

SECTION 11
PHYSICAL PLANT
AND SAFETY

	PAGE
Basics in Safety	105
Fire and Tornado Alarm Planning Sheet	107
Emergency Procedures	110
10 Easy Steps for Fire Safety	111
Tornado Actions	112
When an Earthquake Strikes	113
Health and Safety Procedures	114

BASICS IN SAFETY

A Catechetical Leader:

- Is familiar with the total building: knows the location of all exits, fire-extinguishers, flashlights, and first aid and infection control kits.
- Knows how to operate fire alarm for fire and tornado drills.
- Prepares procedures to follow for evacuation if none are available.
- Provides attendance sheets for catechists to carry during a fire/tornado drill to make sure all students have left the building safely.
- Conducts one fire drill and one tornado drill each year.
- Posts and reviews procedures and maps for disaster drills.
- Shows catechists the video on blood-borne pathogens.
- Is familiar with and enforces all parish policies for catechetical sessions held in catechist's home and off-site locations.

FIRE AND TORNADO ALARM PLANNING SHEET

This worksheet is designed to assist in developing a plan for the Religious Education Program in the event of a fire or tornado.

STEP 1. ALARM SYSTEMS:

- If your program meets in a traditional building:
 - Does this building have a fire alarm system and/or a P.A. system?
 - Do you have access to them, and do you know how to use them?

- Talk with the principal about the procedures the school follows, and see if the same plan will work. If possible, be present when the principal has a drill; watch and learn. Remember, exiting a building can be very different at night. If your program is meeting in the evening, keep this in mind. Ask questions like:
 - Where is the best place for all the catechists and students to meet?
 - Where is the best lighting?
 - What hazards might not be seen at night while exiting to the designated place of safety?

EXITS:

- Are all exits to the building available for use when classes are in session?

It is so easy to unlock the front doors to a building, and then assume the rest of the doors are not needed. Walk around the building and take notes.

- Are any exits blocked at night that might be needed in the event of a fire?
- Are there gates across any hallways through which an exit is needed?
- Are any doors chained or have the red lock bars on?
- If so, can these be corrected before each session?

If the exits needed are not available, talk with the principal or Pastor. Make a plan to keep the building safe for the catechists and students.

STEP 2. TAKING ROLE:

In the event of a fire or tornado, make sure all catechists and students have reached the designated place of safety. Instruct catechists to keep an attendance list readily available (perhaps taped close to the door) in case of an emergency. As catechists exit the classroom, have them take their attendance sheet with them. Upon reaching the designated safety place, take role. Have a designated person check with each catechist to make sure that all students are accounted for and report back to the Catechetical Leader.

As the Catechetical Leader or designated person exits, take the master list, in the event that a catechist has forgotten his/her list. The fire department will want to know if anyone is in the building, and if so, where s/he might be. This will need to be verified.

Once Out, Stay Out! Do not go back inside for anything. Take roll call to account for all the children.

FLOOR PLAN:

Catechetical Leader needs to have in the master file a floor plan of the building and a list of what classes are where. If a student is missing, the Catechetical Leader will need to tell the fire department approximately what area of the building the student was in at the time of the alarm. A student may have been in the bathroom, and therefore not have exited with the rest of the class. The younger the student, the greater the chance they may panic and freeze or hide.

Know Two Ways Out. If the planned exit is blocked by smoke or flames, a predetermined alternative exit is necessary. Know two ways out of wherever you are in the building. This should be clear on the fire exit diagrams.

STEP 3. WEATHER RADIO:

When the weather looks suspicious, a battery operated radio is needed and should be kept on. An AM/FM radio would work, but a weather radio is preferred. The batteries need to be checked periodically.

FLASHLIGHTS:

In the event of a fire or tornado, power may go out. Flashlights should be available. This is especially significant if catechists and students will be exiting a building at night in a poorly lit area.

STEP 4. HAVE A FIRE DRILL AND TORNADO DRILL:

Practice saves lives.

Know What to Do in an Unusual Situation:

- If trapped, feel the door with the back of your hand. If hot, don't open it. Go out another way. If cool, put your shoulder against it, open it slowly so you can close it quickly if there is fire on the other side.
- Also, always crawl low under smoke. Practice this drill by having a student hold up a "smoke" sign in the middle of a corridor. If possible, turn around and use an alternate way out; if not, drop down low and crawl past the sign, showing you know where the air is cleaner.

If you meet in a non-traditional building or perhaps use several buildings:

ALARM:

- Do you have an alarm and/or a P.A. system in the building(s)?
- If not, how will you let your students and catechists know that there is a problem?
- What kind of signal will you use for FIRE, TORNADO, and ALL CLEAR?

It would be good to involve your Pastor and other pertinent people in developing a plan for your program. You might have a firefighter in the parish who can help you think it through. Keep in mind that you need an alarm, horn, or bell that all can hear even with 10-15 noisy children in a room.

EXITS:

- Do you have enough exits?
- What exits will each group use?
- Do you have posted exit maps in each classroom?

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire Drill Procedures

- Alarm sounds.
 - Leave room quickly and silently.
 - Proceed to nearest exit away from the building – to a designated area.
 - Line up as a class.
 - Remain in silence.
 - When all clear signal sounds, return to classroom.
-
- **Catechist's Responsibility**
 - Go over procedures and practice with students.
 - See that all students are out of building.
 - Take attendance sheet with you. Take role call.
 - Shut classroom doors and turn off all lights.
 - Shut outside doors.
 - Remain with your students.
 - If a student is missing, report it immediately to the secretary or designated person. Arrange for the secretary or designated person to be at a designated spot.
 - **Secretary or Designated Person's Responsibility**
 - Take attendance book out with you.
 - Go out exit nearest the office.
 - If Catechetical Leader is out of the building, inform Pastor/parish center of alarm if it isn't a drill.

Tornado Drill Procedures

- School bell rung in a delayed manner – 5 rings.
 - Students go into the corridor of school.
 - Everyone gets down on the floor and covers his/her head.
 - Catechist closes the door as s/he leaves the room.
 - Everyone remains down until the all-clear signal is given.
-
- **Catechist's Responsibility**
 - Go over procedure and practice with students.
 - See that all students are down.
 - Take attendance list with you.
 - Doors are closed and no student in front of doors or near windows.
 - Go on floor with students – if necessary.
 - **Secretary or Designated Person's Responsibility**
 - Comes to the corridor for his/her safety.

10 EASY STEPS FOR FIRE SAFETY

- **Have a plan.** Know exactly what to do if the alarm sounds. Time counts, and you may have only seconds.
- **Set a Time with the Fire Department.** Work with the fire department in planning, as well as monitoring, and evaluating the drill.
- **Check Exit Diagrams.** Every room in the building must have one. Read them. Study them. Be sure to know two ways out of the building, so if one is blocked, there is still an escape.
- **Know the Alarm Sound.** The fire alarm should have a definite sound of its own, bell or horn, unlike the local ambulance or patrol car siren.
- **When the Alarm Sounds, Stop Everything.** Give directions to follow, depending on the location of the make-believe or real fire.
- **Exit Safely.** Have children file out of the room in an orderly line, row by row, quickly and quietly. Walk to the exit and move away from the building to the designated meeting place.
- **Once Out, Stay Out.** Do not go back inside for anything! Take roll call to account for all the children.
- **Have Another Plan.** In case you can't follow the original plan, appoint a student fire marshal who could lead the classroom's evacuation.
- **Know What to Do in an Unusual Situation.** If trapped, feel the door with the back of your hand. If hot, don't open it. Go out another way. If cool, put your shoulder against it, opening it slowly so you can close it quickly if there is fire on the other side. Also, always crawl low under smoke. Practice this drill by having a student hold up a "smoke" sign in the middle of a corridor. If possible, turn around and use an alternate way out; if not, drop low and crawl past the sign, showing you know where the air is clearer.
- **Know Two Ways Out.** If the planned exit route is blocked by smoke or flames, you need to know another way out; not just another way out of the room. Know two ways out of wherever you are in the building. This should be made clear on the fire exit diagrams.

TORNADO ACTIONS

TORNADO WATCH

SIGNAL

MEANS

There is a chance of dangerous weather with damaging winds. Be on the lookout for the danger signs listed below and be ready to move quickly to safety if the Warning Signal is given.

TORNADO WARNING

SIGNAL

MEANS

A tornado has been sighted nearby. You are to go at once to the designated area. If you see or hear a tornado, do not wait for the Warning Signal-go to your shelter area if there is time. If there is not time, curl up on the floor and protect yourself as the boy in the picture is doing.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Lie face down, draw you knees up under you, and cover the back of your head with your hands.



DANGER SIGNS:

SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS

Thunder, lightning, heavy rains, and strong winds.

HAIL

Pellets of ice from dark-clouded skies.

ROARING NOISE

Like a hundred railroad locomotives; a crashing thunderous sound.

FUNNEL

Dark, spinning "rope" or column from the sky to the ground.

WHEN AN EARTHQUAKE STRIKES

When an Earthquake Strikes:

For a minute or two the solid earth may pitch and roll like the deck of a ship. The motion is frightening, but unless it shakes something down on you, it is harmless. Keep calm and ride it out. Your chances of survival are good if you know how to act.

During the Shaking:

- If indoors, stay indoors. Hide under sturdy furniture. Stay near the center of the building. Stay away from glass.
- Don't use candles, matches, or other open flames.
- Don't run through or near buildings where there is danger of falling debris.
- If outside, stay in the open, away from buildings and utility wires.
- If in a moving car, stop but stay inside.

After the Shaking:

- Check utilities. If water pipes are damaged or electrical wires are shorting, turn off at primary control point. If gas leakage is detected, shut off at main valve and stay away until utility officials say it is safe.
- Turn on a battery powered radio for emergency bulletins.
- Stay out of damaged buildings; aftershocks can shake them down.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

Parish procedures for handling accidents, illnesses and injuries involving body fluids need to be established by the Catechetical Leader. The following guidelines are simple precautions which give a basic framework to insure increased safety for the catechetical staff and participants in catechetical programs.

- Every parish is to have a written procedure for handling accidents, illnesses and injuries. The procedure should indicate:
 - Who is to be notified if there is an accident.
 - Where supplies are kept.
 - What catechists or support staff are to do.
- The following are some standard procedures:
 - Do not leave the individual unattended.
 - Body fluids should not be touched. Provide disposable rubber gloves to be worn by personnel in cleaning up blood and body fluid spills.
 - Frequent hand washing is essential. To prevent the spread of disease, all personnel should be reminded to routinely wash their hands using soap and running water. If soap and water are unavailable, wet towelets or alcohol based hand cleaner may be used. Provide disposable paper towels or electric drying machines.
 - Open lesions on program participants and staff should be covered.
 - Clean soiled surfaces promptly with a bleach solution. Wear rubber gloves during the process and use disposable materials such as paper towels. Exercise caution when removing gloves, turning them inside-out as they are removed.
 - Discard all disposable materials, including gloves in a sealed plastic bag and place in a plastic lined garbage receptacle. Use caution with all sharp objects.
 - Eliminate the use of common water bottles, cups and towels.
 - When possible, encourage self-treatment of injuries and illness.
 - Include cleaning and disinfecting of common equipment and areas in the housekeeping policies of the facilities where programs are held.
 - Make first aid materials available to catechists and staff.
- Supplies for handling accidents which involve blood or body fluids should be made available; i.e., disposable gloves, paper towels, plastic leak-proof bags, bleach solution (1 part bleach to 10 parts water), soap, eye and face protection. Provide facilities for washing hands and/or irrigating eyes. Infection control kits are available at your local pharmacy.
- Offer an in-service for catechists and staff regarding the procedures for handling accidents.
- Keep records of all accidents involving spills of blood or body fluids.