

Tanisha and the Changing Weather

Objective: To teach children about the real human impacts of our changing climate through story.

Materials: One copy of colouring page (included) for each child, world map or atlas (optional).

Recommended time: 5 minutes for story and wondering. Additional time needed for new terms, colouring page and extra activities.

Recommended age: Early childhood, preschool, school-age, ages 3-8. Activity suitable for a children's feature during a worship service or for Sunday school.

Number of participants: This activity is suitable for as many participants as you would like.

Activity

Read the following story and lead the wondering questions. Go over the new terms.

Hand out copies of this colouring picture of a woman farmer in Bangladesh. In a Sunday school class setting, these can be coloured during class. In a children's feature setting, have the children bring their page back to their seats.

Check out more climate change activities here: foodgrainsbank.ca/climate_change_and_farming.aspx and foodgrainsbank.ca/harvest_of_letters.aspx

Story

Tanisha lives with her mother and little brother in a small village in the south west of Bangladesh, in the Khulna District. Tanisha and her family are farmers, growing rice and vegetables on their small plot of land. They also share a fish

pond with many neighbours. They used to grow enough food to feed themselves, but things are tougher because the weather has been changing. It's hotter than it used to be, and the rains don't come when they usually do. Sometimes there isn't enough rain. Sometimes it rains so much that it floods! There are also more big storms. These changes have made it more difficult for her family and the other families in her village to grow enough food.

Tanisha remembers a really bad storm when she was smaller. It came from the ocean and flooded almost everything! The storm ruined the fields and fish ponds and washed away the roads. It also filled the fields and canals with salty ocean water. Rice and vegetables don't grow very well in salty water. It became very difficult for Tanisha's family to find enough food.

Then, with the help of a local organization, the people in Tanisha's village started making changes. They started re-digging canals around their fields so that fresh water would be available year-round, even if the rains didn't come. They repaired the fish ponds and the roads. They even planted trees. One of the women planting the trees told Tanisha that the trees' roots would help the road stay in place, even if there was a flood.

Tanisha's mother learned more about farming: how to use the fresh water in the canals and fish pond to grow more than one crop in a year, and how to grow a healthy vegetable garden. Tanisha also helped her mother plant a fruit tree in their yard. She can't wait to taste this new fruit!

Even though the climate is changing, Tanisha and her village are learning to adapt to the changes and grow enough food for themselves.

Wondering questions

These are suggested questions to spark conversation and wondering for the children (and congregation). After each “wondering” allow the children to respond.

- I wonder what it is like in Bangladesh. I wonder how it is different from Canada.
- I wonder what it is like to be in a big storm or flood like Tanisha was. I wonder what happened to her home and her things.
- I wonder what plants need in order to grow. I wonder what I would do to help grow food.

Prayer

God our Creator and Provider, we thank you for providing for our needs. We think of people around the world at a time when the climate is changing and making it more difficult for people to get enough food. Please be with those people who suffer from the impacts of climate change. Bless the people who are working to help provide food for their communities and also help us know what to do in our own lives. Be with us all as we live in your creation. *Amen.*

New Terms

Climate change: Climate change is a long-term change in the earth’s climate. This isn’t a change from day-to-day or even month-to-month, but big overall changes over many years. It is getting hotter, and some places don’t get enough rain whereas others get too much. There are also more big storms. These changes are making it more difficult for many people all over the world to grow enough food.

Smallholder farmer: Tanisha and her family are called smallholder farmers. This means that they own or farm a very small amount of land and that most of the food they grow on their farm is for them to eat, not to sell. Farmers in Canada grow food mainly to sell it, not to eat it themselves.

Adapt: Tanisha’s village is learning to adapt to climate change. This means that they are finding new ways of doing things like farming and fishing so that they will not suffer as much when there is too little rain or too much rain.

Salinization: The fields in Tanisha’s village were flooded by salty ocean water. When salt gets into good soil it is called salinization. Most crops don’t grow well in salty soil.

Cyclone: A cyclone is a type of very strong wind storm that starts over the ocean. The big storm that damaged Tanisha’s village was called Cyclone Aila.

Canal: People in Tanisha’s village re-dug canals after the storm. Canals are waterways like rivers, only they are built by people. They are a way to get water from lakes or rivers to places that usually don’t get water, and they help drain water from the land after flooding.



