



## Talking Points for Educators: In the Aftermath of a Hurricane

The children and young people you teach probably have many questions about what happened to people in Louisiana and near the Gulf Coast as result of the catastrophic Hurricane Katrina which destroyed New Orleans and other areas on August 29, 2005. These questions can range from "[What are hurricanes?](#)" or "[What happens during hurricanes?](#)" to "[Will it happen here?](#)" "[How can I be safe?](#)" "[What if I know someone who can't go home?](#)" and "[What can I do to help?](#)"

These talking points from your American Red Cross will help you to—

- explain to students the hazards of hurricanes and why they are so destructive.
- explain action steps you can take to help make yourself, your students and your communities more prepared.
- tap [resources](#) available for teaching students how to be more prepared and/or recover from disasters.
- provide information about how to support survivors of Hurricane Katrina and other disasters.
- support students who have been directly affected by Hurricane Katrina and help students who know someone who has been affected.

Students, especially young students, may need the most help understanding which disasters are risks in your area and that not all people live in areas at risk for hurricanes. However, almost any area can be greatly affected by flooding, which causes the most destruction in the wake of a hurricane. Use this opportunity to talk to them about the disasters that can happen in your area, as well as places your students commonly visit. Explain how people of all ages can take actions to prepare in order to be safer in the event of any emergency. Be positive and help manage anxiety about disasters by focusing on the action steps students can take to help others recover and to prepare themselves for hazards that could affect them. These actions include making donations, reaching out to new classmates that may have been affected, making a Family Disaster Plan, building a Disaster Supplies Kit, getting trained in First Aid and practicing safety drills at home and school. Empowering young people to take these actions now can help them for a lifetime, no matter where they live.

Your students may also be very concerned about people they know that have been displaced by the disaster or how to help those who have lost their homes. These talking points will help you support your students, including those who may now be in your class because they have been directly affected by the recent disaster events.

If you have students in your class who have been displaced because of the hurricane, the *Facing Fear: Helping Young People Deal With Terrorism and Tragic Events* materials contain lessons and activities that address feelings of loss and sadness. The teacher background information also addresses some age-specific reactions to stress and trauma and provides tips for how to engage students in discussions around the events. There are also pre-written letters, called Home Connections, to send home with students to encourage families to continue discussions at home. These lesson plans and activity sheets can be downloaded for free at [www.redcross.org/disaster/masters](http://www.redcross.org/disaster/masters).

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