

Let's Talk: Family Conversation Starters

Disaster Response

Legend:



Adults ask Children/Youth



Children/Youth ask Adults



For Everyone

Instructions:

For durability, print the document on cardstock if possible. Cut the cards on indicated dashes and place them in a jar or basket on a table. Choose a day of the week when family members take turns asking each other questions. There are specific questions for adults to ask children/youth, children/youth to ask adults and questions for everyone to ask and answer.

There are seven cards in total. They could be spread over seven weeks at mealtime, used as a family road trip resource, used as table talk cards for intergenerational formation sessions, or printed and mailed to the families in your congregations. There are also two additional blank cards for you to add a conversation starter that is meaningful to your family or community. The possibilities are endless!

Let's Talk cards are composed to be open-ended, without a simple yes or no answer to create a time of storytelling. Sometimes parents and grandparents feel they must always have answers for children, but that's not true. A story that includes your feelings will connect you to your children much more than having a concrete answer. Talking with children and youth about disaster can be fraught; some families have direct and traumatic experiences while some have only witnessed disaster from a distance. While it's okay, and healthy, to talk about adult feelings of anxiety and fear and to validate those feelings from our children, the idea for these conversations is to build a sense of hopeful empowerment for everyone.

All of these questions are designed to bring families together. Be prepared for answers that surprise, delight and even startle you. For instance, if your teen says they don't think you ever listen to them, take a breath and ask how they think you could be better at talking and listening to each other. If your youth is playing music with references to violence, don't just make them turn it off. Ask open-ended questions about what they like about that music, how it makes them feel and share why it concerns you, without judgement.

Enjoy the conversations!

What is a Disaster?



What is a disaster? Have you heard of any damaging storms, floods or fires in our area, or in the news? *Or for children who have experienced major storms, flooding or fires:* How did it feel when that big storm or flood happened in our area? What do you remember?



Tell us about storms or disasters you remember; what happened, and how did people get help? How long did the disaster last, and when was it over?



Let's look at Episcopal Relief & Development's [3 Phases of a Disaster](#) together to learn more.

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/what-we-do/us-disaster-program/disasterhelp/>

*Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.
I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold;
I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me.
(Psalm 69:1-2)*



What Happens to Communities Enduring a Disaster?



When a whole community experiences a disaster, how do you think people react? How do they help each other?



How does our community, including the local government, plan for and protect us in emergencies or disasters? Who would help people get to safety, who would make sure everyone had food to eat and clean water to drink?



Let's look through these photos of disaster relief from Episcopal Relief & Development together, and think about what might be happening to help the community that's been harmed: [Responding to Disasters and Rebuilding Communities](#).

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/press-resources/responding-to-disasters-and-rebuilding-communities>

*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
(Matthew 11:28-29)*



Being Prepared as a Family



Who would you call if you needed help? Let's make a list of those people and their phone numbers and addresses, and we can include it in our emergency kit. Emergencies happen; being ready can help us feel safer and less afraid.



What are the types of disasters that happen where we live? What would we need to do in a bad storm? Where would we go if we needed to leave our house?



If we needed to leave our house to be safe, what would we want to take with us? Let's create an emergency kit with extra medicines, keys to our house and cars, lists of family and friends and their contact information. What else should we include?

*But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.
(Luke 12:39-40)*



Being Prepared as a Community



What have you learned at home and at school about keeping yourself and others safe?



How do adults plan for when something goes wrong? What adults outside our family could we talk to about being prepared for a disaster?



Episcopal Relief & Development has a "[Pastors and Disasters Toolkit](#)" for our church leaders. Maybe we can meet with them to talk about how our church community might respond in a disaster.

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/resource/pastors-and-disasters-a-toolkit-for-community-based-disaster-resilience/>

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful.
(Hebrews 10:23)



Disaster Resilience and Response around the World



What kind of disasters do you think happen in different parts of the world? What do you think makes it harder or easier for different communities to prepare for and respond to disasters?



Have you ever traveled to do disaster recovery or response work, or do you know anyone who has done that work?



What are the Bible stories of disasters we know? Why is it important to know the history of people facing these life-changing events?

* look through a Bible or do an internet search

You shall not see your neighbor's donkey or ox fallen on the road and ignore it; you shall help to lift it up.
(Deuteronomy 22:4)



What We Can Do When We Hear of a Disaster



What do we want to pray for when we think about the community currently enduring a disaster? We can think about children, adults, animals, communities, first responders and more as we pray.



What are the best ways to help a community that's experiencing a disaster? Why is it a bad idea to send our old clothes and books and toys right away?



How can our family help those who are suffering? What would we be willing to sacrifice to raise some money to donate to disaster victims? What happens to any money we might decide to send? We can look here to get an idea: [Disaster Recovery](#).

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/what-we-do/us-disaster-program/long-term-recovery-programs/>

And let all survivors in whatever place they reside be assisted by the people of their place with silver and gold, with goods, and with livestock, besides freewill offerings for the house of God in Jerusalem.
(Ezra 1:4)



Recovery After a Disaster



What are the feelings you think people—adults and children—experience during a disaster? What about afterwards, when recovery and rebuilding need to happen?



How long do you think it takes for a community to rebuild after a disaster like a flood or an earthquake? What steps do they have to take to recover and rebuild?



Remember the [3 Phases of a Disaster](#) we looked at. Let's try to tell the story together of a community that faced a particular disaster and what it was like for them, from the beginning of the event to when they may have felt 'recovered.'

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/what-we-do/us-disaster-program/disasterhelp/>

*Then the heads of the families of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites—everyone whose spirit God had stirred—got ready to go up and rebuild the house of the LORD in Jerusalem.
(Ezra 1:5)*



My Family—Conversation Starter



My Family—Conversation Starter

