

30 Day Challenge: Simple Family Preparedness

Day 1: Your first task:

Create 3 lists. You can use a notebook or an app. But you need a place to keep 3 different lists. You don't have to add anything to the lists yet (you can if you want to), you just need to create them.

List #1 - To Do

This list should be full of the things you can do to help reach your preparedness goals. Most of these should cost no (or very little) money. What do you want to get **DONE**? Tasks like organizing all your important documents or taking an inventory of the food you have, or securing the water heater to the wall should be on this list.

List #2 - To Learn

This list can get quite long, but the things on this list can be *powerful*! Include both *skills* and *knowledge* that would help you and your family. Things like learning how to cook with food storage or learning how to knit or how to use a sun oven should be on this list.

List #3 - To Buy

What items do you want / need in order to feel that your family is well prepared? Food storage? Wheat grinder? Water barrel? Siphon for your water barrel.

NO STRESS

IMPORTANT - You are *not* allowed to stress this! Unsure what to put on your list? No worries. Leave it blank. Have a few ideas? Write them down.

The purpose of this is so that you have a place to keep a running list. Now, when you read a preparedness article or get a tip in the Facebook group or from a friend or learn something new during this challenge - you don't forget it and "lose" it. You have a place already prepared to write it down!

That's it! It shouldn't take you more than a couple of minutes to create 3 blank lists!

Day 2:

Your task today is to **call your city and find out what emergency preparedness plans they have.**

What do they suggest you prepare for? What are they prepared for? What communication plans do they have in place? Do they have a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team...)

It'll likely take more than 5 minutes (not more than 20), but you will gain valuable info!

Day 3: Today's task is to think about what you are most at risk for and then focus your efforts on these areas as you start your preparation.

If fires are a concern, evacuations could be a likely outcome. Having a good 72-hour kit would be important as well as making efforts to put all your documents in a cloud-based system and hard copies of critical documents in a Grab and Go Binder. You may only have 15 minutes to get out.

If earthquakes are a major concern in your area, having good water storage and/or filters is important as well as food storage and backup power systems.

Day 4:

During a disaster or emergency panic is often the name of the game. But it doesn't have to be. **You can be prepared.** One of the simplest things you can do now to help avoid panic is to **choose family meeting spots.** Where will you all go if something happens? This will ensure that you find each quickly.

Choose family meeting spots. Consider the following meeting spots:

Inside your home. For those at risk for tornadoes or hurricanes and do not have time to evacuate the area, stay inside and get to a small, interior windowless room or storm shelter. Picking the room beforehand is important so all family members are together.

- ***Right outside your home.*** All those at home during the time of the disaster (such as a house fire) will meet here as soon as they get out of the home.
- ***Outside your neighborhood.*** If your home / neighborhood is unsafe following a disaster, all family members should know to go here.
- ***Outside your town / city.*** This is where your family will meet if you are not home when the disaster happens, and you can't get into your neighborhood.

Your meeting places should be specific, safe and familiar to everyone. For example:

- By the mailbox
- Next to the neighbor's big tree
- At the end of our driveway
- At the elementary school flag pole
- At the junior high school bus entrance
- At the church's south lawn
- At an extended family member's home

Day 5:

Today, check all the smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in your house. Just press the test button, wait a few seconds and see if the alarm is triggered. If not, replace your batteries.

Consider a new practice to check all devices during Church General Conference weekends.

Day 6:

WATER!

- You can't survive more than 3 days without water
- Almost any type of natural disaster can mess up your water supply

For today's task, simply fill up at least *one* container with water.

If you have a **large 55 gallon water barrel** (or **a smaller 5 gallon one**) that has been sitting empty - go fill it up!

If you don't have containers that are specifically made for storing emergency water, here are some other ideas: Fill empty canning jars. If they are empty, they are wasting space. Fill 'em up!

- Clean soda bottles or juice bottles and then fill them up with water
- Buy one 24 pack of water per person in your family
- Fill up an old laundry soap container to use for dishes, laundry, flushing etc. This can make drinking water stretch further.

Your task is simple - Just pick one - fill up *something* with water that you can use in an emergency.

A few important notes:

1. No matter what container you choose, make sure you clean it well first. Wash it with water and a bit of bleach and then rinse it well before filling it up.
2. If you choose canning jars, store them on the floor somewhere so they won't fall and break.
3. If you choose juice bottles make sure they aren't the refrigerated (milk jug type) bottles. Those cannot be used to store drinking water (but you can store 'cleaning' water in them).
4. If you choose water bottle pkgs, make sure you rotate them regularly as they will slowly break down over time.

Day 7: Water is important.

Today, we are still talking about **water**. Yesterday, you added at least one container of water to your emergency supplies.

Today, I want you to do that again. Yep. The same challenge twice. Add one more container (or two or more if you are feeling ambitious) of water to your emergency supplies.

- You cannot survive without drinking it.
- You cannot cook much without it.
- You cannot clean yourself (or wounds etc) without it.

Add ***at least*** one more container to store. If you already have a good amount of water storage, then **rotate** at least one container of stored water.

Day 8: We are still talking about water today - But with a twist! Most everyone will face some sort of power outage in their lifetime. A few hours aren't a huge deal, but anything beyond that is. And most of us will have that happen at some point.

Did you know that water can help you in a power outage?

One sad thing that often happens in a power outage is that the food in your freezer will go bad. But water can help - frozen water that is.

A full freezer will keep food cold (without power) for far longer than a half empty freezer. But no one has a freezer that is always 100% full. The solution is to add frozen milk jugs (or 2 liter soda bottles or gallon Ziploc bags) that have been rinsed and re-filled with water to your freezer in order to fill in all empty spots.

Then, when you need that room for actual *food* in your freezer, you take out the jugs and set them on a shelf or on top of your upright freezer - somewhere accessible.

As you use your food and again have empty space in your freezer, put the jugs back in.

This way, you will always have a FULL freezer and have a better chance of keeping your food in a power outage that lasts a few days.

And as a bonus - you can use that water for cleaning, toilets, bathing etc once it thaws out. *I wouldn't suggest using it for drinking water as the plastic will break down over time (especially as it thaws and re-freezes over and over again) and leak chemicals into the water.*

□

Day 9:

No matter what sort of "disaster" you face - earthquake, tornado, flood, fire, even burglary - having an inventory of what is in your home is SO important.

If you have a detailed and accurate inventory, you will be able to make insurance claims much quicker and get a far more accurate value for your possessions.

But a pen and paper inventory can take a LONG time. The solution? **A video inventory!**

Your task today is to **walk around your house and take a video inventory of your bedrooms, closets and other storage spaces.** (*We will do the rest of the house on other days - I promised you no more than 30 min per task!*)

As you take your inventory, talk! Talk about when you bought things - how long you've had them, where you got them. If your inventory something particularly expensive (jewelry, electronics etc.), take a closeup. Get the item number, brand and any other info that may be important.

Then, keep the inventory in at least 2 of the following places:

- On a DVD or jump drive that you keep with your **grab and go binder**
- On a cloud (I use Google Drive and Microsoft One Drive)
- At a relative or friend's home
- In a safety deposit box

Day 10: Today we are going to continue the video inventory that you started yesterday.

Your task today is to walk around your house and take a video inventory of kitchen and living spaces. (*We will finish the rest of the house tomorrow*)

Remember to talk as you take your inventory. Note where and when you got things. Take closeups of more expensive items. Open cabinets and cupboards.

Then, just like yesterday, keep the inventory in at least 2 of the following places:

- On a DVD or jump drive that you keep with your **grab and go binder**
- On a cloud (I use Google Drive and Microsoft One Drive)
- At a relative or friend's home
- In a safety deposit box

Day 11: Today we are going to **finish up your video inventory.**

Your task today is to walk around your house and take a video inventory of your garage, yard, any other outdoor living space and anything we've missed the other two days.

Once last reminder to remember to talk as you take your inventory. You'll need to know where and when you got things and have close ups of more expensive items will help you clarify their value if you need to.

And just like before, keep the inventory in at least 2 of the following places:

- (1) On a DVD or jump drive that you keep with your **Grab and Go Binder**
- (2) On a cloud (I use Google Drive and Microsoft One Drive)
- (3) At a relative or friend's home
- (4) In a safety deposit box

Day 12: Today's task involves kids. If you don't have young kids in your home, call grandkids or neighbors.

Kids need to know how to call 911. And when they call 911, they need to be able to give essential information such as:

- Parents full names (possible even for very young children)
- Home Address
- Medical conditions of those in the family (*my sister has diabetes; my mom has high blood pressure*)

So, make sure that any children who are important to you in your life know how to call 911 and give this essential information.

Day 13: Let's start talking about food storage!

Having extra food stored in your home is smart for SO many reasons:

- You will run to the grocery store less (and save money b/c you'll have less chances to pick up something extra)
- You can skip a shopping trip if you are sick, super busy or just over stressed one week
- You can make a meal for a friend in need without much notice
- You can feed your family even if you lose your income

And yes, it can help in a disaster.

Grocery stores only carry a limited amount of food and it runs out quite quickly when people are panicked. But if you have food in your home, you won't be one of those people. You won't have to fight - or pay extraordinary prices - for food.

So, today, I want you to write down - or print out - **at least one** recipe you can make with 100% shelf stable ingredients. Bonus points if you do more than one!

Then, add the ingredients to your next shopping list. If funds are limited, buy enough for just one meal - in addition to whatever you are already shopping for that week. If you can, buy enough to make that meal a few times!

Extra Credit

Try repeating this process every week - obviously that isn't part of the challenge b/c it would take more than 30 minutes, but it would be smart!

Day 14: We are continuing with first aid today. Our brains and other organs need oxygen, and our heart is what pumps oxygen rich blood to the brain and other organs. When someone's heart stops, it is essential to keep that blood flowing. As such, everyone should know how to do CPR.

And yet, how many of us can remember what we learned about CPR? *How many compressions? How many breaths? Doesn't age make a difference?* Truthfully, it seems like a lot to remember and review for busy moms and dads. Yes, in an ideal world, we *should* review often enough to remember, but in real life, many of us don't.

Thankfully, the American Heart Association now recommends Hands-Only-CPR for most situations. It is recommended for use by people who see a teen or adult suddenly collapse.

Watch the following video from the American Heart Association:

<https://youtu.be/M4ACYp75mjU?si=WYTchSI mxbaqm qo9>

Day 15

No matter the disaster, if it were to happen at night, you will need light.

Today's task is simple - **put a flashlight near every adult's bed**. For extra credit, put one near the bed of anyone who is old enough to use one. Easy Peasy!

Day 16: Do you have a fire extinguisher in your home? If not, I suggest you get one. Fires at home or the workplace are more common than we may sometimes think and being able to quickly put one out may save lives and property. A fire extinguisher for Class A,B,C is the common choice for a home. Watch the following video for more information.

<https://youtu.be/DQeAwADGi0M?si=Yuplzl-TY7UtXOHq>

Day 17:

This week your task is to learn how to turn off your utilities. It is important to teach your kids and grandparents how to shut off your utilities. Why? Well, there are a few reasons!

Water

During any natural disaster, water will be an extremely important resource. You will want to shut it off from the source to be sure that the water still in your pipes /water heaters remains clean.

Electricity

Electrical sparks can ignite a fire - which is obviously something you want to avoid - so shutting off the electricity after a natural disaster is smart - at least until you know it is safe.

Gas

Natural gas leaks can be extremely dangerous and are responsible for many explosions following natural disaster. As such, you need to know how to shut it off in case of an emergency. Many times, there is a special wrench to turn your gas valve. It is a good idea to zip tie it to the piping near the valve.

Garage Door Opener

If there is no power in an emergency, you will not be able to open the garage door. Teach your family how to manually pull the cord and manually lift the door. There have been instances where people have been found dead sitting in their car in the garage because they didn't know how to get out during a fast moving fire..

Day 18:

There are certain pieces of information that will be important for you to have quick access to during an emergency. Some of these can be included in your **grab and go binder**, but there are some things you may consider memorizing:

- Family members medical conditions, medications, allergies and blood types
- Family member's birthdays
- Family member's social security numbers (or similar if not from the US)
- Emergency contact's phone numbers (all family members plus one local and one long distance contact)
- Your license plate number
- Your driver's license number / passport number
- Your credit card number

You may be able to think of other things that would be important for your family.

Your task today is to memorize anything on the above list that you feel is important for you to know. If you are quick at memorizing (I'm not!), write them down and carry them around with you to look at / review during wait times (doctors office etc).

Day 19:

Today - day #19, your task is to fill out an ID Form for each person in your family (child or adult).

Keep a copy of these forms in our **grab and go binder** as well as in your purse at all times. If I were to ever lose my child, I'd want the police to have all their information as quickly as possible. I've heard horror stories of mothers who can't remember their children's birth dates, eye color etc. b/c they are so distraught with worry.

Include a recent picture with the form and consider adding fingerprints and DNA (a piece of hair will do).

Tips for Fingerprints:

- DO NOT "roll" your finger when pressing it on the paper. This can cause the ridges to distort. And don't use too much ink: practice on a piece of paper first!
- Another option is to get a fingerprint card taken at any local police station/sheriff's office. It's free at my local police station, but sometimes they charge a small fee. You just need to take a photo ID with you when you go.

Day 20:

Only 10 days left!

Today is Day #20 of the 30-Day Emergency Preparedness Challenge. You are 2/3 of the way done. I'm SO glad you are sticking with this!

Today's task is to add a current picture of your family to two places:

- Your phone. Take a family selfie if you need to! Or, take a picture of your most recent family portrait (the one all the wall) with your phone!
- Your purse / wallet (email the selfie you just took to yourself. Then, open it on your computer and print it out. Even regular old paper will do - it doesn't need to be perfect!)

The reason? Having a recent picture of everyone in your family with you at all times is smart.

- Lose a kid at the park? Show everyone around you his picture!
- Separated from family during a disaster? Prove you belong together with a picture.

It shouldn't take but a few minutes!

Day 21: Today your task is to plan to USE food storage!

EEEEK! Yep! Look over what you have planned to eat for the next week or so. Or, consider some of your family's favorite recipes.

Is there a meal where you could use something shelf stable *in the place of* a fresh ingredient?

- Could you use canned veggies instead of fresh / frozen?
- Could you use canned meat?
- Could you make your own breadsticks or rolls or tortillas from scratch?
- Maybe use freeze dried produce or meat?
- Try powdered milk in baking
- Have a bunch of wheat? Here is how to use it!
- Or maybe you have lots of beans?

You don't have to actually cook with it today - ***just plan when you WILL*** - the only rule is that it has to be sometime in the next week!

Day 22:

We are getting closer and closer to the end of this challenge!! Just one week left.

How are you doing? Do you have a favorite day's task? Are you overwhelmed? Have you been able to complete most tasks? What are you doing with those you haven't yet been able to complete?

Today's task - day #22 - is to take a wallet inventory. If your wallet gets lost or stolen, you will want to know a list of what you have so you know the numbers to call to cancel cards as well as exactly what you need to replace.

So, pull out your wallet and write everything down! Make sure you include credit card numbers and the corresponding customer service phone numbers. Then, stash that paper in a safe place!

Day 23:

One "emergency" that almost all disasters are likely to cause is a power outage. Or, you could have a power outage all on your own. Regardless, it is smart to be prepared.

I'm not going to tell you to go buy a bunch of power outage supplies as that is not the point of this challenge. It is likely that you have some around your house already!

Today - day #23 - your task is to gather all your power outage supplies (except the flashlights you put by everyone's bed earlier) into 1 or 2 spots in your home so that they are easy to grab and find when the power goes out - you don't want to have to search for them!

Day 24:

If you have turned off your electricity and lived without power for a few days, one thing you learn is that you may not really know how to use all the various supplies you have bought. Oops!

You *need* the manuals. Even the items you may have used once or twice could be difficult - you can't remember everything. Honestly, that is to be expected! We don't use these items every day, right?

Today - day #24 - your task is to move all manuals for everything you own to one place in your home. This includes all emergency preparedness items, but it also should include everyday appliances and such. You may need those manuals during a power outage as well!

Day 25:

Today your task is to create a "mini emergency car kit." Consider including the following:

- A few bandages and alcohol wipes and Neosporin
- Children's Ibuprofen and Tylenol
- Adult Tylenol and Ibuprofen
- Feminine needs
- 2 water bottles (my two girls are ADDICTED to water: it creates mini emergencies all the time)
- Sippy cups (for young kids)
- Lotion
- An empty water bottle and collapsible funnel (gross, but necessary when you have kids that are out of diapers, but still can't "hold" it for that long! We've actually had to use this a few times...once was while driving around the airport waiting to pick up my mom. There was no parking...)
- Hand Sanitizer (see above, plus oh so many more things my kids seem to get into)
- Sunscreen
- Empty Gallon Ziplocs (think soiled clothes or stinky diapers)
- Small Flashlight
- A bag of random small stuff (Chapstick, hair ties, pens, a safety pin and rubber band)
- Tissues
- Diapers and wipes
- Napkins
- Crackers
- Cash
- Cell Charger

This isn't a major care emergency kit - this stuff you already have around your house! Take a few minutes to gather it, find an empty tub or Tupperware and stick it in your car!

Just a few days left! You are amazing for sticking with it.

Day 26:

Today, we want you to create a checklist of what to grab in an evacuation.

If you do ever have to evacuate, it is likely you will be able to go in your car—especially if you have ample notice. But if you run out of gas or the highways are broken, blocked, or too jam packed, you may also need to walk. In addition, sometimes you will have ample notice, but other times, you may only have moments (like in the case of a house fire). You need to decide *ahead of time* what is most important for you to grab AND make it easy to grab. So today, your task is to do exactly that! This one might take your full 30 minutes – or maybe even a little more, but I felt it so important that I had to include it in the challenge!

- First, create a list of everything you'd need to do AND everything you'd like to take with you if you were able to evacuate in your car. Make sure you note the locations of any items you list. (You don't want to have to try to remember when time is short.)
- Then, prioritize your list by putting the most essentials items and tasks at the very top. This way, if you only end up with a few minutes or moments, you get what is most important.
- Third, split your list up between any responsible adults in your home.
- Last, post the lists near an exit. That way, you can access them quickly (especially if not all assigned adults are home and one adult has to go through all the lists).

Day 27:

Today's task is to talk about swimming pools:

1. Swimming pool water should never be consumed as drinking water in an emergency because the chemicals will make you sick. There are filters that you can buy to purify the pool water for drinking.
2. The pool water can be used to fill your toilet reservoirs for flushing purposes
3. Do not count on your swimming pool as a refuge for fires. When you emerge from the water to breathe, a fast-moving fire will have ashes and heat that make taking the next breath very difficult. Always evacuate from fires and never count on your pool as a fire protection plan.

Day 28:

Today we will talk about communications during an emergency.

Today's task is to procure a red and a green sheet of 8.5 x 11 paper. These can be placed in a window visible from the street to let civil authorities, or your ward block captain, know your status during an emergency. Place the red paper in the window if you are in the house and need assistance. Place the green paper in the window if you are safe or have evacuated. You should always keep these papers in a location near your front door and remember to post them as appropriate during an emergency.

Day 29:

Today's task is to teach a family plan about the gasoline level in your car's tank. In a major evacuation, traffic will be a nightmare and service stations may not be open or have gas. Teach a principle that the drivers in your family never return at night with less than 1/3 of a tank of gas in the car. Consider having a 5 gallon can of gas in your home if you have a safe place to store the container. Rotate the gasoline in your emergency container occasionally.

Day 30: Today's task - your last task - is a bit different. Your task is to share this challenge with a friend, neighbor or family member.

Why?

Well, first, because that is kind! You care about them and if they are prepared, they will fare better during a disaster.

But in addition, it *helps you* when those around you are better prepared b/c they will be less dependent on you!