## Assembly for 7- to 11-year-olds (15 mins)

## Disaster strikes!

## **Schools learning resource**

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**Show slide 1** Welcome children

Ask, what is a disaster? Explain that you will read out situations and they are to decide how far along the ‘disaster scale’ they think this situation belongs. Point out and explain the ‘disaster scale’. Read out each situation and then choose a child to come up, decide where on the scale it belongs, holding the label and staying in place till all five are up.

1. You have forgotten to do your homework and your teacher has asked for it in.

2. You left the bath running and the downstairs has flooded. Luckily your house is insured.

3. Your car broke down on the way to a party. It was repaired but you were late for the party.

4. You fell off a climbing frame and broke your arm. It was in plaster for 6 weeks.

**Show slide 2** 5. Your house has been destroyed by a flood caused by rain. You have no insurance and have lost everything. Thousands of people in your area have been affected and many have died. Roads and bridges have washed away.

Discuss their answers.

**Show slide 3** In 2010, heavy monsoon

rains led to the worst flooding in Pakistan in 80 years, during which hundreds of people died, homes were destroyed and roads and buildings were washed away. The area affected by these floods was the same size as England. This was the worst disaster in Pakistan’s history.

Thankfully emergencies like this do not happen often in Britain. Sometimes we have flooding in some areas, and people’s homes and businesses are affected. Luckily we have regular forecasts that help us prepare for bad weather, and there are lots of people on standby to help others get to safety if conditions are really severe.

**Show slide 4** But this is not the case in every country in the world. Juan David Paz lives in a country called Guatemala. When he was 7 his home was destroyed by floods, and because the floodwater came so quickly, his family had little warning or time to escape.

**Show slide 5** When Juan David’s cousin came running to warn them, Juan David and his family had to escape, leaving all their belongings behind. Juan David had to decide quickly the most important thing to keep safe from the floods. As I’m sure you’ll all agree, the most important thing was for him and his family to be safe. Fortunately they were all ok, though he was separated from his mum, for more than a week. At one point, Juan David had to climb a tree to escape the water, and saw his house get washed away.

**Show slide 6** Juan David says: ‘I watched my house fall into the water; it was breaking in half. Lots of my toys were lost. I never used to be scared of the water, but I am now.’

Ask the pupils: how do you think Juan David felt when he heard his cousin’s warning? Can you imagine how much he must have missed his mum during the eight days they were apart? How do you think he felt when his house was washed away before his eyes?

It is difficult to imagine these things. But the charity Christian Aid knows that it is very important to try to understand the experiences of people living through disasters, such as a major flood, so that we can understand how best to help people who have been affected by a disaster. It’s important that people are helped to prepare for coping better with disasters in the future.

Christian Aid works with partner organisations around the world to help people affected by disasters. For example, in Guatemala, where Juan David lives, Christian Aid worked with an organisation called CPDL, which helped families to prepare for flooding and keep themselves and their homes safe. Floods happen quite often in this area of Guatemala. CPDL used radio messages andmobile phones to warn people about potential floods. Juan David’s cousin had heard one of CPDL’s flood warnings on the radio and then he ran to warn Juan David’s family to escape.

CPDL helped communities to draw up maps so that when another flood happens, the people in the most danger can be helped first. And it also helped communities to work together so that if a serious flood hits, they will all help each other to escape.

Of course, disasters come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. They might be earthquakes, or hurricanes, or droughts, or floods, or storms. Christian Aid partners work with people affected by disasters around the world to help them with the things they might need

And Christian Aid’s partners also help people to be better prepared for future disasters so more lives and homes are saved.

## **Assembly presentation**

Aim: this assembly will help pupils to understand more about disasters, and can be used in response to a

new disaster when it happens.

Materials/preparation:

* You may wish to use the accompanying *Disaster strikes!* assembly presentation, available to

download from **learn.christianaid.org.uk**

* Space has been left for you to adapt this assembly by inputting information about a new disaster.

For updates on disasters affecting people in developing countries, visit news websites and

**christianaid.org.uk/emergencies**

* Set up a ‘disaster scale’ in the front of the hall. Write four labels on large sheets of

paper – ‘fine’, ‘a bit annoying’, ‘a big problem’, ‘disaster’. Fix them in four positions along the scale.

* Write five labels for the children to hold – ‘homework’, ‘flood from bath’, ‘broken down

car’, ‘broken arm’, ‘house destroyed by flood’.

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## **Action**

## **Reflection**

* Download the Christian Aid *Disaster Strikes!* pack from **http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/TeachersResources/primary/disaster-strikes.aspx**
* Visit the Christian Aid website for up to date information on any disasters c**hristianaid.org.uk/emergencies**

**You can reflect on a recent disaster/a disaster you are studying. Allow a couple of minutes silence at the end of the assembly to reflect upon how people’s lives will have been changed by the disaster they have experienced, and back in classrooms the pupils can prepare an article about the disaster, including the following information:**

**- the type of disaster and where it happened**

**- the number of people affected**

**- why people were vulnerable**

**- what is being done to help people cope with the immediate effects of the disaster**

**- how people will be helped to cope in the longer term and prepare for future disasters**

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