

Be prepared!

Disaster Risk Reduction



Curriculum links

Health & PE

Explore a range of factors and behaviours that can influence health, safety and wellbeing.

HASS

Resources and environments can be used, conserved and protected by using sustainable practices.

The impact of bushfires or floods on environments and communities, and how people can respond.

Sequence information about people's lives, events, developments and phenomena using a variety of methods.

Science

Scientific knowledge is used to solve problems and inform personal and community decisions.

Consider the effect of sudden geological changes and extreme weather events on living and non-living things in the environment.

Design and Technology

Explore factors, including sustainability that impact on the design of products, services and environments to meet community needs.

Please note: Every effort has been made to explore the topic of disaster risk reduction in a way that is non-threatening to primary children. However, especially in areas that have recently experienced forest fires or floods, your pupils may be particularly sensitive to these issues. Please adapt this material as necessary.

Experience of being prepared

- Ask students to explain what 'being prepared' means (e.g. getting ready for something). Ask for examples, e.g. getting ready for Christmas, for a spelling test or to go away on holiday. Ask: How would you prepare for going away on holiday?
- Explain that, as well as good things like holidays, we also prepare in case of bad things, like fires. If we prepare well, we can make sure people, animals and buildings are safe.
- Ask: What do we do in school to prepare in case of a fire? (Prompts: Notices, fire drills, registers, emergency phone numbers, safe assembly area, fire extinguishers and water supplies in the area).
- Carry out a fire drill so that the children can experience what they have discussed.
- Afterwards, review the steps taken and the reasons for them.
- Ask: If there were danger of forest fires near your home, what would you do to prepare? (Prompts: Check there are clear warnings for forest visitors not to light fires; arrange to receive a warning if a fire is coming; learn the quickest route to safety; clear the yard - so that there is no rubbish to catch light; your parents may have installed a water cistern so that there's water nearby; they might even hose the roof with water. If fires happen often in your area, fire-fighters might have created a fire-break around your home or your house may be made of material that doesn't burn very easily).
- Review learning by inviting children to complete the fire hazards worksheet (page 3).
- Task: Students create a flowchart to show the sequence of safety procedures that can be used to mitigate the effects of bushfire or flood.

What is a 'disaster'?

- In pairs, work out a one-sentence definition of a 'disaster' and list some examples of disasters.
- If we expected a disaster like a forest fire, we would prepare for it. Lots of people in other parts of the world have disasters more often than we do in Australia. So they need to be prepared all the time.
- Review the steps taken to prepare the house on the worksheet. Talk about how much it might cost to install a water cistern and to put in a new fence not made of wood - preparing for disasters can cost money. If people do not have money they can sometimes be less well prepared. This is not fair. Everyone has a right to protect their home and family.

How can we support others to 'be prepared' and stay safe?

- Caritas Australia is helping communities that live in dangerous areas and do not have much money, to be prepared for disasters.
- One way to prepare is to ensure everyone knows what to do in a disaster, like knowing a safe place to gather if there is a flood. It is also important to try to avoid a disaster, like avoiding landslides by not chopping down trees whose roots hold the earth together. Show this primary version of a video about Caritas helping Fijian school children to make animations on reducing disaster risk in Fiji: <http://bit.ly/nTlc0u> (3min 29s).
- Read Martina's story about using nursery rhymes to keep children safe from natural disasters in the Solomon Islands (Page 4) or watch the video: <http://bit.ly/2bOchnl> (3m 34s).
- Together, try to sing the Flood Song in the local language of the Solomon Islands (Page 4).
- Using a familiar tune from a nursery rhyme, rewrite the words to reflect the steps needed to be taken if there was a fire or other natural disaster at school.
- Ask children to complete the card-sorting worksheet (Page 5).



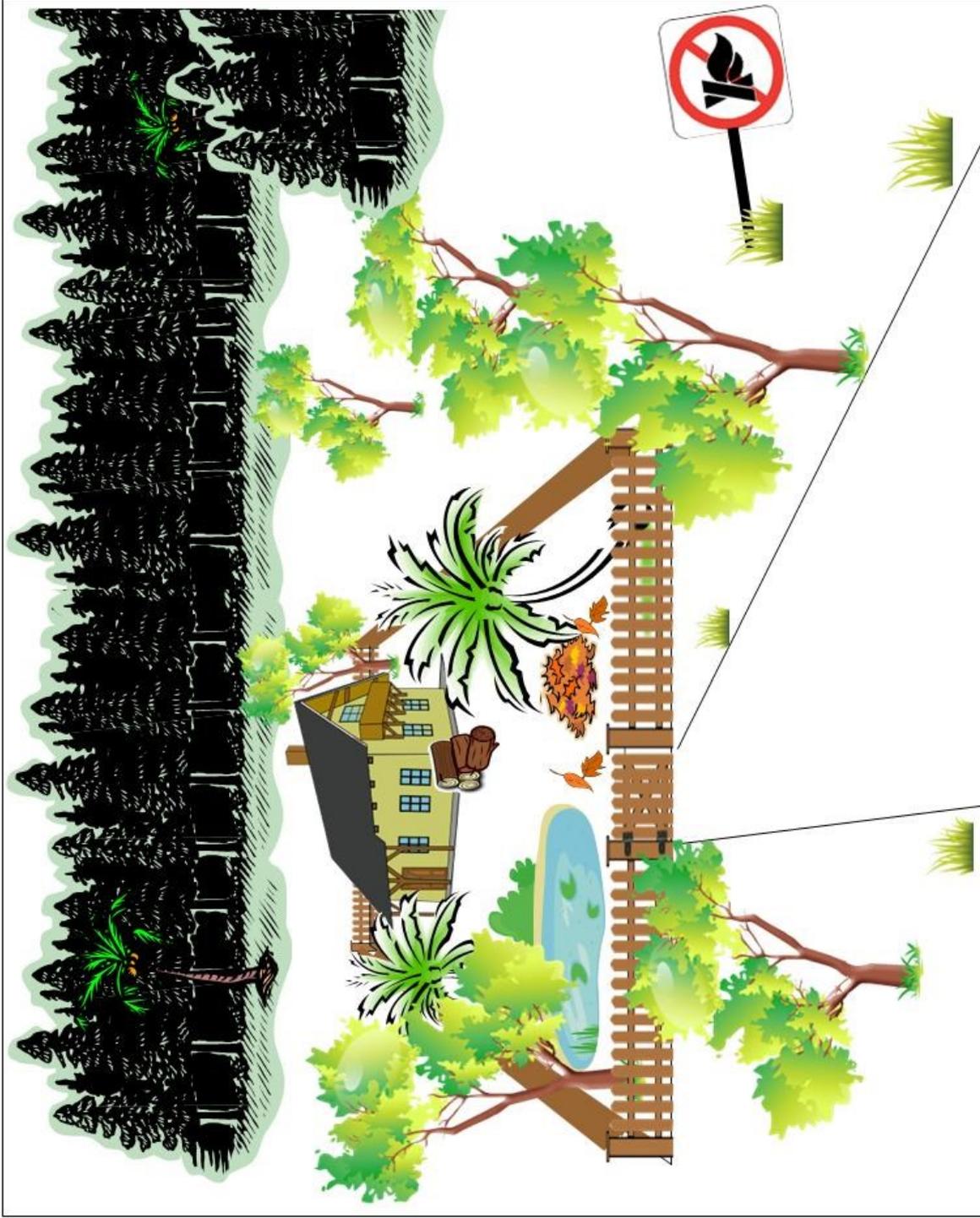
Photos: Children learn about disaster risk reduction at a school in the Solomon Islands. "The children take this disaster risk management to their home. They sing songs and talk about what the songs have taught them," says Adam Elliot, Caritas Australia's Solomon Islands and Vanuatu Program Manager.

Photo Credit: Richard Wainwright

Spot the hazards! How can the house owner prepare for forest fires?

If a label says something that is a fire danger, colour in the unhappy face.

If a label says something good, colour in the happy face.



Firewood near the house	☹	☹
A clear road for escape	☹	☹
Broken warning sign	☹	☹
Pond nearby	☹	☹
Trees between the forest and the house	☹	☹
Wooden fence	☹	☹
Slate roof	☹	☹
Leaves in yard	☹	☹

To prepare for forest fires, the house owner should.....

Singing for survival

Martina from the Solomon Islands



Songs and rhymes are important teaching tools. You might have learned the days of the week and numbers through songs or rhymes. In the Solomon Islands, believe it or not, nursery rhymes are helping to save children's lives.

Martina, a class teacher at Bishop Epalle Catholic School in West Honiara, enjoys clapping and singing with the children in her classroom. She knows they are not only having fun but learning lifesaving skills. Using well-known tunes and simple lyrics, children learn what to do in the event of potential disasters that face the Solomon Islands such as cyclones, floods, earthquakes and tsunamis.



In this school and in many others in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, Caritas Australia's Disaster Risk Management Project trains teachers to help young children to learn strategies for keeping safe during disasters and emergencies. The project is for children from 4 to 12 years of age. Because disasters often occur early in the morning when the children are at school, teachers are trained to plan and develop skills around time management, effective communication and protecting children.

"Nursery rhymes break down the fear associated with natural disasters, and also help children memorise the rhymes and the emergency response," says Martina. "We have the cyclone season that runs from November to March annually, so this type of disaster is a big risk."

When a cyclone hit recently, everything was well co-ordinated and planned. The children waited in the classroom until the worst of the weather passed. When it was safe they left to return home to their families. Everyone knew exactly what to do. Songs are written in the local language. The children take the messages that they learn to their families and communities. They sing the songs and talk about what the songs have taught them.

The message is spreading. "This season we're better prepared and know how to respond, and in an emergency this can make all the difference", says Martina.

Flood song

Sung to the tune of 'This is the day that our Lord has made'.

*River hem flood, River hem flood.
Yumi run away, up to higher
ground.*

*River hem flood. River hem flood. Yu
no stay en drown, Yumi run on top
Olketa hurry, yumi run away Up to
the hill and the mountain top.*

*River hem flood. River hem flood.
Yumi run away.*

These cards are mixed up. Cut them out and sort them into sets of three. Stick them into your workbook. Write a sentence about how Caritas helps people to prepare for disasters.

<p>Caritas Australia has funded the building of a cyclone shelter in Satkhira, South Bangladesh.</p>	<p>Is this fair? Our homes on Kiribati will be under water if sea levels continue to rise due to climate change. We will have to move.</p>	
<p>Caritas has helped Samoan communities to set up storage sites for supplies in case of future disasters and to rebuild homes further inland.</p>	<p>Caritas has supported communities in South Bangladesh to raise their houses on mud platforms so they do not flood so easily.</p>	
<p>Is this fair? My home will be swept away if there are floods. I cannot afford to build flood defences.</p>	<p>Is this fair? People on my island don't realise that cutting down trees on hills makes the soil give way in heavy rain and can cause landslides.</p>	
<p>Caritas Australia's <i>Our Common Home</i> campaign calls for justice for communities like Kiribati.</p>	<p>Is this fair? People in my village have nowhere safe to go if there is a cyclone.</p>	
<p>In Mangochi, Malawi, Caritas has helped families to build underwater tanks to store rainwater for dry periods.</p>	<p>Is this fair? My home was destroyed by a tsunami in 2009. We were not prepared for the disaster.</p>	
<p>Caritas Australia has provided farmers in Bangladesh with experimental seeds that can grow in salty soil.</p>	<p>Is this fair? My fields will be too salty to grow crops if the sea levels continue to rise. I cannot afford to do anything about it.</p>	
<p>Caritas Australia has helped children on Ovalau, Fiji to make animations explaining how to reduce risk of landslides.</p>	<p>Is this fair? When there is a drought, I cannot grow crops or water my cattle. I have no other way to feed my family.</p>	