Lesson Plan: Earthquakes – Exploring the Shaky World Beneath Our Feet

Age Group: 5-year-old children Plus
Subject: Earth Science
Duration: 30–40 minutes
Objectives:

- To introduce children to the concept of earthquakes and tectonic plates.
- To help children understand why earthquakes happen.
- To teach basic earthquake safety practices.

Materials Needed:

- Video by DiscoverLifeSkills.com: *Earthquakes: Exploring the Shaky World Beneath Our Feet*
- Tectonic plate puzzle or images of Earth's tectonic plates
- Large blanket or sheet (for simulating an earthquake)
- Construction paper, markers, and crayons for drawing
- Toy blocks or small building blocks for an earthquake simulation activity

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Lesson Outline:

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Start with a question:** "Has anyone ever felt the ground shake or heard about an earthquake?"
- **Explain:** "Today we're going to learn about earthquakes! Earthquakes are when the ground shakes because big pieces of the Earth, called tectonic plates, move and rub against each other. We'll even learn how to stay safe during an earthquake."

2. Watch the Video (7-10 minutes)

- Show the *Earthquakes: Exploring the Shaky World Beneath Our Feet* video.
- Encourage children to listen for words like "tectonic plates" and "shaking."

3. Discussion (5 minutes)

- **Ask follow-up questions:**
    - "Why do earthquakes happen?" (Because tectonic plates move and get stuck, then break free.)

    - "What should you do if an earthquake happens?" (Duck under a sturdy table, stay away from windows.)
    - "Did you know animals can sense earthquakes before they happen?"

4. Hands-on Activity: Earthquake Simulation (10-15 minutes)

- **Instructions:**
    - Use toy blocks to create small “buildings” on a flat surface.
    - Place a large blanket or sheet under the blocks, and gently shake it to simulate an earthquake.
    - Ask the children to observe what happens to the buildings (they may fall over).
    - Discuss why buildings shake during earthquakes and explain that scientists study how to make buildings stronger to protect people.

5. Craft Activity: Tectonic Plates Drawing (10 minutes)

- **Instructions:**
    - Hand out construction paper, markers, and crayons.
    - Ask the children to draw the Earth with its tectonic plates. Help them divide the Earth into large puzzle-like shapes (the plates) and explain how they move.
    - Encourage them to draw an earthquake by showing the plates bumping into each other.

6. Conclusion and Reflection (5 minutes)

- **Wrap up:**
    - Review why earthquakes happen and what to do to stay safe.
    - Ask the children if they think they would be ready for an earthquake.
    - **End with a fun fact:** "Did you know that the biggest earthquake ever recorded was so strong that it shook the whole Earth?"

Extension Ideas for Continued Learning:

1. **Earthquake Safety Role Play:**
    - Practice earthquake safety drills by having the children “duck and cover” under tables when you say “earthquake!”
2. **Tectonic Plate Puzzle:**
    - Use a simple tectonic plate puzzle to show how plates move around and cause earthquakes. The children can take turns sliding the puzzle pieces.
3. **Storytime:**
    - Read a picture book about earthquakes, like *"The Earthshaking Earthquake Mystery"* by Carole Marsh.

Learning Goals for 5-Year-Olds:

- Recognize the basic concept of tectonic plates and how earthquakes happen.
- Learn simple safety measures for staying safe during an earthquake.
- Engage in imaginative play and creative drawing to reinforce learning.

This lesson plan uses interactive activities, simulations, and crafting to help children understand the science behind earthquakes and safety practices in a fun and engaging way!

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