



Use the Friend magazine to help your family understand a different sensitive topic each month.

## DEALING WITH DISASTERS

Earthquakes, hurricanes, terrorist attacks. In any disaster, one of the earliest casualties is our children's sense of safety and security. That can be true even if the disaster is on the other side of the globe. No matter how hard we may try to protect them from shocking news, children hear about traumatic events at school and glimpse disturbing images on phones or televisions. They can also feel shock waves of sorrow, anger, and fear reverberating from us. So how can we comfort and empower our children?

Children's advocate Fred Rogers passed along the advice his mother would give him after traumatic events: "Always look for the helpers" (in Fred Rogers and Barry Head, *Mister Rogers Talks with Parents* [1983], 183). We can also teach our children to look for "the Helper"—a loving Heavenly Father whose helping hand is always stretched out to His children. This month's *Friend* can help families cope during those inevitable times when disaster strikes.

### "The Lemonade Stand That Changed Everything" (page 32)

After a terrorist attack, a child feels comforted and empowered when she helps her neighborhood raise money for injured firefighters.

### "What's on Your Mind?" (page 34)

This page gives lots of ideas for serving others in the wake of an illness or disaster.



### "I Can Always Pray" (page 24)

These activities remind children that they can always pray to Heavenly Father, including when they're frightened or sad.

### "Emergency Scavenger Hunt" (page 35)

Help everyone feel more secure by making or updating your emergency kit.



Find stories, activities, and media related to this topic and others at [lessonhelps.lds.org](http://lessonhelps.lds.org). For past *Friend* Connection articles, visit [FriendConnection.lds.org](http://FriendConnection.lds.org).

### TALK ABOUT IT

- Explain what happened in concrete terms: "Wind damaged the power lines that light our house." Then tell what's being done to help: "Workers are working on the lines, and we're going to use our emergency lanterns until the lines are repaired."
- Ask children what they already know about the disaster. Let their questions guide what you tell them.
- Limit the news coverage your family watches about the disaster.
- Let children express fear and sadness, and don't try to "reason" them out of their feelings. Worries about not seeing their friends or missing a soccer game may be very important to them.
- Do something as a family to help those who are suffering.
- Reassure them that you love them and that Heavenly Father loves them and all those who have been affected.

### RELATED RESOURCES

- Janele Williams, "Helping Children Cope with Traumatic Situations," *Ensign*, Feb. 2008, 46–48.
- Shawn Evans, "Helping Children Feel Safe," *Ensign*, Feb. 2011, 14–17.
- "Help in Times of Trouble," *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 129.
- [JustServe.org](http://JustServe.org).