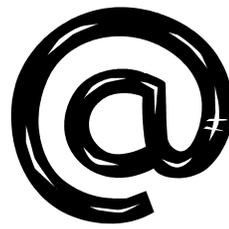


Living Faith



Dear Friends,

At one of the gatherings of the Home Life Network, we discussed how to make this publication more useful for the congregations of the Northeast Iowa Synod. One of the things we talked about, was doing special editions that would be accessible on the NEIA Synod website as stand alone pieces that people could use as things come up. This issue of newsletter is one of the results of that conversation. Little did we know it would be needed so soon.

We were all shocked and horrified when we learned of the outcome of the two missing girls in Evansdale, the shootings in Connecticut, natural disasters such as flooding, tornados, and earthquakes, and most recently the crash of the Med Care helicopter near Ventura. When these things happen, we feel helpless and powerless. These are times that test our faith. But if we believe we are the Easter people we find peace and hope even in the darkness and confusion.

To cope with the things we have no control over, it helps to be able to actively do something. Even if it is just a small simple thing like praying together as a family, writing a letter or drawing a picture. When talking to kids let them talk and just listen without commenting or trying to fix everything for them. Let your children ask questions and express their thoughts. Remember it is ok to admit you don't know and sometimes we just don't understand or have an answer.

Please know, I am not advocating that anyone should expose children to things they are not ready for. I would encourage parents, caregivers, (and grandparents) to talk together as a parenting team about how best to teach your children about the hard things in life. It is never easy to talk about the tough stuff, especially when someone close to one's age is affected. Bless you for having the courage to talk about it.

Blessings, Elayne Werges, DM, BSW

Dealing with Tragedy & Disaster

*How could someone do this?
Why did God let this Happen?*

We live in a world that is broken and sinful. God does not send tragedy to punish us. The reality is that bad things happen. But, because we are called through the waters of baptism to be witnesses of God's love and grace to the world, we respond differently than the rest of the world. We look to scripture for examples of faithful followers and find the words of comfort that we share.

As Christians we gather as a family and as congregations for prayer and support, and we respond. We pray for those affected, their families, for safety, healing, and renewal. We gather supplies and food or send counselors and willing hands. Bishop Stephen Bouman, former bishop of the Metro New York Synod wrote these words that continue to resonate to people of faith following the attacks on September 11, 2001 "The cross is God's way of saying clearly to all creation: in life and death, in the tragedy, passion, and renewal of all existence, God is present all the way."



“For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. “

Romans 8:24-25



This information is prepared for you by the
Northwestern Iowa Synod of the ELCA-Home Life Network

for use by families and local congregations.

For more ideas about how you can pass on faith in your homes go to:

http://www.neiasynod.org/synod_resources/YouthFamilyResources.asp

If you have a comment or suggestion for future newsletters or are interested in joining the Home-Life Network please contact the synod office or

Elayne Werges, facilitator at elaynewerges@gmail.com



Disasters and tragedy impact everyone in different ways. In most cases' people will go through three phases in the process of recovery.

IMPACT Phase

The Disaster, Tragedy, or Crisis itself with the disruptions to daily life and the reactions of those directly involved.

RECOIL Phase

The recoil phase includes the immediate reactions to the crisis and the beginning of the process to regain control.

RECOVERY Phase

This phase involves letting people make sense of the crisis and find a new sense of what is "normal" that allows all to move forward into the future using the knowledge and coping skills learned from the crisis.

Talking With Kids About Their Feelings.....

As a parent our instinct is to protect children. Sometimes in that process we may not really listen to what the other is saying. Here are some guidelines to help parents communicate with their kids (and each other).

- ♥ Listen to your child's feelings rather than controlling the conversation yourself.
- ♥ Acknowledge and normalize your child's statements with positive responses, such as:
 - "It is okay to feel that way"*
 - "Things like that make everyone feel _____"*
 - "You must have been scared/afraid when that happened"*
 - "Say more about that"*
- ♥ It is okay to say "I don't know" if your child asks a question you cannot answer.
- ♥ Express your own feelings, but try to avoid alarming or upsetting your child. Avoid forcing them to talk and 'putting words in their mouths', rather accept what they are trying to tell you about their feelings, even though it may be different from what you are feeling.
- ♥ Pay attention to behaviors that show your child has strong feelings, such as: fidgeting or squirming, avoiding eye contact, facial expressions that show anger, sadness, or worry. Keep in mind that listening to your child is a good way of showing emotional support.
- ♥ To teach about feelings, do an online search to find feeling faces pictures. Talk about all the different feelings that God made you to have. All feelings are good, how we respond can get us into trouble.
- ♥ Turn off the newsfeeds on the TV, radio, or internet. The images tend to cause more trauma.
- ♥ When you start a conversation, make it the priority. Avoid distractions.



Emergency Contact Card

Name: _____

Address: _____

Parents/Guardian: _____

Mom-Cell: _____ Hm: _____ Wk: _____

Dad-Cell: _____ Hm: _____ Wk: _____

Emergency Meeting Place: _____

Outside of Area Meeting Place: _____



Suggestions to Deal with Feelings

Here are some ideas that caregivers can use to help kids cope.....

- ♥ Let them call their friends and relatives that live away from you. Allowing time to do this will assure them that the people they love are okay.
- ♥ Let them work out their feelings by giving options for expression such as drawing, painting, or sculpting what they are thinking-Younger children may not have the 'words' to express what they are feeling. Let them use play dough, markers, crayons, colored pencils. If they create something that shows them vulnerable or powerless, help them to explore the ways that are keeping them safe. If necessary let them draw a picture of themselves as a superhero.
- ♥ Let them role play what they might do in the case of a crisis. They can make puppets or use their toys if necessary. Sometimes it is helpful to give them a superhero cape.
- ♥ Write a letter or make a card to send to those who were affected. If you don't know anyone, send it to a nearby Lutheran Church.
- ♥ Light candles to honor those who were lost.
- ♥ Create a collage with magazine pictures about how a community to prepare and prevent disasters or tragedies.
- ♥ In the event of a storm, create a timeline or a scrapbook about the events, who you met, and what happened. It is helpful for adults to journal.
- ♥ Keep your routine as normal as possible.
- ♥ Make a safety plan with your family. Including Emergency Card such as the one above.