



GET INVOLVED



45 MINUTES



PREPARATION
NEEDED

DROUGHTS AND DAMS



GETTING INTO THE ACTIVITY

Droughts have a huge impact on communities, particularly in the developing world. Explore how organisations like Christian Aid are trying to help those affected by these climate emergencies. [Link to Christian Aid Week \(10th - 16th May\).](#)

First you'll need to download and print the 'Droughts & Dams Instruction Sheet'. This has detailed instructions on how to carry out the activity including discussion questions, information, challenges and more. A summary of each activity / challenge is below:

My Water Usage: A quick look at all the different ways we use water and how lucky we are to have such easy access to water.

Droughts: An opportunity to explore what a drought is and how these can impact communities who experience them in the developing world. Due to climate change, the impact of droughts are now being felt more regularly and severely.

Earth Dams: Christian Aid are supporting the construction of earth dams, which help capture and store water for communities. Hear Florence's story and how an earth dam has helped her.

Challenge: Build a Dam - Use natural materials to build a mini dam, helping to see how water can be collected and stored.

Take it Further: Fundraising - Consider if your group can help raise money for Christian Aid to build earth dams for those communities experiencing droughts due to climate change.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Droughts & Dams Instruction Sheet
- Florence's Story Video (YouTube)
- Guttering / Long Container Etc
- Natural Materials (mud, sticks, leaves etc)
- Water



KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE

Please maintain social distancing where required. If using shared equipment, please ensure hands are washed before and after the activity.

DROUGHTS AND DAMS

My Water Use (5 mins)

Start by thinking about how much we rely on water. Go through an average week and try to think of all the times you use water (drinking, washing, brushing teeth, cooking, flushing toilet etc). How many different uses can the group come up with? How lucky are we in the UK that water is so easy to access and always there? Across the world, not everyone is as lucky...

Droughts (5 mins)

Hundreds of millions of people, particularly in the developing world, struggle to access water. Some people have to walk hours each day to collect it. But what happens when these countries experience droughts and that water dries up? A drought is a prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water. With our climate changing, droughts are happening more frequently and severely. Have a think about what impact that might have on a community? What ways can your group think of? This can make it hard to grow crops, earn a living, keep animals alive and look after themselves. It is often the poorest people that have to deal with the most severe consequences of our changing environment

Earth Dams (5 mins)

Christian Aid are working with these communities to help them deal with droughts better. One way of doing that is by building earth dams, to help capture and store water so when droughts do come they have some water to rely on. Watch Florence's story to see how an Earth Dam has helped her community.

Florence's Story - <https://youtu.be/d2g2VYJ2sxc>

Florence is a soulful, joyful woman: full of life, love and laughter. The women in her farming group look up to her. She's courageous and kind - a survivor. A few years ago, her husband died, leaving her a widow. At that time, she had no water to grow crops. Her children were hungry. She had to walk for 6 hours a day to collect water. 'Life was miserable,' she told us.

Florence could easily have been defeated. But she is a fighter. With help from Christian Aid, Florence and her community were able to build a dam together, just 30 minutes from her house. Using water from the dam, Florence grows tomatoes, onions and chillies on her farm. Her children can eat healthy, nutritious vegetables, and she has enough left to sell. It's her source of life and joy. Florence also uses the dam to keep bees: the microclimate of plants growing around the dam means the bees don't need to search long distances for nectar. She sells the rich, golden honey at the market.

She says: 'I have been sustained by the earth dam. My life has changed. I am very happy. You can see it in my face: my face is shining. I have strength and power.'

Challenge - Build a Dam (15 Mins)

We've seen how useful an earth dam can be, now take on the challenge of trying to build a mini version. Split into small teams and give each team something to build their dam in (i.e., a gutter, long container, box etc). In the middle of this, try to build a dam using natural materials (mud, sand, leaves, twigs, stones etc). Once happy, add water to one side of the dam and see if it holds it. A successful dam won't let any / only a small amount of the water escape through to the other side. If the dam isn't working, encourage groups to try to improve their dams. Which group can build the most successful dam in the time given?

Take it Further Challenge - Raise Money

As we have seen in Florence's story, an Earth Dam has a huge benefit to a community and can mean people like Florence can use it to not only survive from, but flourish. Could your group take part in some fundraising to help other communities benefit from an earth dam? Below is a guide on how money you raise could be used by Christian Aid.

- £4.40 could teach 10 farmers how to plant drought-tolerant crops that can survive the drought.
- £10 could buy a pair of taps at a water point which will be installed at an earth dam, making it easier for people to fetch water.
- £42 could buy 350kg of cement, which is needed to build an earth dam.
- £545 could pay for a skilled labourer to work on the construction of an earth or sand dam.