



“For you [God] have been ... a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm ...”
 — Isaiah 25:4a

Severe Weather Recovery Milestone Moment

Most people look for weather reports daily. The weather determines how we will dress, whether or not to allow for traffic as we head to work, or if an outdoor sport or activity is cancelled. We depend on the weather and know how to cope with the occasional rainy, windy, or snowy day. But when there are severe weather warnings, we are never quite prepared. We check the news frequently and hope that the storm will take a different path. When we are in the direct path of a hurricane, typhoon, flooding, or heavy snowstorm, we need to reschedule activities, safeguard our homes and families, and stock up on supplies.

In years past, before we had today’s technology to determine weather patterns, people looked to the sky and nature to forecast the weather. The Farmer’s Almanac lists many traditional proverbs that are still true today:

- The higher the clouds the finer the weather.
- Clear moon, frost soon.
- Rainbow in the morning gives you fair warning.
- Red sky at night, sailors delight. Red sky in morning, sailors take warning.

There are also many folklore stories about animals and how their behavior forecasts the weather. If it were only that easy to predict. Meteorologists now have a number of tools that are very accurate and can give early warnings and forecasts. This helps make decisions in local settings whether or not to evacuate, or stock up on food, batteries, and candles to hold tight and stay at home. No matter the case, being prepared is important and recognizing God’s presence in this moment helps during this stressful time.

The opportunity for families, neighbors, and friends to gather together during severe weather recovery is important to relieve stress and reassure the future. The Severe Weather Recovery Milestone Moment incorporates a simple structure that includes naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing so that the Milestone Moment has a greater chance to take deeper root in lifelong faith formation and help and support those who have gone through a disaster.





Naming – When the weather reports and radar showed a severe storm was coming and the impact was felt, it is good to name what has happened and provide support.

Equipping – Providing an opportunity to engage in caring conversations, devotions, service, and Christian rituals and traditions at this time is important and can provide comfort for family, friends, and neighbors who have experienced this impact in their homes and lives.

Blessing – Offering a prayer blesses all involved and reminds us of God’s presence in this moment.

Gifting – Prayer shawls, blankets, and items needed for survival are a helpful reminder of God’s presence.

Reinforcing – One way to follow up after spending this Milestone Moment together, is to gather again to reflect on how lives have changed and how your faith has been impacted.

 Caring Conversations	 Devotions	Four Key Faith Practices	 Service	 Rituals and Traditions
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Severe Weather Recovery Milestone Moment

For a Small Group or Family Gathering



Growing People in Faith when at Home and Away

“and talk about them when you are at home and when away, when you lie down and when you rise.”

Deuteronomy 6:7b

Having ongoing conversations following the Severe Weather Recovery Milestone Moment can help reinforce the earlier conversations and provide further opportunities to nurture the Christian faith through the experiences of living through severe weather.

An important step after experiencing the Milestone Moment is to continue using the Four Key Faith Practices (caring conversations, devotions, service, and rituals and traditions) on a regular basis. It helps to encourage people in their lifelong faith formation.

Other resources that can help support the continued journey of faith using the Four Key Faith Practices include the following:

Taking Faith Home
Taking Faith Home Cards

Additional Milestone Modules and Moments can be found at:
www.milestonesministry.org



The Four Key Faith Practices listed below are central to every Milestone and offer a specific Christian spirituality that is simple, doable, and transformative. This Milestone Moment provides an opportunity for people to learn, experience, and grow in their faith together. The next page is a discussion guide handout to assist with the conversations.



As you gather together, begin by sharing a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your lives and then use the outline below to talk about faith and God’s presence in this moment.



Caring Conversations

Invite everyone to take turns answering these questions:

- How did you prepare for the storm? What plans changed?
- Where were you during the storm? What did you do while waiting it out?
- Where have you found help and support since the storm? Who did you turn to?



Devotions

Read the following:

A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But [Jesus] was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” Mark 4: 37-40 (NRSV)

- During the storm, how and where did you find comfort?
- When the storm ceased, where did you find calm?
- Where do you see signs of hope and God’s care reaching out to you and others?



Service

Organizations such as the Red Cross, Samaritan’s Purse, and Lutheran World Relief help victims of disaster through volunteers, donations, and prayer. Have you ever volunteered for or been on the receiving end of these or other organizations? How might you support their work?



Rituals and Traditions

Having a flashlight or candles handy in case of a power outage, getting bottled water, and storing up on non-perishable foods are ways we prepare for a storm. It is also helpful for people of faith to turn to God for hope and good courage. Prayers give spiritual and emotional support. Close with this prayer:

Come healing Spirit, calm the weather, calm our hearts, calm the communities and restore all those in need with basic services and an outpouring of care from organizations and individuals reaching out with love. In Christ's name. Amen.



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Severe Weather Recovery Discussion Guide



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