



Prepare with Pedro!

TORNADOES

Dear Educator:

Thank you again for inviting us to share our *Prepare with Pedro* emergency preparedness program with your students. To help build on our presentation, we have developed these K–2 lesson plans, with separate activity sheets for two age levels.

Pedro will guide you, your students and their households through engaging, standards-based activities that teach science and health concepts, while building language arts and critical-thinking skills. The lessons follow a Before–During–After approach to navigating tornadoes that will empower students to be preparedness advocates at home.

We hope that you will use these resources to further enrich your students' learning experience and help them prepare for emergencies.

Sincerely,

Your Friends at the
American Red Cross

Activity 1

It's a Twister!

Objectives

- Create awareness among students and families about tornadoes, including warning signs and the two types of tornado alerts
- Engage students in group discussions to foster language and literacy skills
- Involve students in visual discrimination exercises to build critical thinking skills
- Promote parent/caregiver involvement through at-home activities

Note: Students will need a dark green marker, crayon or pencil for this activity.

Introduction: Begin by asking students what they remember about tornadoes based on what they learned with Pedro.

Say: Tornadoes have strong winds that can cause a lot of damage to things in their path. Tornadoes move in different ways: they can bounce around, spin in place or suck up things outdoors like a vacuum cleaner. Tornadoes can be very dangerous, but we can learn ways to be prepared to help us stay safe.

Say: Because tornadoes move fast, weather experts aren't always sure exactly where they're going to go. But they are able to warn us if they think a tornado might be coming to an area so

households can **be prepared**. This is called a *tornado watch*, and we can hear about it on TV, the radio, an alert on a cell phone or from a grown-up. If there is already a tornado in our area, there will be a *tornado warning*, which means it's time to **take action**.

Say: Hearing a tornado watch or tornado warning is not the only way to know a tornado is nearby. We can watch and listen for warning signs too!

Distribute copies of the activity sheet and explain that students are going to help Pedro and his friends Amelia and Elijah learn about tornadoes.

Read the directions to **Part 1. Say:** These pictures show different ways to tell a tornado might be coming. Let's look at them together so we can recognize the signs.

1. **Tornadoes have a cone shape.**
Say: In a tornado, the wind spins really fast and forms into a cone-shaped cloud that looks like an ice cream cone. **Ask:** Can anyone tell me which of these is a cone shape?
Say: Color the cone shape.
2. **Tornadoes make a roaring sound.** **Say:** Sometimes, the wind is so strong in a tornado that it makes a loud roaring sound. Roar with me! **Ask:** Which of these animals makes a roaring sound, like a tornado might make? **Say:** Color the animal that roars.



3. *The sky can change color in a tornado.*

Say: Another thing that can happen during a tornado is that the sky changes color. **Ask:** To give you a hint, who can tell me what color we make if we mix blue and yellow? **Say:** Green, yes! Sometimes the sky turns dark green in a tornado. Color the sky dark green.

4. *Tornadoes create a lot of wind.*

Say: We talked about how tornadoes can make wind that is so strong, it makes things fly through the air. **Ask:** Can you tell which way the wind is blowing in this picture? What might help you figure it out? **Say:** It looks to me like things are moving to the right side of the picture, so the wind is coming in from the left side and blowing things to the right. Draw an arrow to show the direction of the wind.

Answers: 1. cone; 2. lion; 3. Students color the sky dark green.; 4. Arrows should point from left to right.

To conclude, read the message at the bottom of the page, which encourages households to learn more about tornadoes. Emphasize to students that it is not their responsibility to look out for tornado warning signs, but they can be helpers if they notice any of these signs.

Say: If you see or hear a tornado warning sign, tell a grown-up right away. Your grown-ups will be in charge of making a plan to stay safe. You're the helper.

Grades 1-2

For **Part 1**, complete the same exercise as in the Grades K-1 activity. For **Part 2**, explain that the tornado warning signs got mixed up and Pedro needs their help matching them to the right clues! Read the directions and, depending on your students' reading levels, read aloud the clues and terms (or invite student volunteers to do so). Then invite students to work in pairs to match the explanations to the warning signs.

Answers: Part 2: 1. roar = b; 2. cone = d; 3. green = a; 4. wind = c

Activity 2

Safe Place, Safe Position

Objectives

- Teach children the importance of going to a safe place and assuming a safe position during a tornado
- Engage students in reading and symbolic decoding activities to build language and literacy skills
- Encourage students to be preparedness advocates for their households

Note: Each student will need one green and one red marker, crayon or pencil for this activity.

Begin by sharing that now that students have learned what tornadoes are and the warning signs that a tornado may be coming, it's time to learn what to do to help us be safe if a tornado comes to our community.

Ask: Does anyone remember what a *tornado watch* is?

Say: It's when we hear that a tornado might be coming our way. During a tornado watch, it's time to *be prepared*. That means going to a safe place. Let's learn what that means.

Explain that to help us stay safe during a tornado watch, we want to go somewhere indoors that has strong walls, no windows and is as low as possible in the building.

Ask: Why do you think that is? **Say:** We want to be as far away as possible from those strong winds and anything that blows around. High up places could be dangerous if the wind damages the roof or makes the building sway from side to side. Rooms with windows are not safe because the windows could break and hurt someone.

Say: If you live in a mobile home, it is not safe to stay there during a tornado because it is not as strong as a building. A safe place to go would be a strong building nearby or an underground shelter.

Distribute the activity sheets. Explain that this is a picture of Amelia and Elijah's home, and they need help knowing where their safe places are. Read the directions to



Answers: Kneel on the **floor**. Curl up as tight as a **ball**. Put your **hands** over your **head** and neck. This will help protect you from anything that could **blow** around from the wind.

To conclude, read the message at the bottom of the page, which encourages households to identify two to three safe places in or near their home and practice the safe position together.

Remind students that they should share this information with the grown-ups in their home and help them prepare.

Say: Your grown-ups will be in charge of making the plan. You're the helper.

Part 1 and have students circle in GREEN the safe places to go during a tornado, and cross out in RED the unsafe places. As students complete the activity individually, circulate as needed to remind them of the characteristics of safe versus unsafe places. Then review the answers as a class.

Answers: Green—basement, closet, lower floor rooms with no windows. Red—treehouse, attic, rooms with windows, bathroom, trailer.

Congratulate students on learning about safe places to go during a tornado watch. **Say:** When everyone in your household is in your safe place, have a radio or cellphone with you so you can be informed if the tornado watch becomes a *tornado warning*, which happens when the tornado is right nearby. That will mean it's time to *take action* and go into a *safe position*! **Ask:** Does anyone know what the safe position is? **Say:** There are three parts. First, you kneel down on the ground. Then you curl up into a ball shape. Last, you put your hands over your head and your neck to protect yourself from anything that is blowing around.

If appropriate, invite students to practice the safe position in place.

Say: Once you're in your safe position, it's important to stay that way until a grown-up says it's safe to move. You don't need to be in charge of knowing when the tornado has passed and things are safe again; the grown-ups will tell you.

Read the directions to **Part 2** and **say:** Pedro, Amelia and Elijah are trying to remember how to get in a safe position and why the safe position is important during a tornado, but some of the words in the message got replaced with pictures!

Have students decode the pictures. Once finished, invite volunteers to read each of the completed sentences.

Grades 1-2

For **Parts 1 and 2**, complete the same exercise as in the Grades K–1 activity. For **Part 3**, invite students to draw a diagram of their home on the back of the page and indicate three safe places for their household to go during a tornado. If students live in a mobile home, they should draw a nearby sturdy building or evacuation shelter.

Take-Home Activity

Ten Tornado Tips

Objectives

- Empower students to share tips on how to be prepared for and take action during a tornado with their households
- Create a visual representation of tornado preparedness tips to reassure children and decrease fear
- Promote parent/caregiver involvement through at-home activities

This activity leads households through creating a "Tornado Responsibilities Chart" to display in their home, where adults and children pair up to be in charge of key preparedness activities.

As a class, review Activities 1 and 2, discussing all the information students have learned. Have students take home the activity sheets so they can refer to them when sharing information with their households. Distribute copies of the take-home activity and tell students that there is information for grown-ups to read on this sheet as well as an activity to do together to prepare for tornadoes. Finally, congratulate students on a job well done learning about tornado preparedness!

