Seven Tips for Effective Crisis Preparedness

By Steven Norman, III - Communication Director for the Southern Union Conference

Crises may come at any time but you and your congregation need not be caught unprepared. Here are seven tips that can help you be prepared.
Safety Webinar
November 13th 2:30 pm ET

Supervision
Key to Successful Ministries

By Dr. William Chunestudy, D.M.A
Educational Resources Specialist at Adventist Risk Management®, Inc.

SPACE IS LIMITED
Reserve your Webinar Seat Now at:
https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/533047960

Did you know: The key to successful supervision is to review each activity, outing, or field trip and provide the best-qualified personnel possible, in ample numbers, to maintain the security of youth and to keep youth safe.

This webinar is a key opportunity to learn how you can integrate practical supervision methods and guidelines into your ministry.

Title: Supervision
Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2013
Time: 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM EST

Facebook  Twitter  Website
Crises may come at any time but you and your congregation need not be caught unprepared. Here are seven tips that can help you be prepared.

1 - Plan

Every church and school needs three written plans. An emergency operations plan, a crisis communication plan, and a business continuity plan. Templates for each of these plans and information on how to write and use them are available at ready.gov. FEMA publishes the "Guide for Developing High Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship" that can be downloaded at fema.gov. All of these resources are free.

2 - Select a Spokesperson

Select a good spokesperson for your church. Make sure he/she receives training on how write crisis communication statements, and how to speak to the media. Educate your staff and congregation that one official voice speaking for your organization gives a clearer message than many voices speaking.
3 - Build Positive Relationships

If you ever need friends, it is during a crisis. Before a crisis occurs, develop friendships in your community. Cultivate these relationships personally and as a church. Meet your public officials and religion reporters. Make friends for your church by fostering corporate partnerships with community organizations. Participate in various projects that other organizations sponsor. Become part of the fabric of your community. Be seen as positive contributors to the life of your community. When a crisis occurs, you will have friends in the media, government, and other places that will help you and your church because they know who you are.

4 - Prepare a Contact Database and Notification System

Gather contact information for the media, police department, fire department, ambulance, conference officers and communication director, Adventist Risk Management, conference safety representative, and all people affected by the crisis. For your church that will be the members, church officers, conference officials, etc. For a school, the list of stakeholders would include faculty and staff, parents, students, alumni, etc. Review and update list regularly.

Once you have a list of contacts, select the best notification system to communicate with them. Some options are press releases, email, text message blast, social media, telephone, meeting, a press conference with the media, etc.

5 - Polish the Church's Online Presence

The first place people seek information about your church is your website. Make sure the address, phone numbers, and personnel listings are current and accurate.

When a crisis occurs, be sure to place public statements on your website. Place a link to your website on your Facebook page. Encourage people to develop the habit of visit your organization’s website as the central place for information.

Make good news easy to find, and bad news hard to find by regularly publishing positive news stories about your church in your local newspaper, website, and Facebook pages. When people Google your church, they will see so many good stories that he negative stories are less damaging.

6 - Watch the Triggers

Certain events and conditions are triggers for a crisis. A list of these include swimming trips, church bus or van trips, being lax with background check of personnel who work with children, etc. Make a list of all the triggers that could affect you and monitor them.

7 - Set Up Google Alerts

Before a crisis occurs, set up a Google Alert account. You can use this to collect all news stories about the crisis from newspapers, television, blogs, etc. When a crisis occurs, enter the search words that the site needs to collect the stories. Google will then provide a curated set of links to stories, which you can read, and then cut and paste into a Crisis Management notebook on Evernote where you keep you crisis log.
By Steven Norman, III
Communication Director for the Southern Union Conference.
He lives in Snellville, GA.