

I.

I'm so happy today is nice and sunny. Did you see the big storm yesterday? When I got home from school a tree was knocked down in my yard.

I saw people cleaning up a house that had some windows broken.

The storm stayed away from our school and I know my teacher was glad about that. She made all of us get in the hallway and cover our heads when we heard the loud siren. Some of the kids were laughing at first. They thought we were just doing a safety drill. Later, when we found out it was real they were a little scared. I wasn't too scared because I knew we were in a safe place.

Why does the weather have to storm?

My brother says we get storms when the weather tries to even out hot air and cold air, or dry air and wet air. I read a book once that showed all the different kinds of storms around the Earth.

I bet I can name some. Floods, lightning, wind, and tornadoes.

And then you can have snowstorms, rainstorms, thunderstorms, and hurricanes. The book said more than one storm can happen at the same time even in the same place, but all storms have an important job to do.

What's that?

To carry water around the world, clean the air, and to make sure one part of the planet doesn't get too hot, or too cold, or too wet, or too dry. We can pretend to be lightning and thunder. I'll be right back. Guess who I'll be?

Lightning.

That's right, I'm lightning. OK. Do your job.

What's my job?

To follow lightning. Whenever there's a flash of lightning from a storm cloud, the thunder comes after it.

OK. Boom.

Is that it? Is that the best you can do? Let's try again.

Kaboom.

Well, that was a little better. One more time.

Wow, you even scared me.

Well don't let me scare you. I'm only noise and my job is to make a loud sound to let people know when you are happening so they can go inside to be safe. It's the lightning that can hurt people.

I guess you're right. After all, lightning is a big spark of electricity that travels through the sky and you never know where it will hit the ground. I am so powerful that I'm hotter than the sun so I could even start fires.

And don't forget you have a lot of electricity too.

My electricity can shock people and hurt them pretty bad.

OK lightning, you just watch yourself.

I don't mean to start problems but it just happens whenever I strike something.

Well I'll be sure to go inside whenever I see you, Mr. Lightning.

And I'll go inside whenever I hear you, Mr. Thunder.

(unison:) ...and we'll both be safer inside.

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II. Hey what are you guys doing?

We're storming.

Storming?

Yes, I'm lightning and he's thunder.

Can I be a rainstorm?

Sure.

OK. hold on I'll be right back. Alright, here I go.

Hey, that wasn't nice.

But you said I could be a rainstorm so I had to carry water from one place and spread it out somewhere else. Because of me the flowers will grow, farm fields get watered, lakes get filled, and people who don't live near rivers can get clean water.

Well, I guess I was a little hot anyway from flashing around, and you did cool me off.

Then you should thank me.

Maybe not.

Well maybe then we could just be a team. A lot of times lightning and thunder come with heavy rain and people call that thunderstorms. OK. Let me go get some more water. Here everyone. Are we all ready? Let's go team but this time we'll just throw all the water in the same spot.

Look! All the water just made a really big puddle fast and some of the water is running down the hill. That's like a flood.

Right, a flood of water that happened in a flash. That's called a flash flood. It's when water from rainstorms can make deep water where the ground was dry and it can make rivers rise and move faster. I can even see the twigs floating down the hill with the water.

That's almost what I saw on TV last week. A river was flooding and the water was moving so fast that it was carrying trees.

That's a lot of water. I know that if flood water is strong enough to carry trees then I should never try to walk through it or play around it.

That's a good idea. Water is really heavy. When it is deep and moving it can even carry a car or truck off the road. A lot of people forget how strong water is when it is moving and that's why kids and grownups get hurt in flash floods.

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III. I just thought of something. When we have thunderstorms and heavy rain the trees sometimes bend over because the wind is blowing hard. We need some wind. Hey kid. Come here. We need you to be wind.

Huh?

We're pretending to be storms and we want you to add wind to our lightning, thunder and rain.

Oh. That's easy.

Wow, you really can be a windstorm!

Sorry. I didn't know my own strength. I guess I can work with you and then I can move you around to other spots.

OK, everyone here we go. We have to work as one storm.

What on Earth are you guys doing?

We're storms.

You sure are because you look pretty scary to me.

That's not funny.

Well, which one of you is the snowstorm?

Uhhhhhh.

Okay, let me help. I'll be a snowstorm.

Why did you throw the leaves on us?

Use your imagination. They're not leaves, they are beautiful snowflakes and now you are stuck in a big pile of snow.

I don't get it.

You don't? Let me get some more. girl runs out and back several times with another pile up to kids necks. **See? You're stuck. A few snowflakes don't weigh much but in the winter when too much snow falls at once it gets heavy and it can stop people and cars from moving around.**

Now I really get it.

I hope you have shovels!

Hey, look at her skating and spinning around. Do you know what kind of storm that reminds me of?

A tornado?

Watch I'll be a tornado. I'm spinning around .

Is that the same as a twister?

Yes. Sometimes people call tornadoes twisters because the wind twists around the middle of the storm. Even though I am a small storm my tornado winds can be very fast.

I bet tornadoes can knock over trees and houses.

They could but the good thing about tornadoes is most of them happen only in certain times of the year, in places where not too many people live.

But what should I do if one comes close to me?

Do what we all did in school yesterday. If you hear the storm siren or if a grownup tells you a tornado is on the way go to a strong part of your school or home. Stay away from windows. And duck down and cover yourself. I saw pictures of a tornado and it looked like a skinny funnel stretching down from the dark storm cloud.

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IV. Now those kids over there remind me of a hurricane. Can we pretend to be one of those too?

Sure but you all have to be a part of it.

Why?

Because a hurricane is a really big storm that is made up of a lot of smaller storms.

How big is it?

A hurricane is bigger than a city and sometimes as big as a state. That means a whole bunch of people feel the storm when it strikes. High winds knock things over and damage people's homes and property. A lot of times the electricity gets knocked out too. Heavy rain can make floods even away from where the hurricane strikes.

Where do hurricanes come from?

The ocean where it is very warm. Hurricanes start over the water of the ocean and they usually stay there but every once in a while they move onto land. They are so large we can see them from space on a weather satellite. The satellite lets a meteorologist know how big or strong a hurricane is as it travels across the ocean. Last year one of the hurricanes had the same name as my sister.

We give hurricanes names to make it easier to keep track of them because there could be more than one hurricane happening at the same time.

Okay wind. Your job is to move all of the little storms around in a circle so they move fast, and then faster as a group. Go lightning. And now thunder. And where's my rain? You too tornado. Faster everyone. Faster. Look how hard it is to stay in the middle. That's it! We now have a hurricane. No one is in the center so we call that the eye. That's where everything is calm but around the eye it is stormy, windy and wet. As the wind pushes the hurricane across the ocean the hurricane moves water around the planet and helps to even out the temperature. Thank you all my little storms.

(unison:) Can we stop now?!

Yes. Your job is done.

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V. If there are so many different kinds of storms how come we never hear about them all?

Because the Earth is a big planet and only certain kinds of storms happen in certain parts of Earth, and some storms only happen in certain seasons.

Well that's good. If they all happened at once I don't know what I would do.

I can tell you what we do at home.

What's that?

Just like we practice fire drills we practice storm drills so all my family knows where the safe rooms are in our house. We have a radio in the kitchen called a weather alert radio and it has a siren that can wake us up and let us know when stormy weather is on the way.

Oh, that's pretty smart.

In my apartment we make sure to watch the weather forecast every evening. The meteorologist tells me when stormy weather might happen.

"Severe thunderstorms are likely tomorrow. We can't say for sure at what time but tune in early in the morning for an update on the weather forecast."

She also says that there are only 3 ingredients for all weather. Sun, air and water. If we get too much of one ingredient and not enough of the others we can get storms. The more you learn about storms the more you see that we don't have to be scared as long as we are prepared and have a safety plan.

Some storms are powerful, but they are amazing, awesome, and even pretty when you are far enough away to see them and not feel them. But all storms are part of nature trying to take care of the Earth and the Earth is what takes care of us.

































































