

Vigil Service Template Following Natural Disaster Flooding, Hurricane, Earthquake, Tornado, Train Derailment, Airplane Crash...

Notes to Religious and/or Civic Leaders:

Possible Theme:

Objective:

Opening Music

Welcome

We gather this evening for a time of quiet prayer shaped by scripture, ritual and music. At a time like this, a time of great disaster, we react on many levels at once. Scripture, music, ritual and silence are gifts of God that can encompass the complexity of our responses and help re-order a world that has been literally shaken to its core. May we find a peace in this time together that enables us to *pass on* Christ's gift of peace that surpasses all understanding. (*Resource from www.textweek.com worship and prayer resources following a natural disaster*)

Opening prayer/gathering litany

Sacred reading(s)

Music/singing (acoustic guitar, cello, violin) - stringed instrument

Center or gathering rituals (stones to sink fears, flowers to float hopes)

Reading of names (of those who lost their lives)

Prayerful reading & reflection

(from *Christchurch After the Earthquake*, by Beverly L. Osborn, from *A Child Laughs*)⁷

This broken city
looks nothing like my childhood memories
of pigeons wheeling over tall buildings,
of the fine architecture lovingly created by our forebears,
the trees they planted that grew to statuesque majesty,
the beautiful, beloved city I was proud to call home.
I mourned when [our] children grew up
their memories would be of rubble and dust and loss
and weeds growing in desolate open spaces.

But I was wrong!
[Our] children will remember not buildings, but community –
The strong and loving support of strangers who became family,
the fun activities, the welling up of joy and healing and purpose,
a way of life built on sharing and generosity and relationships
that will be their strong foundation forever.

Long ago, on the Mount of Transfiguration,
Peter and James and John saw the glory of God in Jesus.

Their immediate desire was to safely house and contain that glory.
But Jesus smiled and led them down the mountain to build love and healing and hope and kindness
in people.

I need not fear.
[Our] children will have a heritage of memories
even more valuable than [our own].

Benediction

⁷ Ibid, p. 260.