congregation's mission, vision and values to disaster preparedness and response.

Time: 90 minutes

Materials:

- Hard copy of the *Preparedness Planning Guide for Congregations and Parishes* for all team members. Team members will refer to this guide throughout the sessions. We suggest 3-hole-punching the pages and putting them in binders, so that additional resources can be added throughout the process.
- Flip Chart
- Pens
- Tape for posting sheets
- Copies of diocesan and church mission statements for all participants. If the congregation has a vision and values statement, provide copies of these as well.

Opening Prayer – 5 minutes

Facilitator or Prayer Leader: Invite the group to respond to each line with:
“We praise you, O Lord.”

You Lord will surely comfort your people...

You will make their deserts like Eden, their wastelands like a garden...

Joy and gladness will be found among them, thanksgiving and the sound of signing...

Invite the group to share any personal intentions, joys or concerns that they have brought with them.

Facilitator or Prayer Leader: *Merciful God, in Christ you make all things new. Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer:*

All: ***Amen.***

(Adapted from the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer, Collect for the Fifth Sunday After Epiphany)

Introductions and Welcome – 5 minutes

Introduce yourself and explain your role as facilitator. Invite the other team members to introduce themselves and explain what interests or experience in disaster preparedness and response that they bring to this team.

The View from a Disaster – 20 minutes

Hand out copies of *The Preparedness Planning Guide for Congregations and Parishes*. Have the group turn to the Foreword on page 5. Read the story aloud by going around the room and inviting each team member read a paragraph.

Discuss:

- What resources helped the congregation to recover?
- If something like this happened to our congregation, what resources would we have in place to respond?
- If something like this happened to a neighbor, what resources would we have in place to respond?

Summarize these points:

- *This is a very localized disaster, in one church building, but it required the help of others in the community to recover.*
- *We could be that church one day. Or we could be the responding congregation. We could be involved in something local like a church fire, or something wide reaching like Hurricane Sandy.*
- *Disaster preparedness not only helps us to recover more quickly, but it equips us to help others quickly, effectively and sustainably.*

An Overview of the Process – 15 min

Facilitator: *To create our congregation disaster preparedness and response plan, we will use this planning guide designed by Episcopal Relief & Development's US Disaster Preparedness and Response Program.*

- Explain if the parish planning process is part of a larger diocesan effort. If the diocese has a Diocesan Disaster Coordinator and a Diocesan Disaster Preparedness Team, mention who these are. (To determine if your diocese has a disaster coordinator visit www.episcopalrelief.org/usdisaster or call your diocesan offices.)
- Have the group turn to the Table of Contents on page 6. Explain that the planning process will include these general components.
 - **Goals:** *Situating our congregation in this disaster preparedness effort. How do our priorities and identity shape the way we might respond to a disaster, our own or someone else's?*
 - **Risk Assessment:** *Identifying the types of disasters and emergencies that our congregation or community might typically face.*
 - **Property Assets:** *Inventoring our congregation's material assets. We may be handing this part over to staff or volunteers. But the team will make sure the inventory gets done.*
 - **Response and Recovery Capacity:** *Identifying the resources our congregation already has in place – from physical space to community programs – to help respond to and recover from a disaster.*

- **Communications and Outreach:** *Developing a process for communicating effectively with members and neighbors during a disaster, and connecting with potential partners.*
- **Developing Templates for Initial Response:** *Developing the initial steps for responding to various categories of disasters.*
- *Our team will do some of this planning. Other pieces may be handed over to the appropriate staff person or volunteer to complete. In the end we'll have a procedure that we can use if a disaster strikes. And we'll know ourselves as a congregation – our gifts and our vulnerabilities – a bit better as well.*
- Point out how many meetings have been scheduled to complete the planning process, or how long the process is expected to take.
- *But preparedness doesn't stop with a plan. The Disaster Leadership Team has to be ready to put it into action.*
- Invite the group to turn to page 10. Have each member read a bullet point under the headings, "The Responsibilities of the Disaster Leadership Team Include:" and "To do this the Disaster Leadership Team must:"
- Ask the group: *How does this process look to you? What are you feeling?*
- Ask the team to choose a compiler who will be in charge of typing the material into the Word Document and incorporating pieces that others complete separately. This should be someone with a computer who is comfortable using Microsoft Word and email.

Setting Goals: Where Do We Fit In? – 30 minutes

Facilitator: *Before we dive into the work of inventorying our gifts and assets, or figuring out whom to call first when a disaster strikes, it's important to take a little time to think about who we are as a congregation. What do we value? And how might that shape how we respond?*

- Provide the group members with copies of the mission statements, vision and values if the congregation has them. Give them a few minutes to read through them on their own. Invite them to circle key words or sentences.
- *Given what we know about our congregation's mission and vision, close your eyes and imagine our congregation doing what it does best. Imagine all of its rituals and ministries and teams running full gear. Who is involved? What is going on?*
- Invite the group to share what they have imagined. Write their answers on a flip chart page, titled "Ministries:"
- *Now imagine that we are at the end of a disaster response effort, months after the disaster struck, when we're well into recovery, what disaster responders call a "new normal." We are imagining that our team has led our congregation in some really effective disaster response both in the congregation and beyond.*
- *Name the things that you want to have accomplished.... Record these on flip chart paper headed: "We did a great job if:"*

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- *Now look at the list of ministries we generated before. How does our image of a great job of disaster response reflect our current ministries? How does it add to them? Is there anything that we want to add to either list based on what we see here?*
- *These two visions, what we do best now, and what we want to do well in responding to a disaster, can help us determine what our congregation's goals and priorities might be if a disaster hit.*
- *Given what we know about our congregation, what ministries are most important to have up and running as soon as possible after a disaster strikes? (Circle these on the "Ministries:" sheet)*
- *What groups in our parish or community are most in need of our attention after a disaster? (Circle or add these to the "We did a great job if:" sheet.)*
- *What are five goals that flow out of this vision? To get us started, an obvious goal would be "resume weekend worship services as quickly as possible."*
- Once the group is done, point out that they do not need to figure out how to meet the goals now, but will return to them in a later part of the planning process.
- Make sure that the compiler has a copy of the "Goals" flip chart to add to the goals section of the guide.

Closing Comments and Prayer – 10 minutes

Review any next steps that members will be responsible for. Thank the group for its work and remind them of the next meeting time. Close with the Lord's Prayer, or another prayer that the group can pray collectively.

Session 2: Risk Assessment

Identifying Past and Potential Crises

Objectives:

- Identify any vulnerabilities and hazards to your community so that you know what you are preparing for.
- Take steps to mitigate the impact of those risks on your church, members and neighbors
- Identify who is most vulnerable and plan to protect or help them

Time: 60 minutes

Materials

- Flip chart sheets
- Extra copies of page 18 - 21 from the Planning Guide, “Local Crisis History,” “Brainstorm Like Disasters and Emergencies”.
- Pens
- Extra paper

Opening Prayer – 5 minutes

Facilitator or Prayer Leader: Invite the group to respond to each line with:
“We praise you, O Lord.”

*O Lord how manifold are your works...
In wisdom you made them all...
The earth is full of your creatures...*

Invite the group to share any personal intentions, joys or concerns that they have brought with them.

Facilitator or Prayer Leader:
You made us Lord and we are yours; grant that we may use your gifts that all your creatures may enjoy the harmony you planned.

All: **Amen.**

(Adapted from the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer, Collect for the Seventh Sunday After Epiphany)

Local Crisis History and Possible Emergencies – 20 min

Facilitator: *How many years have you lived in this community? ... Who has been here longest? Our institutional memory both of this church and our community helps us understand where we've been and what we might face in the future. We're going to split into two groups to discuss our local crisis history and possible crises that our community could face.*

- *Provide one group with the "Local Crisis History" sheet, and the other with the "Brainstorm Likely Disasters and Emergencies" sheet. Provide them each with a sheet of flip chart paper as well. Give the groups 10 minutes to follow the directions on their sheet, writing their answers on the flip chart paper.*
- *When the groups are finished, have each group present it to the large group. Add any additional comments from the group to the sheets. Post the sheets so the groups can refer to them in the next exercise.*
- *Give these final pages to the compiler to add to the overall report. Or if group members want to type them up, make sure they have an electronic copy in Word that they can forward to the report compiler.*

People with Special Needs – 10 minutes

Facilitator: *We're beginning to get into the details of preparation, based on where we've been and what we can likely expect. What about the people who would be most vulnerable in our congregation after a disaster? How might we make sure that they don't fall between the cracks during a disaster?*

- *Close your eyes for a moment and call to mind church members with special needs whom you know or know of, or whom you've seen at Eucharist or at church events.*
- *Without using people's names, describe the kinds of people who came to mind; for example, did you call to mind someone who uses a wheelchair?*
- *What are some of the difficulties they might face in a disaster?*
- *Turn to page 20 in your Planning Guide.*

Invite the group to fill out the chart, listing the programs in the congregation that are composed of or serve people who might be vulnerable in a disaster. Also list the contact person and the kinds of needs that group members might have. You might use flip chart paper to collect people's thoughts. Of have the compiler take notes for inclusion in the completed guide.

- *Point out that the group will determine ways to identify individual members' specific needs and gifts in a later section of the planning guide.*

Property Assets – 10 minutes

Facilitator: *The Property Assets section starting on page 21 of the Planning Guide is another piece that our team will not fill out right now. But we can determine which individuals have the knowledge to fill it out. Some of them may be on our team, and others may be staff or volunteers.*

- Have the group look through the pages and determine who to assign this section to.
- Determine who from the group will contact these people, provide them with copies of the section and follow up to make sure it is filled out.
- Determine a deadline for when this section should be completed.

Closing Comments and Prayer – 10 minutes

Review any next steps that members will be responsible for. Thank the group for its work and remind them of the next meeting time. Close with the Lord's Prayer, or another prayer that the group can pray collectively.

Session 3: Response and Recovery

Connecting Gifts with Needs

Objectives:

- Identify both the people and the material resources that your congregation can tap to help members and the community recover from a disaster.
- Make plans or preparations for how to respond to needs.

Time: 60 minutes

Materials:

One copy of each of the following sheets from the Planning Guide:

- Congregational Resources, pg. 30
- Congregational Activities Resources, pg. 31
- Members with Disaster-Related Skills, pg. 33
- Member Questionnaire, pg. 34
- Copy of church directory if you have one
- Copies of bulletins or church newsletters from the last several months
- Copies of the **completed** Congregational Goals sheet, pg. 15, for all. Or repost the flip chart where you captured these goals in Session 2.

Note on inviting participants

For this session, make sure that participants include people that know the church property and programs, as well as those who know the members and their gifts very well. If they are not already on the planning team, ask them to contribute to this session. The following exercises work best with a group of at least six people.

Opening Prayer

Facilitator or Prayer Leader: Invite the group to respond with: “**Thanks Be to God.**”

The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea...

Invite the group to share any personal intentions, joys or concerns that they have brought with them.

Facilitator or Prayer Leader: *Jesus, savior in storm, when the waters of the deep are broken up, when the landmarks are washed away or drowned, come to us across the water.*

All: **Amen.**

(Adapted from the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer, Collect for the Sixth Sunday After Epiphany)

Inventorying our Gifts – 20 minutes

Facilitator: *Today we're going to take stock – not of what we have, but what we do as a congregation. What we do when a disaster strikes may look a bit different from what we do now. We may find gifts that we never realized we had. Today we're going to anticipate some of those gifts and how they might help meet needs after a disaster.*

- Split the group into three. Provide each subgroup with one of the pages from the Planning Guide to fill out.
 - Group 1 – Congregational Resources, pg. 32.
 - Group 2 – Congregational Activities Resources, pg. 33
 - Group 3* – Members With Disaster Related Skills, pg. 34, and Member Questionnaire, pgs. 35-37.

*Note: The group addressing “Members with Disaster-Related Skills” will not be completing a list. Rather they should suggest how the group should go about getting this information. Will they use the paper survey on pg. 33? An electronic version? What are next steps for collecting and compiling this information? Determine who will follow through on it.

- Provide them with copies of the church directory, bulletins and newsletters to consult.
- When the groups are done, invite them to summarize their work and ask for input from the large group if there were areas of the planning sheet that they couldn't fill out.
- Make sure the compiler receives the completed sheets to transcribe into the final plan.

Revisiting our goals – 30 minutes

- Either repost the flip chart that captured goals in Session 2, or provide the members with copies of the completed Goals on page 15.
- Facilitator: *Turn to pg. 38 of the Planning Guide. By now we have a pretty good idea of what our assets are, both in people and in materials, and we have a sense of the various ways that we can respond. Let's use pg. 38 to revisit our goals from Session 2 and flesh them out with steps for implementing them. This is the moment to decide what activities are needed to accomplish those goals, what preparation is needed before a disaster and who shall lead each activity.*
- Flip chart the group's work, and give it to the compiler to transcribe into the final plan.

Communication and Outreach – 10 minutes

Facilitator: *The Communication and Outreach Section starting on page 40 of the Planning Guide is another piece that we can assign to the appropriate person.*

- Have the group look through the pages and determine who to assign this section to.
- Determine who from the group will contact these people, provide them with copies of the section and follow up to make sure it is filled out.
- Determine a deadline for when this section should be completed.

Closing Comments and Prayer

Review any next steps that members will be responsible for. Thank the group for its work and remind them of the next meeting time. Close with the Lord's Prayer, or another prayer that the group can pray collectively.

Session 4: Developing Responses and Assessing Knowledge

Objective:

Using the planning information compiled in the guide, create templates for responding to four types of crises that could likely affect your congregation and community.

Time: 60-90 minutes

Materials:

- Completed Planning Guides for all
- Extra copies of planning sheets for major disasters and local emergencies (pgs. 51-54)

Opening Prayer – 5 minutes

Facilitator or Prayer Leader: Invite the group to respond to each line with:
“There is none like you, O Lord.”

There is none like the God of the upright, who rides on the heavens to help you and on the clouds in majesty....

The eternal God is your refuge....

Underneath are the everlasting arms....

Invite the group to share any personal intentions, joys or concerns that they have brought with them.

Facilitator or Prayer Leader: *God of unchangeable power, our strength at all times; guard us from all dangers and support us in all difficulties that we may live victoriously now and forever, through Jesus Christ our Savior.*

All: ***Amen.***

(Adapted from the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer, Collect for the Third Sunday After Pentecost)

Disaster Response Templates – 25 minutes

Facilitator: *So far we’ve been compiling the information that we need on hand to respond to a disaster or emergency. Now we’re going to put it together into four templates that capture the first 10 steps in responding to a disaster or local emergency. We’ll be considering how to respond to major disasters that come with or without warning, and local emergencies that come with or without warning.*

- *This planning would get us through the first 24 hours or so of a disaster and would pave the way for additional response.*
- *Turn to pages 49 and 50. These are example plans for a major disaster that comes with warning, such as a hurricane, and a local emergency that comes with no warning, such as a local snowstorm. Take a few minutes to review how these plans are structured...*

- *Given the information that we've compiled in our guide, would we be able to plot these types of action steps? Is anything missing that we need to note to add to our guide?*
- *Turn to the page that we filled out titled "Brainstorm Potential Disasters and Emergencies" (It's page 19 in the blank Preparedness Planning Guide; the page number may have changed in your completed plan.) These are the types of disasters and emergencies that we felt would be most likely to hit our area. We also determined if they were crises that would occur with or without warning.*
- Depending on the size of your team, you can divide the group into two or four groups. Provide each group with one or two of the four Initial Response pages found on pgs. 51-54. Have the groups work together to fill out the initial steps to responding to this type of disaster.
- When the groups are finished, have them report their action steps. Note where the steps are similar and where they are different.
- Provide these plans for the compiler to add to the final document.

Looking Forward – 15 minutes

Facilitator: *We have done a great deal of work to compile planning information and map out first steps in a disaster. It looks great on paper. But plans can also be filed away and forgotten. What if a disaster strikes three years from now? What will ensure that our planning is put into action?*

- *Discuss: What is our team's role in ensuring that our plan can be put into action? Consult page 10 to review the ongoing responsibilities of this group.*
- *What actions and activities should we plan for the next year to ensure that the congregation is informed, the information is current and the plan works? Flip chart these ideas.*
- Have the group map out a timeline of actions, assigning who will be responsible for initiating and completing it. An example might be, "write an article for the church bulletin," or "put out a survey to update information."
- Have the compiler include this information in a next-steps page to be inserted after the Initial Response plans.

Putting it to the Test – at least 20 minutes

Play the Disaster Preparedness Game included at the end of this resource. This exercise tests the **initial** responses that the group has determined in light of a disaster scenario, and examines other parts of the plan. It would take about 15 to 20 minutes to consider one scenario. If the group has time, consider playing more than one scenario, or using the exercise in future meetings.

Closing Comments and Prayer

Review any next steps that members will be responsible for. Thank the group for its work and remind them of the next meeting time. Close with the Lord's Prayer, or another prayer that the group can pray collectively.

The Disaster Preparedness Game

Object of the game:

As a group, map out your response to a disaster scenario in a 15-minute round.

Materials:

- Game pieces, cut apart and separated. (Note: You can write custom disaster scenarios and challenges on the blanks pieces provided.)
- One six-sided die
- A digital timer, phone or stop watch that can be set for 15 minutes.
- Flip chart paper, markers and stands (optional)

Set up:

Copy the scenarios and challenge questions on two different colors of paper and cut the game pieces apart. Place them face down in two piles. Set up a flip chart.

How to play:

Set up the disaster

- Draw a disaster scenario that applies to your community (discard scenarios that don't apply)
- Determine whether this is a regional disaster with or without warning, or a local emergency with or without warning.
- Roll the die to determine the following:
 - Whether or not your church buildings have been directly impacted (if applicable): roll even for yes and odd for no.
 - Whether or not church members were directly impacted: roll even for yes and odd for no
 - Whether the rector/priest is reachable to be part of the response: roll even for yes and odd for no.Note: You might want to note these factors on a piece of flip chart paper.

Test your initial response steps

Set the timer for 15 minutes. As a group, determine what steps your team would take to respond to the disaster in the first 24 hours. Make a note if your plan seems to be missing a step or approach, and determine how to fix it.

Meet additional challenges

Still have some time on the clock or want to extend the game? Have individual group members draw challenge questions regarding this scenario and answer them to the group's satisfaction. See how many additional challenge questions the group can answer before the timer runs out (or just ignore the timer and keep going). The answers to many of these challenges go beyond your 24-hour plan and require you to consider your entire planning process.

Additional Notes

You'll soon discover that answers to these questions will depend on the consensus of the group. More important than beating the clock is seeing how well your group knows the components of the plan it has created and can recognize if parts of the plan are missing or need strengthening. Consider using the game at subsequent meetings of your group to keep members thinking about disaster preparedness.

Disaster Scenario Pieces

Print these on colored paper and cut them out. Write your own familiar local scenarios on the blank strips if you don't find them among the options here.

An uncontrollable fire is sweeping through your community.

A heavy rainstorm has caused landslides and floods that have destroyed homes and made roads impassable.

A tornado has touched down in your county.

A hurricane has hit the coast of your state.

An ice storm has paralyzed the entire state.

A bombing has occurred in the business district of your community.

A train carrying nuclear waste has derailed and released its contents into the air and water supply.

A trailer park that serves low-income residents has closed, displacing 100 residents who now must find comparably priced housing.

A unit of national guard members – all from your community – has been killed in a military assault overseas. More than 50 families in your community have lost close relatives.

The waterway nearest your church has flooded.

Challenge Question Pieces

Print on colored paper and cut them out. Write your own local challenges on the blank strips if you don't find them among the options here.

One week after the event: What is your disaster leadership team working on?

Two weeks after the event: How do you determine who is still in need in your community as a result of the event?

If your church was affected: How will you protect church property in this scenario?
If your church was unaffected: Draw a new challenge question.

It's the first Sunday after the event. How have weekend worship services and ministries been impacted?

It's two weeks after the event. How is the church responding?

It's a week after the event. Name three church members, who are not on staff or on the disaster leadership committee, who would be essential to the response and how they would be included.

If your church building was impacted: From where are church operations occurring a week after the event?
If your church building was not impacted: Choose a new challenge question.

Three weeks after the event: How will you work with non-church partners to respond?

If church members were impacted: How are you determining people's needs three days after the event?
If church members were not impacted: Who in the community is most in need of your help?

If this is a long-term disaster: What is your church doing three months after the event? Is this a new ministry or an extension of previous ministries?
If this is not a long-term disaster: draw a new challenge question.

