The Plano Texas Stake Preparedness Challenge

For January—“Be Ready”

“Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing…establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning…a house of order, a house of God.” D&C 88:119

The information in this first of a series of monthly documents is to help you get started with the Plano Stake Preparedness Challenge. To get a one page overview of the preparedness challenge for the whole year go to the website [www.preparednessplano.org](http://www.preparednessplano.org), click on the “Preparedness Challenge” tab, then the “Challenge Calendar” tab, and finally, click on the words, “Plano Stake Preparedness Challenge by Month” (up near the top of the page). Do not get discouraged if you are not able to keep up with the suggested schedule. The key to “preparedness success” is to consistently and systematically do what you can to be more spiritually, financially, and temporally prepared. The information we are giving you is to help you come up with a plan for your individual household. Feel free to consult with your ward or branch emergency preparedness or food storage specialists. Visit the Church’s website: [www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org) and the Plano Stake preparedness website given above. Prayerfully determine what Heavenly Father expects of you at this time.

 **Spiritual Goals:**

The spiritual goals for this month will be carried out the entire year. Only the scripture selections will change from month-to-month.

**First Spiritual Goal: Make twice daily personal prayer a habit. Set aside time for twice daily family prayer as well.**  The prophet Amulek gives us instruction on prayer: “Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon his holy name . . . Yea, cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save. Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him. Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks. Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over your entire household, both morning, mid-day, and evening. Yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies. Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them. Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase. But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness.” Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you.” Alma 34:17-27

**Second Spiritual Goal: Plan Family Home Evenings with your family**. Gordon B. Hinckley said: “‘We have a family home evening program once a week. . . . in which parents sit down with their children. They study the scriptures. They talk about family problems. They plan family activities . . . I don’t hesitate to say if every family in the world practiced that one thing, you’d see a very great difference in the solidarity of the families of the world’ (interview, *Boston Globe,* 14 Aug. 2000).” A wealth of information on making successful Family Home Evenings can be found on the Church’s website: [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org) Click on “Serve and Teach,” then “Lessons and Teaching,” then, “Family Home Evening.”

**Third Spiritual Goal: Daily personal and family scripture study.** President Marion G. Romney said: “I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase; mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness. …” (From his talk: “The Book of Mormon”, quoted in Ensign August 2005)

**Suggested Reading for the Month of January:** Introduction to the Book of Mormon through 1 Nephi Chapter 19. We have divided the chapters from the Book of Mormon into 12 segments of 20 chapters each. This is just a suggestion (although a good one—see Marion G. Romney’s quote above). If you read one chapter a night, this leaves you with approximately 10 days to study other scriptures. To help chart your progress, here is a link to a Book of Mormon reading chart and a daily scripture reading chart (all on one page): [www.lds.org/bc/content/shared/content/images/gospel-library/manual/09411/09411\_000\_appendix\_00-readingCharts.pdf](http://www.lds.org/bc/content/shared/content/images/gospel-library/manual/09411/09411_000_appendix_00-readingCharts.pdf).

For families with young children, Scripture stories videos are available at:

[www.lds.org/media-library/video/categories/children?lang=eng](http://www.lds.org/media-library/video/categories/children?lang=eng). Select the Scripture Stories from whichever of the standard works your family is studying from. Here is a link to the Book of Mormon Stories video: [www.lds.org/media-library/video/book-of-mormon/book-of-mormon-stories?lang=eng](http://www.lds.org/media-library/video/book-of-mormon/book-of-mormon-stories?lang=eng). For children’s reading charts see: [www.lds.org/children/resources/type/scripture-reading-charts](http://www.lds.org/children/resources/type/scripture-reading-charts)

Note: In August of 2005 our Prophet (then Gordon B. Hinckley) issued a challenge to the members of the Church to read The Book of Mormon before the end of the year. Likewise our Plano Stake Relief Society Presidency recently asked the sisters in the Stake to follow a certain Book of Mormon reading schedule. We encourage you to follow these types of reading goals if requested to by your leaders.

**Fourth Spiritual Goal: Do family history and Temple work.** Fulfill the Plano Stake Goals of spending at least **one hour in indexing** each month, **one hour of family history** each month and of **taking one family name to the temple** each year**.** Contact your Ward or Branch Family History Specialist to find out more. Register yourself at: <https://familysearch.org/>. See your Ward or Branch clerk for your member number (needed to register) if you do not already know it. Make plans to attend the temple regularly throughout the coming year. If you do not currently possess a temple recommend, see your Bishop or Branch President to determine what you need to do to obtain one.

**Financial Objectives:**

**Underlying Financial Principle**: “Successful family finances begin with the payment of an honest tithe and the giving of a generous fast offering. The Lord has promised to open the windows of heaven and pour out great blessings upon those who pay tithes and offerings faithfully (see [Malachi 3:10](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/ot/mal/3.10?lang=eng#9) and [Isaiah 58:6–12](https://www.lds.org/scriptures/ot/isa/58.6-12?lang=eng#5))”. (Above quote taken from the “Finances” page of the website: [www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org) .)

**First Financial Objective: Analyze your finances.** The Church now has a many wonderful resources and helps for preparing financially. To access these go to: [www.providentliving.org](http://www.providentliving.org), and click on “Finances.” On this page you can find a number of financial calculators which you can use to fit your family’s financial needs. Record and review all of your known daily, monthly and annual expenses (mortgage, utilities, car payment, insurance, tithes and offerings etc.). Use this information to begin looking for areas where you can reduce expenses and debt. Begin to draft a family budget (create now or in February). Discuss this information in a Family Council meeting and invite family members to provide their input.

**Second Financial Objective: Track your expenditures:** “Keep a record of your expenditures. Record and review monthly income and expenses. Determine how to reduce what you spend for nonessentials.” You will use this information to establish a family budget next month. Refer to the back of the pamphlet “All is Safely Gathered In—Family Finances,” or to page 7 in the pamphlet “One for the Money” for a budget worksheet.

**Emergency Preparedness Tasks:**

Referring to Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream, President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine…And God will shortly bring it to pass (Gen. 41:20, 26, 30, 32). Now, brethren, I want to make it very clear that I am not prophesying, that I am not predicting years of famine in the future. But I am suggesting that the time has come to get our houses in order… There is a portent of stormy weather ahead to which we had better give heed ...That’s all I have to say about it, but I wish to say it with all the emphasis of which I am capable.” (Pres. Gordon B. Hinckley, *“To the Boys and Men,”* *Ensign*, Nov. 1998)

**First Preparedness Task: Inventory current emergency preparedness.**  Determine how long your family could survive if your water supply were to be disrupted. How long could you live off your current food storage? What if you were to have to evacuate your family due to a tornado or other disaster? The handout entitled “Emergency Checklist” in the “Resources” section of this month’s “Challenge Calendar” on the Stake Preparedness website: [www.preparednessplano.org](http://www.preparednessplano.org) is a good way to help you determine where you stand.

**Second Preparedness Task: Store water for your family**. Aside from the air we breathe, water is the most necessary item needed for our survival. The good news is— it’s practically free. The handout “Water Storage from Providentliving.org” found in the “Resources” section of the Preparedness “Challenge Calendar” on the Stake Preparedness website ([www.preparednessplano.org](http://www.preparednessplano.org)) for this month can help you learn how to store water for your family to survive for at least two weeks. Try to get this done in the month of January. If you already have sufficient water, consider storing powdered milk or other beverages for your family.

**Third Preparedness Task: Begin your three month food** **supply**. This will take a bit longer to acquire than water storage. Go at a pace that is comfortable for you. We are instructed not to go into debt to acquire food storage. Money that is being spent on non-essential items should probably be diverted to food storage. The First Presidency has encouraged us to: **“**Build a small supply of food that is part of your normal, daily diet. One way to do this is to purchase a few extra items each week to build a one-week supply of food. Then you can gradually increase your supply until it is sufficient for three months” (providentliving.org). The handouts in this month’s “Resources” section (see website above under Second Preparedness Task above) may be helpful in planning and acquiring your food storage. Use the “One Week Menu Worksheet” or the “15 Day Menu Worksheet” to fill in what you and your family ate for a week or two weeks (15 days) then use that information to figure out what you need to store to meet the needs of your family. There are many handouts on our Plano Stake preparedness website: [www.preparednessplano.org](http://www.preparednessplano.org) which can help you plan out how you are going to complete this task.