



# NATURAL DISASTERS

Ask the children what they can tell you about Natural Disasters, they will mention floods, volcanoes, earthquakes etc. This is just a warmer really to get them recalling information about natural disasters.

## Scenarios

These are invented stories that you can tell the children to get them to examine 'what makes something a natural disaster?' After each story ask the task question (though you don't have to do all of them, two were enough for one yr3 group).

- ✓ I leave my tap on and it fills up the sink. The sink then overflows and floods the bathroom.
- ✓ A river bursts its banks and floods a large area.
- ✓ A dam that was poorly built breaks and the water floods a large area.
- ✓ A volcano erupts on a deserted island.
- ✓ A volcano destroys a village but all the people escaped.
- ✓ An earthquake causes all the books to fall off the shelves, cups and glasses smash on the floor. A few people are hit by falling objects. No one has to go to hospital.

## Task question:

- ✓ Is that a natural disaster?

## Nested questions – these are the questions that may come up during the discussion.

- ✓ How big does a flood have to be to be a natural disaster?
- ✓ Is it a natural disaster if nothing is destroyed?
- ✓ If no one is hurt?
- ✓ If no one is killed?
- ✓ If it was started by someone is it a natural disaster?

## Abstract/general questions

- ✓ What makes something 'natural'?
- ✓ What makes something a 'disaster'?

## Real events

These are true stories and the first is a little harrowing. You may want to make it imaginary (or not use them at all) for the purposes of discussion.

### Aberfan

*In October 1966, after days of heavy rain, a mudslide from Merthyr Mountain hit a village called Aberfan, Wales. Most of the mud had been put there by miners over the last 50 years.*

## Task question:

- ✓ If it was caused by people and rain was it a natural disaster?

### Mascali

*Mascali lies on the side of Mount Etna, which is a live volcano and frequently erupts. In 1928 Mascali was completely destroyed by one of Etna's eruptions. They rebuilt Mascali in exactly the same place. Etna.*

### **Task Question:**

- ✓ If it gets destroyed again are the builders of the volcano responsible?

### **Nested questions:**

- ✓ Can nature be blamed for anything?
- ✓ Is no one to blame?
- ✓ Are natural disasters evil?
- ✓ Are you responsible if you didn't know what would happen?