Make your own tornado

You will need
• Water
• A clear plastic bottle with a cap (that won’t leak)
• Glitter
• Dish washing liquid

Directions
1. Fill the plastic bottle with water until it is about three quarters full.
2. Add a few drops of dish washing liquid.
3. Sprinkle in a few pinches of glitter (this will make your tornado easier to see).
4. Put the cap on tightly.
5. Turn the bottle upside down and hold it by the neck. Quickly spin the bottle in a circular motion for a few seconds, stop and look inside to see if you can see a mini tornado forming in the water. You might need to try it a few times before you get it working properly.

A tornado is a violent rotating column of air extending from a thunderstorm to the ground. They can destroy large buildings, uproot trees and throw vehicles hundreds of yards. To make a tornado you need warm, moist air to meet up with cool, dry air. When they meet, they can create changes in wind direction and speed that cause a spinning effect.

Most tornados form in the afternoon during May and June. Tornados happen more frequently in America than in any other part of the world. The states with the most tornados are called Tornado Alley, but tornados have occurred in all 50 states and even in Yellowstone National Park.

For more information and activities on tornados and weather visit the MSU K-12 Earth Systems Science Project at
www.math.montana.edu/~nmp/materials/ess

Learn about opportunities to participate in upcoming science activities and events at MSU by visiting Montana.edu/outreach