

How to Prepare for Climate Change: A Practical Guide to Surviving the Chaos **By David Pogue**

Book discussion facilitator guide developed by the Blue Marble Librarians

Would you like to offer a book discussion for your community as part of [Climate Prep Week](#) (September 24 -30)? This year's theme is *The Weather is Changing; Are You Prepared?*

This guide includes recommended formats, tips, introductory material, questions and prompts, and resources to share.

Possible formats for book discussion:

- Virtual, outdoor, or small group walking book discussions are encouraged.
- **For one session:** Estimated length 1 ½ hours, or whatever you prefer.
- **For a series:** Provide an introduction at the first session. Engage participants in identifying topics of interest or specific chapters to discuss for following sessions.
- **Optional:** Form working/support groups following the discussion.

Tips for hosting the discussion:

- Address the urgency and the importance of taking action. Prepare now!
- Highlight specific information from the book.
- Provide practical and local preparedness information.
- If hosting a virtual book discussion, share supplemental resources for each topic in chat.
- The book has a sense of humor. You can have a sense of humor with this discussion.

Guidance for introducing the discussion

- Emphasize that the weather is changing. The time for debating is gone.
- It's time to get prepared!
- *Read the first two paragraphs of the book's introduction.*
- Explain that discussion will primarily be locally focused on Massachusetts.
- Share some introductory material. Examples:
 - Adaptation Era (page 4-5)
 - Why 417 PPM matters (p 10)
 - Climate chaos - "everything is changing, and all at once" (p13)
- Ask: *What changes have you seen in the weather in the past couple years?*
 - Examples: excessive summer rain, more severe hurricanes, drought, and dangerous air conditions in Massachusetts from fires on the west coast.
 - There are health implications for these issues - threats to water and food supply, heat-related deaths, increase in asthma, more ticks and risk for Lyme Disease.
 - Increase in the length of the allergy season.
 - The time to get prepared is now!

Questions:

Including prompts, examples, and resources

Getting Started with Preparedness

What steps have you taken to prepare for extreme weather events?

- Did you attend David Pogue's keynote? Any thoughts on it?
- How would you like to be more prepared such as the go-bags, insurance, evacuation plans, sheltering at home?
- What have you checked off? What do you need to do?
- Have you thought about where you live or relocating? (chapter 2)

Examples: drought, flooding, blizzards, tornadoes

Resource to share:

- Link to Pogue's *How to Prepare for Climate Change: A Practical Guide to Surviving the Chaos* Keynote: (add link here)
- [American Red Cross - Emergency Apps](#)

Taking Action

What can you do now?

- What can you commit to?
- Is your home ready? (chapter 3)
- Do you have a go-bag? One month plan?
- When the emergency happens, do you have all the resources in one place if you need to evacuate or shelter in place? (chapter 8)

Examples: Paper and digitally: documented household items for insurance.

Resource to share:

- [Make a Plan \(Ready.gov\)](#)
- [Family Communications Plan](#)
- [My Emergency Plan \(Planet Ready\)](#)

Drought

How are you preparing for drought?

- What are you doing to prepare for water issues?
- What resources does your community have?
- How can we advocate for community resources?

Examples: Access to drinkable water/refill stations, access to food, heat safety, home preparedness, survival gardening (what to grow: beans/peanuts), plastic-free water solutions, rain-barrel programs

Note: Plastic water bottles are not the answer - contaminated and hazardous for the planet.

Community Preparedness

Are you familiar with local emergency resources?

- Are you signed up for town/state emergency alerts?
- How can we better prepare our communities and neighborhoods?
- Do you know about your community's municipal vulnerability plan?
- Does your community have a climate action plan?

Examples: Volunteerism, community partnerships, run for local government

Resources to share:

- [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program](#)
- Sign up for your city/town's emergency alerts!
- [Massachusetts Emergency Alerts](#)
- Examples of climate action plans: [Cape Cod Commission](#), [Sustainable Concord](#)

Health

What have you considered about how the changing climate may affect your health?

- Were there any health impacts that surprised you?
- What is your plan for filling in risk gaps you might have?
- What preventative steps are you taking to support your physical and mental health?

Examples: Public health - mosquitoes, kidney stones, asthma, allergies, medications, mold

Resources to share: [MedlinePlus.gov](#); [ICE \(In Case of Emergency\)](#); [American Red Cross - Emergency Apps](#)

Talking with kids and teens

What would help you to communicate with kids and teens about climate preparedness?

- Have you checked out books to talk with your kids about climate preparedness?
- Is your family ready? Do you have a plan? (p268-)
- How can we help soothe eco-despair? (p228 - 246)

Resource to share: [Climate Prep Week Toolkit Books for Youth](#)

Highlight a book available at your library such as *The Story of Climate Change* by Catherine Barr or *I Have Right to Save the Planet* by Alain Seres or *The Parents' Guide to Climate Revolution* by Mary DeMocker

Stress relief

How are you dealing with the stress of climate preparedness?

- How are you staying balanced?
- Keeping things in perspective? Prioritizing health?
- Not feeling like you are more responsible than you are?

Examples: Exercise, a dose of nature, news diet, deep breathing, the worry hour, creative outlets, therapy, dealing with deniers (p27-37)

Resource to share: Optimism balance (p560)

"So which should you feel? Depressed or hopeful? The informed answer is 'A little or both.'" (p560)

Wrap up/Final Thoughts:

"The world of sustainability warriors is crying out for your help - and offering to train you for the job." (p25)

- Best response to eco-grief and anxiety is to get involved and take action
- Find Power In Groups (p26)
- Share some examples of advocacy groups

Examples:

- [Climate Reality. Mothers out Front](#)
- [Citizens' Climate Lobby](#)
- [350.org](#)
- [Union of Concerned Scientists](#)
- [PowerShift.org](#)

Also, share an example of a local group like the [CAN! Concord Climate Action Group](#) or [Climate Reality Massachusetts Southcoast](#)

August 2021