


# Integration of Ignatian Principles in Emergency and Disaster Management Education

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## ABSTRACT

This study seeks to explore, understand, and develop a comprehensive application of Ignatian principles into academic emergency and disaster management programs. The research focuses on relevant work discussing Ignatian principles, Ignatian pedagogy, and emergency management training and education. This exploratory and novelistic research approach utilizes document analysis as the strategy for inquiry on how Ignatian principles and pedagogy interact with emergency and disaster management. The document analysis conducted presented limitations due to constraints in the amount of literature available. The study is original; no direct research associating the fields involved is available. The research identified the use of Ignatian principles in several professional disciplines. There is a focus on the application of a modern version of the spiritual exercises, discernment, reflection, and contemplation as tools for improvement of critical thinking, academic excellence, ethics, social analysis, and justice as they apply to emergency and disaster management.

## KEYWORDS

Critical Thinking, Decision Makers, Disaster, Discernment, Ethics, Mitigation, Preparedness, Recovery, Reflection, Response, Social Analysis, Social Justice, Vulnerable Populations

## INTRODUCTION

As natural and man-made disasters increase and have become an unfortunate but routine part of life, this research considers the application of Ignatian principles as an additional tool for the academic education of emergency managers. It is profound asking modern educators and emergency managers to be innovators by incorporating and utilizing Ignatian principles from a 450-year-old religious tradition into a contemporary framework. This approach empowers emergency managers to be mindful and contemplative decisionmakers, providing an opportunity to do the best good in an emergency or disaster scenario.

Academic, degree-granting programs in emergency management have sprouted throughout the United States with the goal of preparing the next generation of emergency managers to meet future challenges. Due to the high levels of stress in the field, and the accompanying impact on communities, it is crucial to offer emergency and disaster managers established systems which empower them to

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do their jobs and offer them the tools to make conscious and holistic decisions regarding interactions with communities they serve. Ignatian spirituality and discernment provokes not only thoughtful decision making, but also careful consideration about the consequences of those decisions. Including Ignatian principles and discernment into emergency and disaster management education encourages an approach to decision making which fosters intellectual and spiritual wisdom, irrespective of its religious underpinnings.

Emergency management is an emerging field. There is no standardized ethical code for emergency managers or a standardized curriculum for academic programs teaching emergency management. An opportunity exists to compliment academic programs by utilizing Ignatian principles as guidelines. These principles have universal applications which could provide an ethical framework for emergency management decision making. Including these tools in academic emergency management curriculums offers a holistic solution by empowering emergency managers with unique skills for disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery issues which foster focusing on individual needs and respect for their unique circumstances.

This document analysis study seeks to explore, understand and develop a comprehensive application of Ignatian principles into academic emergency and disaster management programs. The research presented in this instance is both original and novel since the concepts of ethics and decision making have not been addressed from the Ignatian perspective and there has been no published research suggesting these principles could be utilized to improve critical thinking, increase social consciousness and promote academic excellence. The research review focuses on peer reviewed academic data which examines Ignatian principles, and emergency management training and education. Understanding existing, potentially relevant research is critical in determining how Ignatian principles could integrate into academic EDM programs.

This research adds considerable value to the known collective of knowledge related to emergency management ethics and decision making by offering an improvement after analyzing aggregated relevant published research. This study approaches a crucial issue from a unique perspective and proposes a practical solution. Existing research in the field of EDM academia has limitations as it pertains largely to the need for curriculum development for academic EDM programs, with little discussion regarding content.

## Research Questions

- Why should educators and educational institutions integrate Ignatian principles into emergency and disaster management academic programs?
- What are the benefits of integrating Ignatian principles into emergency and disaster management academic programs? (if any)
- How can emergency and disaster management students utilize Ignatian principles?

For the context of this study, the following definitions and terminology should be considered.

The term **Jesuit** can be used to describe a member of the Society of Jesus, a Roman Catholic order of priests and brothers founded by Ignatius Loyola (Traub, 2010). The term **Saint Ignatius** refers to one of the most influential theologians of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the founder of the Society of Jesus. During the second period of his life, he experienced a spiritual awakening – a study of theology and service to others. Previous studies mostly define **Ignatian Principles** as frequently accepted guidelines or characteristics influenced by experiences of Ignatius of Loyola. **Ignatian Spirituality** refers to spirituality for everyday life, and presents a pathway for deeper prayer, meditation, and good decisions guided by discernment and a life of service to others and is adaptable with a base of profound humanism.

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