



## Tips and Lessons – Disaster Response

# How To Address Hurricane Harvey in Sunday School

This tipsheet offers advice and guidance for churches outside of the affected areas on how best to have a conversation with kids about disasters. It also presents a prayer card activity that can be used during Sunday School classes or coffee hour. The activity is designed to give kids a chance to ask questions, safely process their feelings about the disaster and think about ways to help and support those affected by the crisis. When having these conversations, it is important to be a calm presence, listen to their fears and concerns and cultivate a sense of hope for the future.

### CREATING PRAYER CARDS FOR AFFECTED CHURCHES:

**Estimated Time:** 60 minutes

**Materials:** Pre-cut card stock or construction paper, markers, colored pencils and/or any other art supplies you have on hand.

### Why prayer cards?

Prayer cards are a great way to express hope and encouragement to people who have been impacted. Other goods and physical donations place a heavy burden on people recovering from disasters because they must find ways to store and distribute goods until they are needed. In contrast, prayer cards are small and lightweight but still very personal.

### Begin in prayer

Consider beginning with a prayer. You may use the one below or one of your choosing.

*God, be with us and with all those recovering from Hurricane Harvey. Please help us to be a source of comfort and help when bad things happen in the world and hold us in your love forever. Amen.*

### Conversations about Hurricane Harvey

After praying together, explain what happened in simple terms that your group can understand. For young children, you might say

*Dear Lord, be with us this day as we gather together to comfort and support each other. Help us to find your guiding words and presence in those around us. Help us find listening ears and kind words as we seek to bring our thoughts and prayers to You.*

*In Christ's Name, Amen.*

To learn more about Episcopal Relief & Development's response following Hurricane Harvey and how you can help, visit our Hurricane Harvey page:

[www.episcopalrelief.org/harvey](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/harvey)



something like: *“There was a hurricane that caused a lot of damage. A lot of people aren’t able to go back to their homes and are feeling sad and afraid.”* Then, ask questions that can help the group empathize with people who have been impacted.

### Here are some example questions:

- What do you think it is like to lose something that is very important to you like a pet or a home?
- Where do you see God when you are sad or afraid?
- How do we take care of other people when they are sad or frightened?
- If something bad happened to you, what would you want someone to say to make you feel better?
- How can you be the hands and feet of God during a bad time?

Reassure the kids that God is love, and God doesn’t want bad things to happen or to cause harm. It may also be helpful to say that it is okay to have questions and point out that lots of people are working really hard to help the people who are in trouble, including them.

After this session, invite the group to decorate the prayer cards with their art, prayers and well wishes.

Some congregations also pair a prayer card activity with a fundraiser to help with disaster response efforts. This provides an opportunity to combine compassionate prayer cards with critical material assistance to those in need. You can contribute to Episcopal Relief & Development’s Hurricane Harvey Disaster response efforts here: <http://www.episcopalrelief.org/harvey>

### What happens next?

Your prayer cards will be delivered to diocesan leaders in the impacted area who will then distribute them to congregational leaders. The cards may be:

- Distributed during community meals
- Given along with a gift card to a family in need
- Used to decorate parish halls and shelters

### SEND YOUR PRAYER CARDS TO:

#### Episcopal Diocese of West Texas:

The Rev. Nancy Springer  
1417 E. Austin Ave.  
Harlingen, TX 78550

#### Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana:

The Rev. Deacon Lois Maberry  
St Mark’s Cathedral  
908 Rutherford St  
Shreveport, LA. 71114

#### Episcopal Diocese of Texas:

Diocese of Texas Prayer Cards  
Christ Church Cathedral  
1117 Texas Ave,  
Houston, TX 77002