

VANISHING FIREFLIES

Nagahanaw na mga Aninipot

CURIOUS MINDS · PRIMARY SCHOOL · AGES 5–11

Typhoon Destruction

Biodiversity loss

Childhood resilience

Hope in the face of loss

DIRECTOR	JP Corton
PRODUCER	Jaime Morados
RUNTIME	8 minutes
FORMAT	Animation
LANGUAGE	Cebuano, Waray (English subtitles)
LOCATION	Tabango, Leyte, Philippines
FILM & TRAILER	youtu.be/DH6-uJXdApQ
POSTER & STILLS	tinyurl.com/mrx66vww



THE STORY

In the quiet town of Tabango, Leyte, young Russell's world is upended when a super typhoon forces him and his grandfather, Lolo Lito, to seek shelter in an evacuation centre. Clinging to a single firefly for comfort, Russell begins to sense the weight of the storm's aftermath — felt most deeply by the farmers and families around him. As he searches for light amidst loss and uncertainty, he discovers that even the smallest flicker can grow into a symbol of hope, memory, and quiet resilience.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When Typhoon Yolanda struck the Philippines in 2013, it reshaped lives and landscapes in a matter of hours — more than four million people were displaced. I was seventeen, looking after my eight-year-old cousin, Russell, and amid all the chaos he simply kept chasing fireflies.

Growing up in Tabango, those fireflies were pure magic to me — lights we caught in jars on warm nights. After the storm, they were gone. The wind didn't only destroy homes; it wiped out small moments of wonder, and in the aftermath came corruption and neglect as relief funds quietly disappeared. Vanishing Fireflies is my way of giving voice to those quieter losses — the innocence of childhood, the everyday joys we take for granted — and to the hope we hold onto, even when it feels as if all the light has gone.

— JP Corton, Director

WHY IT MATTERS

Vanishing Fireflies invites viewers to reflect on what climate change really takes from us — not just homes and harvests, but the small, everyday magic of a childhood. The film encourages resilience, disaster preparedness, and community action, told through the eyes of a child who refuses to let the light go out.

SCREENINGS & AWARDS

Vanishing Fireflies has screened at eight international film festivals across Azerbaijan, Cambodia, India, Italy, the Philippines, Poland, Singapore, and Thailand, winning six awards including Best Animation, Jury Prize for Shorts, and Best Work for Children.

8 FESTIVALS

6 AWARDS

8 COUNTRIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

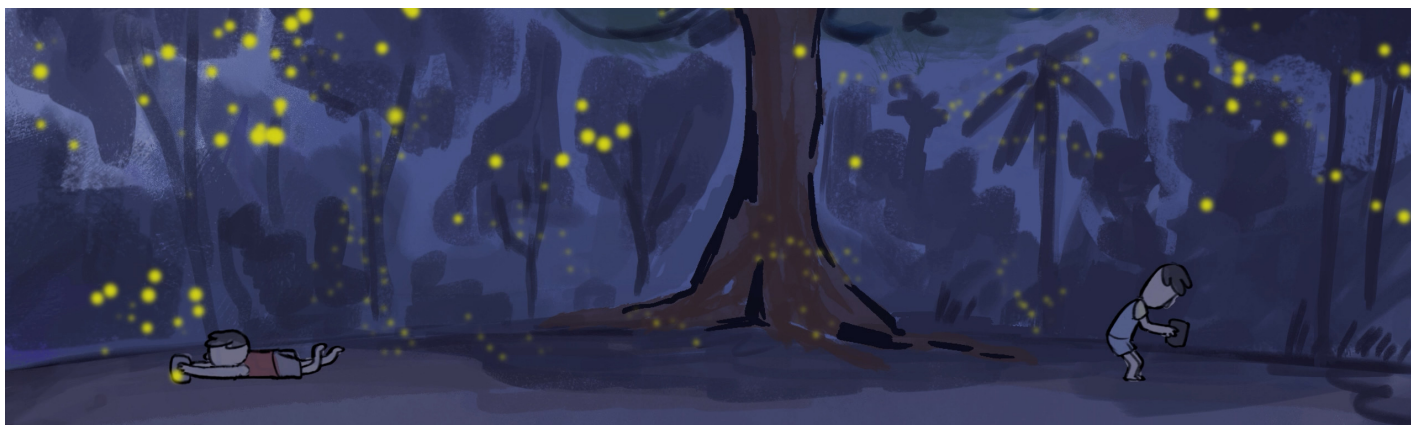
Vanishing Fireflies is designed for primary school students aged 5–11. It approaches climate change through hope and community rather than fear, helping children understand what is happening to their world and what they can do about it. It can be integrated into primary school subjects including environmental science, social studies, citizenship, and climate education.

After watching the film, students will be able to:

- Understand that extreme weather events affect real communities: their homes, their lives, and the natural world around them.
- Recognise that communities show strength and resilience in the face of climate impacts, even when systems fail them.
- Reflect on how working together and caring for each other and for nature helps communities recover and grow.

SDG ALIGNMENT

The film connects to four United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



LESSON PLANS & ACTIVITIES

Full lesson plans, discussion questions & classroom activities — <https://tinyurl.com/354ze58p>

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This document provides two lesson plan formats and a set of classroom activities to accompany a screening of Vanishing Fireflies. Choose the format that fits your time and setting, then select from the activities below.

FILM SCREENING

FORMAT · 2 HOURS

Objective: Use the film to inspire reflection and discussion on typhoon preparedness, biodiversity, and community support.

SCREENING AND ACTIVITY FLOW (2 HOURS)

- **Welcome and introduction (10 mins)** — Brief introduction to the day's theme and purpose.
- **Film screening (10 mins)** — Watch Vanishing Fireflies.
- **Thematic talk (10 mins)** — Fireflies as symbols of hope; what to do during typhoons.
- **Interactive trivia (15 mins)** — Questions on the film, environment, and typhoon safety.
- **Art reflection activity (1 hour)** — Drawing prompt: "How can I help during a typhoon?" Drawings can be displayed in the school hallway or compiled into a travelling exhibit.
- **Discussion and sharing (15 mins)** — Students share what they learned and reflect on how they can contribute at home and at school.

FILM SCREENING & TREE PLANTING ACTIVITY

FORMAT · 2 HALF DAYS

Objective: To inspire students to reflect on the importance of community, hope, and environmental action in the context of typhoons and climate change.

DAY 1 — FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION (HALF DAY)

- **Welcome and introduction (15 mins)** — Brief introduction to the film's themes: typhoons, fireflies, hope, and community.
- **Film screening (10 mins)** — Watch Vanishing Fireflies.
- **Environmental talk (10 mins)** — Discuss fireflies and typhoon preparedness.
- **Trivia game (15 mins)** — Interactive Q&A on the film, environment, and safety.
- **Art and reflection activity (1 hour)** — Drawing prompt: "How can you help your family and community during a typhoon?" Drawings are collected for a collaborative Tree of Hope mural.
- **Closing reflection (15 mins)** — Group sharing and summary of key takeaways.

DAY 2 — TREE PLANTING ACTIVITY (HALF DAY)

- **Warm-up and recap (15 mins)** — Review lessons from Day 1.
- **Talk: The importance of trees (10 mins)** — How trees support fireflies and protect communities from climate impacts.
- **Tree planting (2 hours)** — Groups plant saplings around the school and label them with their group names.
- **Pledge and mural completion (30 mins)** — Students write personal commitments on leaf cutouts and add them to the mural. Group photo with mural and trees.

■ GUIDED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these questions to guide conversation after the film screening.

- 1 How did Russell feel during and after the storm? Why do you think he held onto the firefly?
- 2 What are some ways the community tried to help each other after the typhoon? Can you think of ways you would help if something like this happened in your town?
- 3 Why do you think the fireflies disappeared after the storm? What does this show about nature and how storms can change the environment?
- 4 If your town needed help after a big storm, what would you hope people would do to help families stay safe and supported?
- 5 What lessons can we learn about taking care of nature and each other? How can we protect the things that are important to us — even small things like fireflies?
- 6 What are some small actions children and communities can take to help care for the environment and prepare for emergencies?

■ CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Tree Drawing and Community Care

Have students draw their own tree and discuss why trees matter — for fireflies, for wildlife, and for communities. Trees provide soil moisture for firefly larvae, shelter for adult fireflies, protection, oxygen, food, and support for wildlife.

While drawing, encourage students to think about how they can help their community grow and stay healthy. Discuss the kinds of support families might need during and after a storm, and how communities can prepare together.

If possible, follow up with a simple tree-planting activity at school.

Firefly Wishes Reflection

Ask students to draw or write about a "light" in their own lives — something that brings them hope, comfort, or joy, the way the firefly does for Russell. Students can then share their drawings and discuss how helping others, protecting nature, and standing up for what's right can keep these "lights" alive in their communities.

Biodiversity Reflection

Have students draw animals or insects from their local community that may be affected by climate change now or in the future.

Discuss what measures are needed to protect these creatures, and how communities, organisations, and governments can help.

Emotions and Action Worksheets

Two worksheets support deeper engagement with the characters in the film:

- **Role on the Wall (Emotions in a Character)** — Students choose a character (Russell, Grandfather Lolo Lito, or the firefly) and explore the internal and external factors that shape that character's actions and emotions.
- **Axis of Emotion (Plotting Emotions)** — Building on the Role on the Wall activity, students map how their chosen character's emotions change throughout the film and consider what drives those changes.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Students who complete the lesson plans and activities should develop:

Increased Awareness — A better understanding of biodiversity, disaster preparedness, and the value of community collaboration.

Empowered Action — Confidence to take small but meaningful steps to support their families and neighbours, especially during emergencies.

Community Connection — A stronger sense of unity, empathy, and shared responsibility through group activities.

RESOURCES

TYPHOONS AND PREPAREDNESS

Teaching Disaster Preparedness in Schools — A practical article on how schools can teach children about floods, typhoons, and emergency readiness.

<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/feature/2012/11/28/teaching-disaster-preparedness-schools>

Keeping Schools Safe from Disasters in the Philippines — A child- and school-focused resource on disaster risk reduction and safer learning spaces.

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/blogs/2019/keeping-schools-safe-from-disasters-philippines>

FIREFLIES AND BIODIVERSITY

Firefly Populations at Risk Due to Climate Change and Urban Development — A short science article on threats to fireflies, including habitat loss and environmental change.

<https://www.psu.edu/news/agricultural-sciences/story/firefly-populations-risk-due-climate-change-urban-development>

Illuminating Firefly Diversity, Trends, Threats and Conservation — A research article with useful background on firefly diversity and conservation pressures.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10815995/>

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Indigenous Knowledge and Practices on Disaster Preparedness and Response — An academic source on community resilience and local knowledge.

<https://www.ijams-bbp.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/5-IJAMS-MAY-2025-48-63.pdf>

TEACHING WITH FILM

Climate Ed Resources — A curated climate education resource collection with materials that can support classroom discussion.

<https://learning.teachforall.org/climate-ed/climate-ed-resources>

Using Film in Schools: A Practical Guide — A general guide for educators using film as a learning tool in class.

http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/misc/C21_Using_film_in_schools.pdf

WATCH MORE

Cyclones, Hurricanes & Typhoons for Kids — A short animated explainer that helps children understand what typhoons are and how they form.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJRw38jHYn0>

Disaster Dodgers: Introduction to Emergency Planning — A youth-friendly video about disaster preparedness, family communication plans, and emergency kits.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbzvomQYJpE>

Hurricane and Home Fire Facts for Kids — A child-centered preparedness video from the Red Cross that explains what to do in an emergency.

<https://www.redcross.org/local/pennsylvania/greater-pennsylvania/about-us/our-work/videos-hurricane-facts-for-kids.html>

Climate Change — BBC Teach — A short school video where children talk about climate change, its impacts, and what people can do to help.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/articles/zbqxijsq>