What do you see when you look around your home, school, or playground? Ana Maria sees microbes! These microscopic organisms play an important role in keeping us safe. Some germs however can make us sick. In this activity, we’ll use pepper to mimic germs and show how washing our hands can make a big difference.

“I know we’re often told to be scared of germs but we don’t have to be afraid of them - in the same way you sleep with a lovey at night and it helps you feel safe, the microbes on and around us help protect us.”

– ANA MARIA PORRAS

**MATERIALS:**
- Pepper
- Dish soap
- A wide bowl or deep dish
- Cotton swabs

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Fill a bowl with a few inches of water, then sprinkle a good amount of pepper into the bowl. The pepper will float on the surface of the water.

2. Dip one end of the cotton swab into the middle of the bowl. What happens to the cotton swab and pepper?
3. Dip the end of a second cotton swab into some dish soap. Make sure to cover it thoroughly.

Now dip the soap covered end into the bowl of pepper and water. What happens to the cotton swab and pepper?

5. Try the activity again, but use your finger this time. Does the same thing happen?

VOCABULARY:
MICROBE - a germ; a tiny living organism that can cause disease.