

EMERGENCY DAY DRILL

BY HEIDI POPE

(Based on a true story)

If ye are prepared ye shall not fear
(D&C 38:30).

Cassidy sat on the living room floor examining all the items in her emergency backpack—granola bars, hard candy, canned tuna and crackers, a coloring book and crayons, a flashlight with batteries, a small travel game, a whistle, an emergency blanket, paper and a pencil, and other small things.

“Mom, is today an emergency day?” five-year-old Cassidy called out. “I want to use my backpack!” Cassidy and her family had gotten the emergency backpacks for Christmas from an aunt and uncle.

“No, not today,” Mom answered. “I know there are a lot of neat things you would like to use out of your backpack, but if we

In the U.S., it's called a flashlight, but in England it's a torch?

Right!

have an emergency you'll be glad you've kept them all together." Mom stood at the doorway. "Come on, let's put all the backpacks on the top shelf in the hall closet. Then we'll know where to find them in an emergency."

Cassidy began putting things back inside her backpack. "I want to have an emergency so I can use my stuff," she said.

Mom sat down on the floor to help Cassidy put the items back. "Do you remember hearing about the people whose homes were destroyed by a big wave called a tsunami?"

"Yes," Cassidy answered, looking concerned.

"That was an emergency," Mom explained as she zipped up Cassidy's backpack. "It's a situation that happens quickly when people are not expecting it."

"Emergencies are bad things, aren't they?" Cassidy asked.

"They can be very serious," Mom replied. "But when bad things happen it can give us comfort to have something prepared—something we can grab quickly if we need to."

"Like our backpacks?" Cassidy asked eagerly.

"Exactly," Mom said. "You don't need to wish for an emergency though. Let's plan an emergency day drill. We'll pretend there is an emergency and that we can only use the snacks and things we have in our backpacks. When we are done, we can replace the things we've used and

plan another emergency day drill to keep us on our toes."

"Yes!" Cassidy shouted. "That sounds fun!"

"The Lord promises us that if we are prepared we shall not fear," Mom said.

"We should tell the rest of the family about our idea," Cassidy said.

"Good idea. We'll talk about it tonight at family home evening," Mom said.

That evening just before dinner, Cassidy was reading a book in the living room. Her brother and sisters were finishing their homework in the basement. The lights flickered a few times, and then the electricity



went out. The winter sky was already dark, and for a few moments it was impossible to see anything.

“Mom!” Cassidy yelled.

Mom answered from the kitchen in a calm voice, “It’s OK. Just stay where you are. I’ll come get you.”

Cassidy blinked her eyes several times to adjust to the darkness. Then her mother reached out and took her hand.

“There you are!” Mom said. “Now we need some light.”

“There’s a flashlight in my emergency backpack!” Cassidy said excitedly.

They walked carefully through the dark house toward the hall closet.

“Who turned out the lights?”

Cassidy’s older brother, Adison, shouted.

“It’s dark down here!” her sister Olivia called.

“We’ll get a light for you!” Cassidy said as she held tightly to Mom’s hand.

When they reached the closet, Mom pulled down Cassidy’s backpack and got out the flashlight. “That’s better,” Mom said. She quickly pulled down everyone’s backpack, and Cassidy got out the flashlights so that everyone would have their own light.

Dad came in through the door to the garage. “Boy, it sure was dark out there. It took me a while to find the door,” he said. “Were you scared?” he asked Cassidy.

“Yes, but I knew where my flashlight was, so that made me

feel better,” she answered.

Looking out the window, they saw that the electricity was out all over the neighborhood, and a thick fog had rolled in.

The family gathered in the living room with their emergency backpacks and everyone chatted excitedly. Dad searched his backpack for his emergency radio and began to listen for a weather report. After a few minutes he announced, “Well, it doesn’t appear to be a winter storm. Hopefully, the power will be back on by morning. Your mom and I have decided that we will use this opportunity to have an emergency drill.

You each can use only the things you have in your backpacks. Use them wisely, just in case the power is out for longer than we expect. Now that we are all here, we will start family home evening with a prayer of thanks that we were prepared for this minor emergency.”

Cassidy pulled a granola bar out of her backpack. She leaned over to Mom and said, “It turned out to be an emergency day after all.” ●



“Using our resources and worldly goods wisely and extending their life will help us become more self-reliant.”⁴

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

