

Some ideas to help children and young people explore feelings of loss of all kinds



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A circular path, like the cycle of life, leads you through the seasons...

Spring Garden
'Garden of Hope'

Trees blossom, bulbs burst out of the ground.
The path leads the way forward after the shock and pain you can feel when someone dies or goes away. New life is appearing; there are new leaves on the trees, showing us that loss and death can be a beginning as well as an end.

Winter Garden
'Garden of Thought'

Around you there's no sign of colour. Like the early days after someone has died or moved away, life is hard. But inside the seed pods, things are happening, reminding us that life goes on. More colourful times are on the way. Spring is coming



Summer Garden
'Garden of Light'

Roses are for love, rosemary for remembrance. Colourful flowers remind us that, even in very sad times, there are happy times too when the world is bright and life is for living and it's OK to have fun

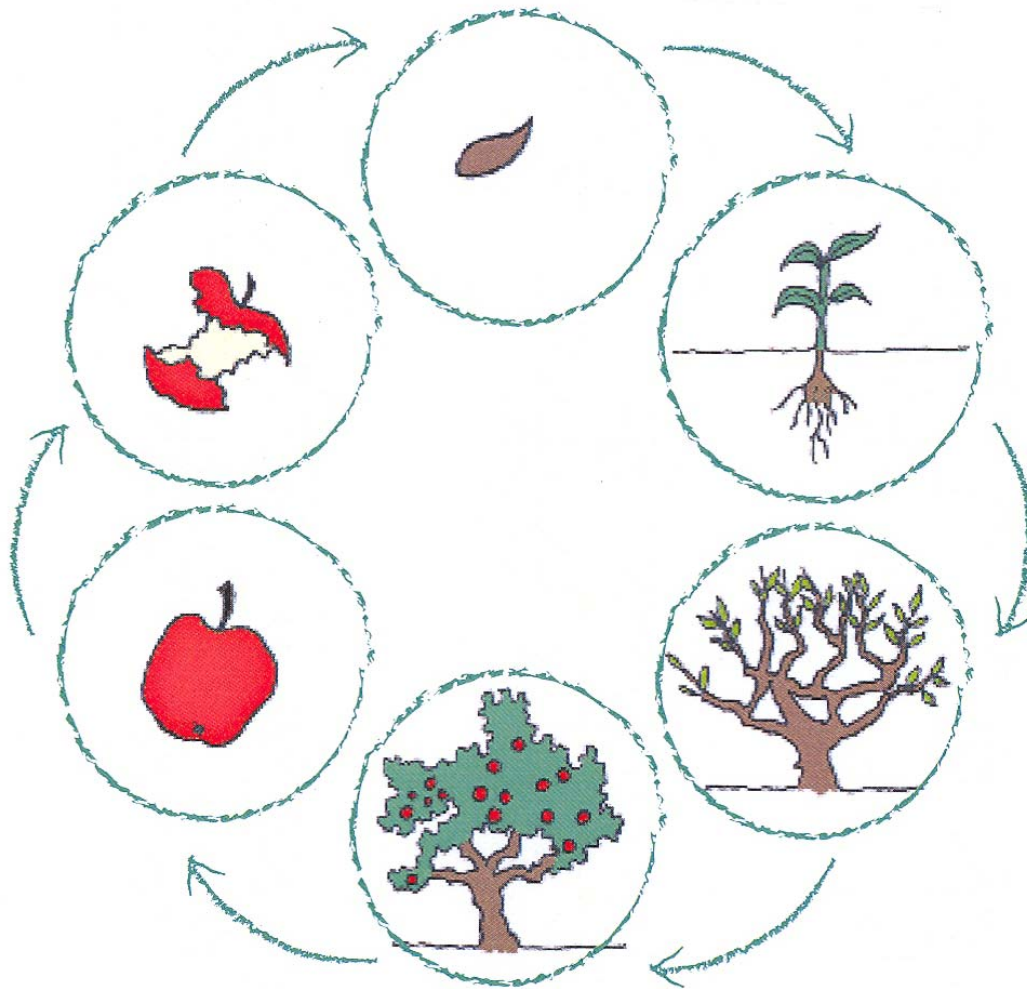
Autumn Garden
'Garden of Change'

Fruits, seeds and berries show that the outside shape of things becomes different with time. A bud becomes a flower, a flower becomes a fruit and the fruit will eventually drop from the tree. But in the fruit are the seeds from which new life will grow. Life is a journey full of change



Changes

Life is full of changes, they happen all the time. Some changes are harder to cope with than others. Sometimes we know when change will happen, sometimes we don't. Sometimes we are ready for change, sometimes we're not. To change is to grow.



- Where do you think you are on the Apple Tree circle?
- Where do you think your Mum or Dad would be?
- Where do you think your Grandma or Grandpa would be?
- Make up your own "Changes" circle like the Apple Tree one
 - it could be about you
 - it could be about an animal or insect you've seen in the garden
 - it could be about your family

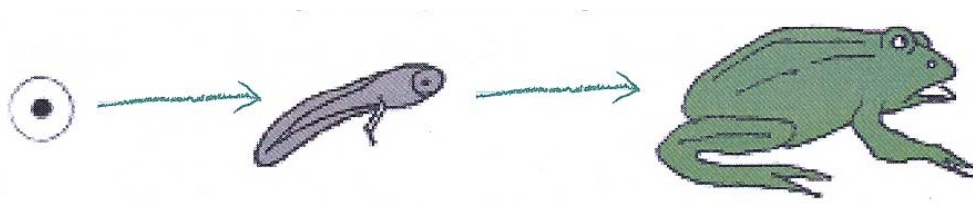


Another name for change is ...

Metamorphosis

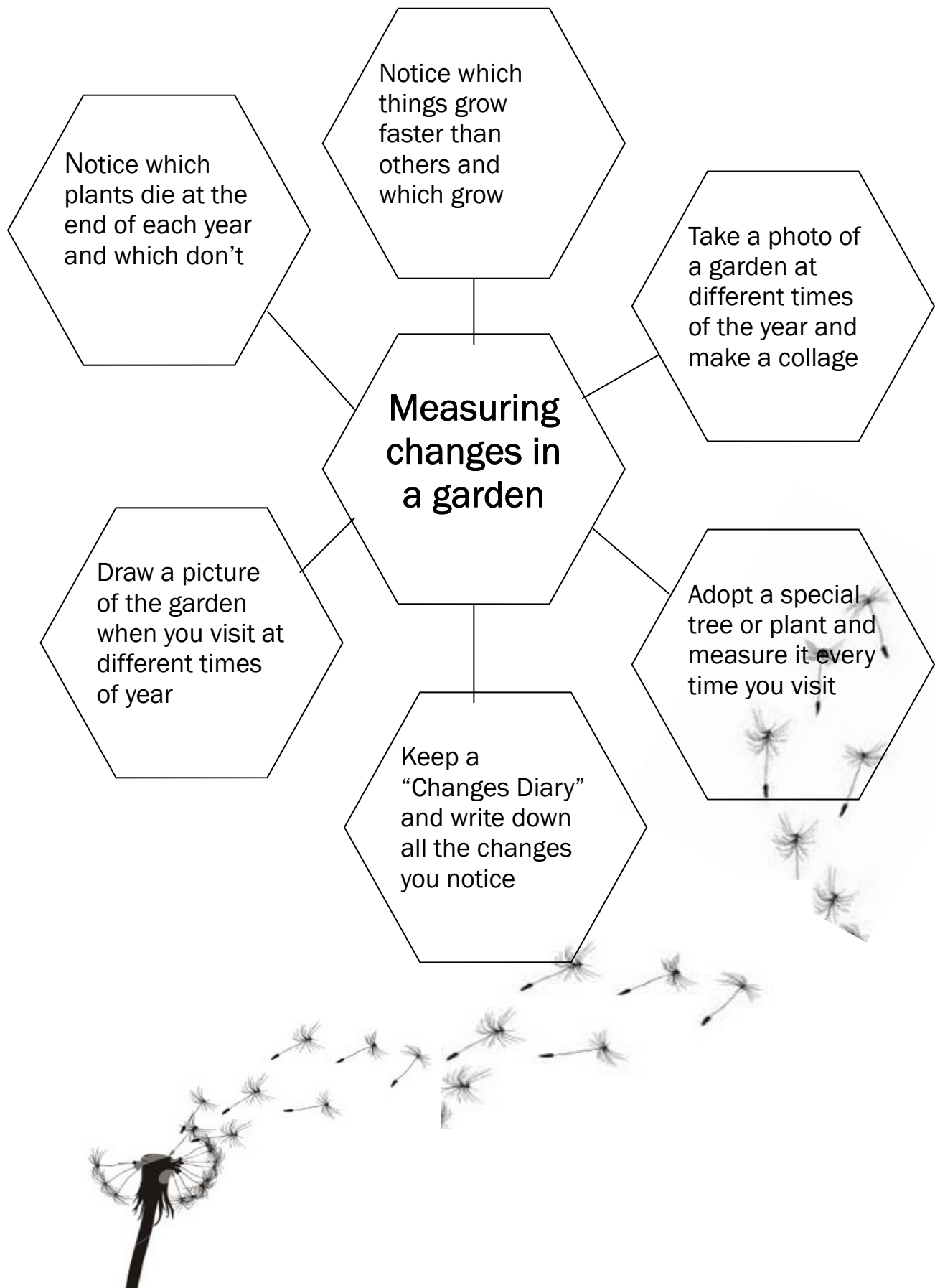


- Draw a “change line” for yourself like the frog or butterfly
- What does the change make you feel like? Do you like change?
- In what ways have you changed in your life?



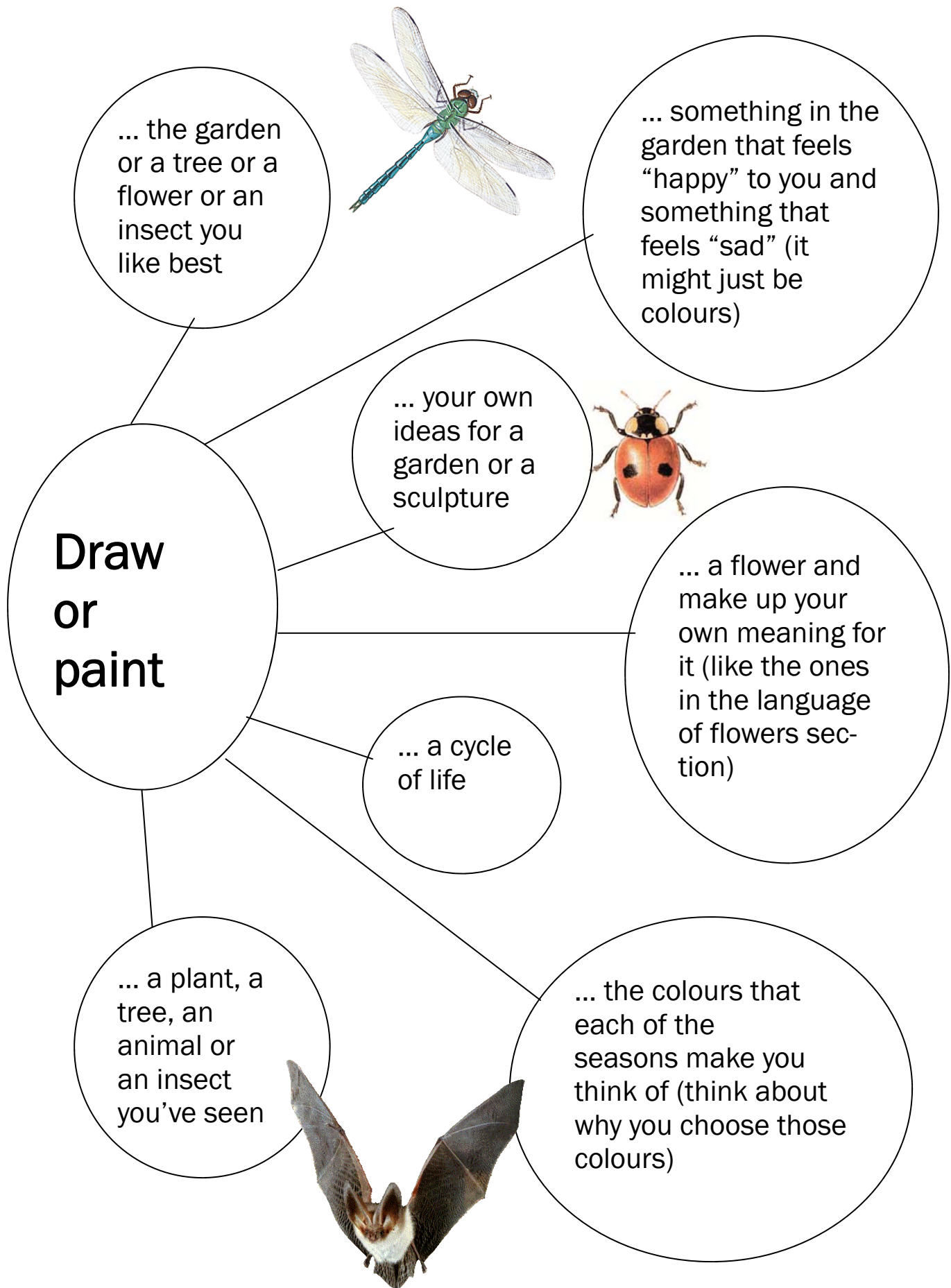
The dictionary says that metamorphosis means “a complete change of physical form or appearance”. It happens to many living creatures. What creatures can you think of in the garden that go through metamorphosis? Have a look at a compost heap? How is compost made?

A garden goes through a sort of metamorphosis through the seasons every year. What signs can you find in a garden that this is happening? Is there moss or fungus growing anywhere? Are the new and the old holly leaves the same? Is the path level? Are there berries where there used to be flowers?

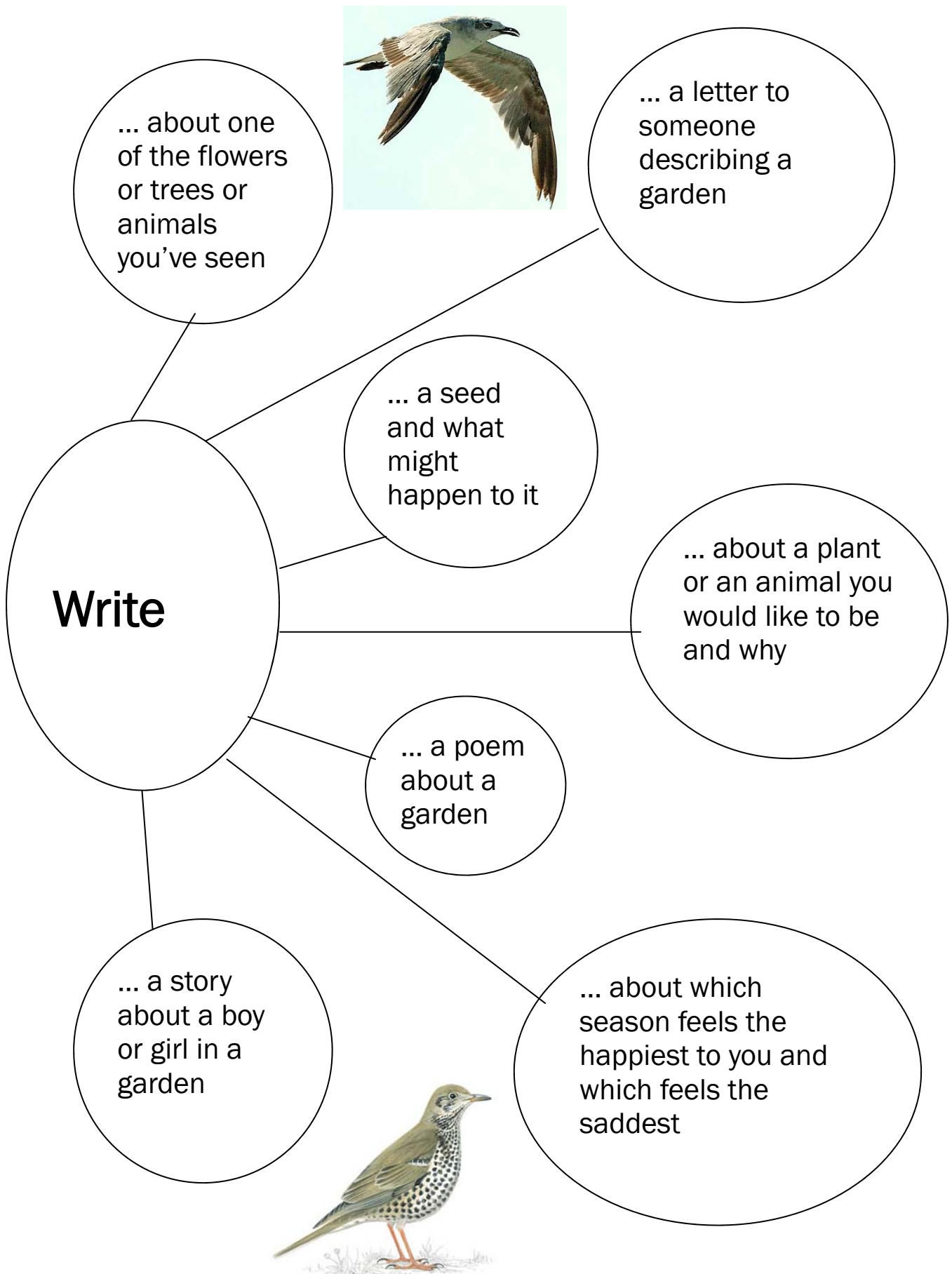


What's in the garden?

Sometimes drawing can help us explore what we're feeling?



Writing something helps to get feelings out from inside us—
here are some suggestions you might try...





All of us find it hard to deal with losses in our lives.
One reason is because whoever or whatever we've lost has brought us happiness and now it's gone.
Here's a way of exploring both sides of the same coin...

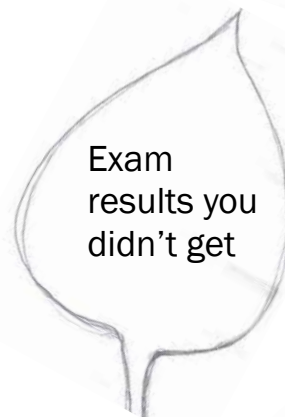
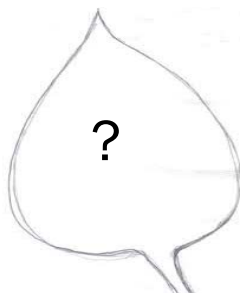
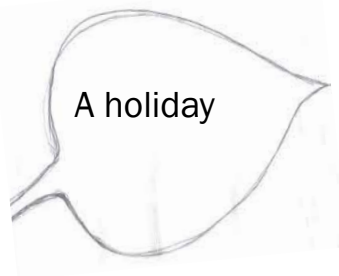
Memory and Loss Leaves

Choose a leaf

Think of someone or something you've lost in your life.
Draw or write your loss on the leaf

Choose another leaf

Think of a happy memory you have
Draw or write your happy memory on the leaf

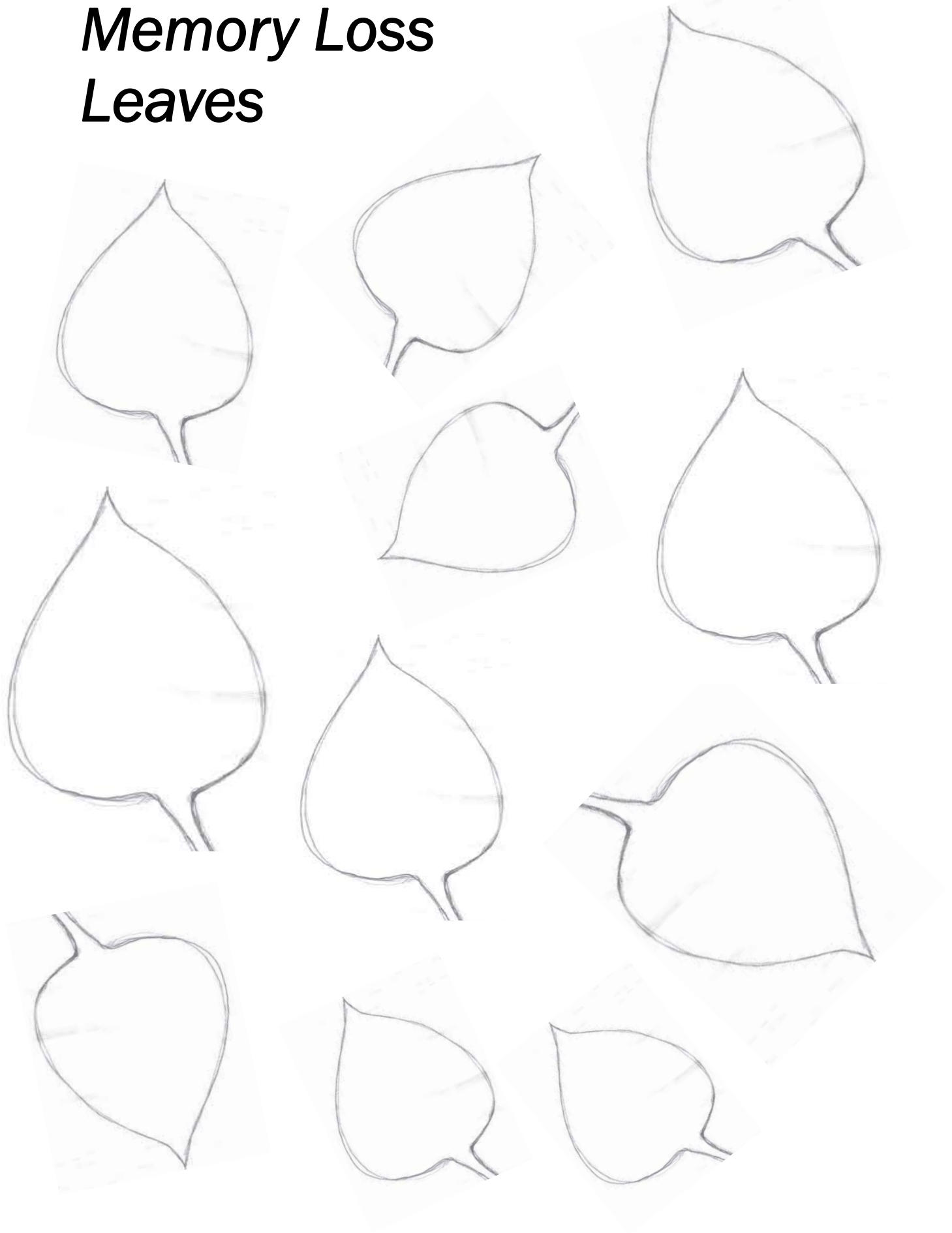


Cut out your leaves and stick them on the Memory and Loss Tree.

You could colour your leaves one colour for a loss and one colour for a memory.
See if you can get equal colours on your tree

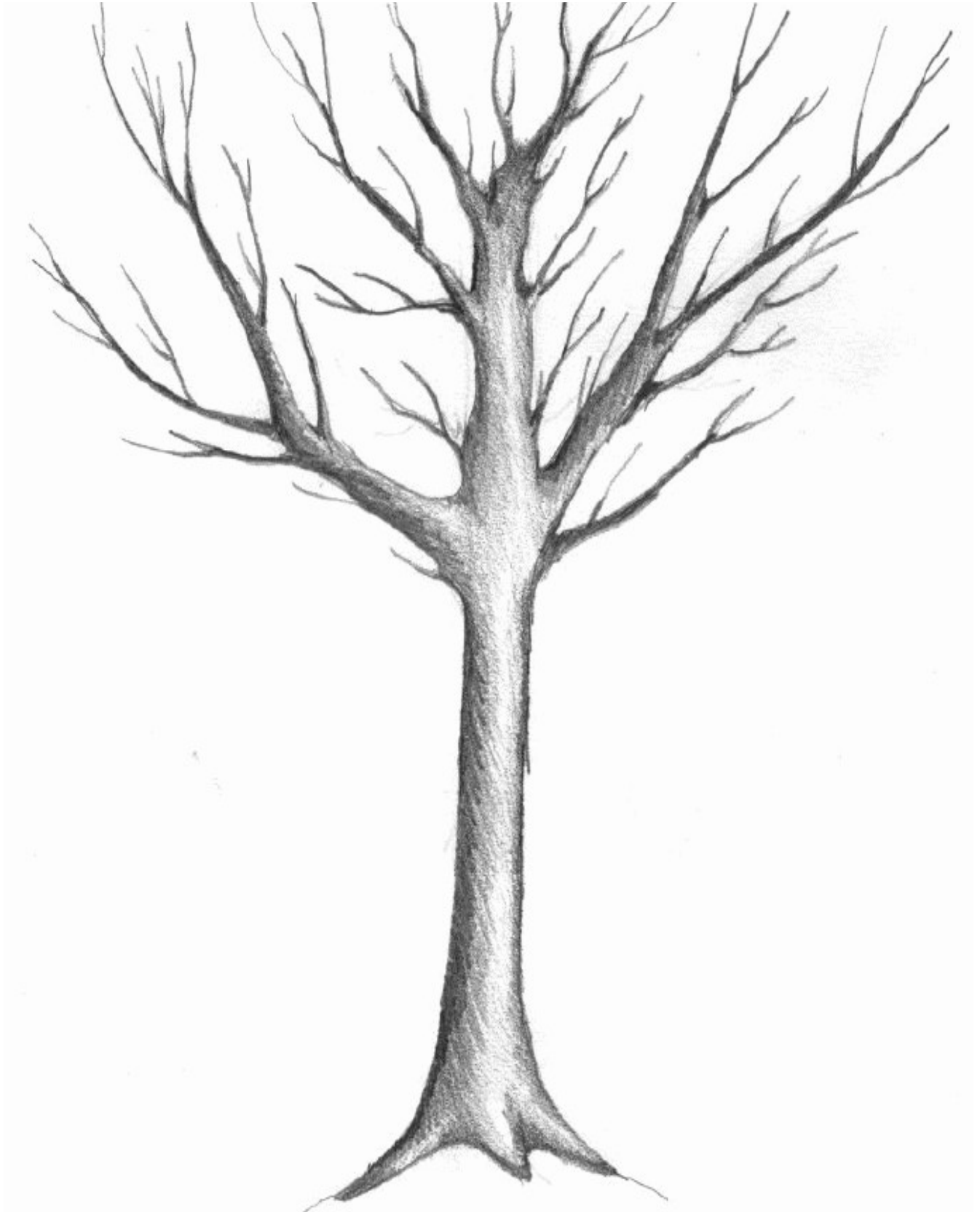
Memory Loss

Leaves



Here's a tree to stick your leaves on, or you could make one of your own...

Memory and Loss Tree





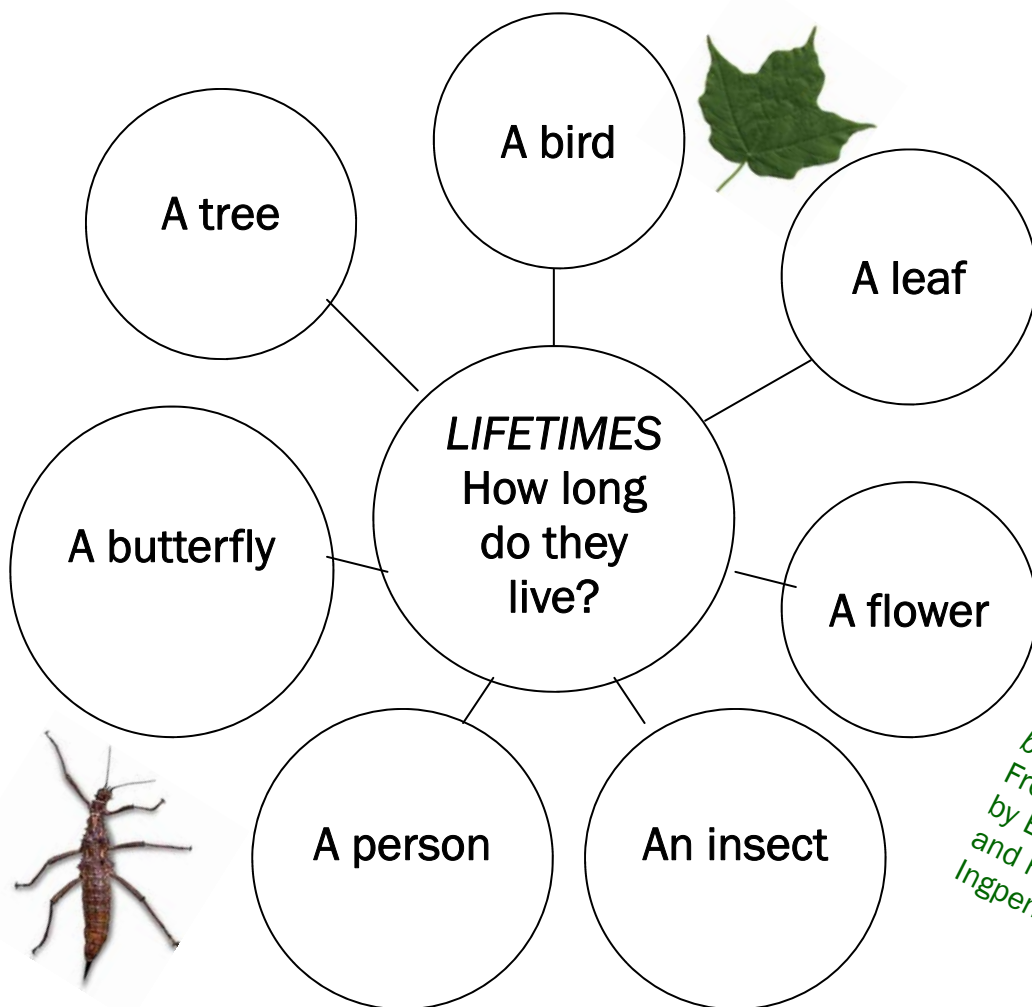
Lifetimes

Things around us all live for different lengths of time. We all find it hard when things don't work out as we expect them to, when lifetimes are cut short or when change happens when we don't expect it...

Nothing that is alive will live for ever. Just as everything and everybody is born, so everything and everybody will die.

The length of a lifetime depends on whose or what it is and what happens during it.

There are lots of different lifetimes in a garden—can you find out how long each of these lives?



*"You can't have living
without dying!
From Tuck
Everlasting by Natalie
Babbitt*

*"No matter how
long they are, or
how short,
lifetimes
really all are
the same. They have
beginnings and
endings and
there is living in
between"
From "Lifetimes"
by Bryan Mellonie
and Robert
Ingpen*

Are their life cycles short or long? Does it depend how big they grow? Does a birch tree live for the same length of time as an oak tree? Do all trees grow straight? If not, how could this affect the length of their lifetimes? Perhaps one creature's cycle of life is longer because another's is cut short.

Lifetimes may be cut short for lots of reasons. A butterfly might break its wing, a person might become very sick, a tree might get blown over in a storm.

Sometimes, especially in a garden, the most beautiful things live for the shortest time—like cherry blossom. Can you think of other things that only live for a short time? Sometimes people are born with a life-limiting condition that means they cannot live as long as others. When a lifetime has been cut short, we all have different ways of remembering. How do you remember?

"We cannot judge a biography by its length, by the number of pages in it, we must judge by the richness of the contents ... sometimes the 'unfinishes' are among the most beautiful symphonies." From Men's search for Meaning by Victor Frankl

Play a special song

Make a memory box

Write a message, tie it to a balloon and let it go

Do something special on a special day

*"To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace"
Luke 1:79*

*"A lily of a day,
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night,
It was the plant and flower of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures, life may perfect be"
From a poem by Ben Jonson*

When we are sad, the whole world can seem very dark but if we keep looking there is often light somewhere.

So if times feel dark to you, look for a light—sometimes you can find one in an unexpected place. Or you could make one of your own. Winter, the darkest time of year, is a good time to light a candle. Maybe you could light a candle and put it on your windowsill. Make sure to ask an adult if this is OK. Then as it gets darker, notice how your light gets brighter.

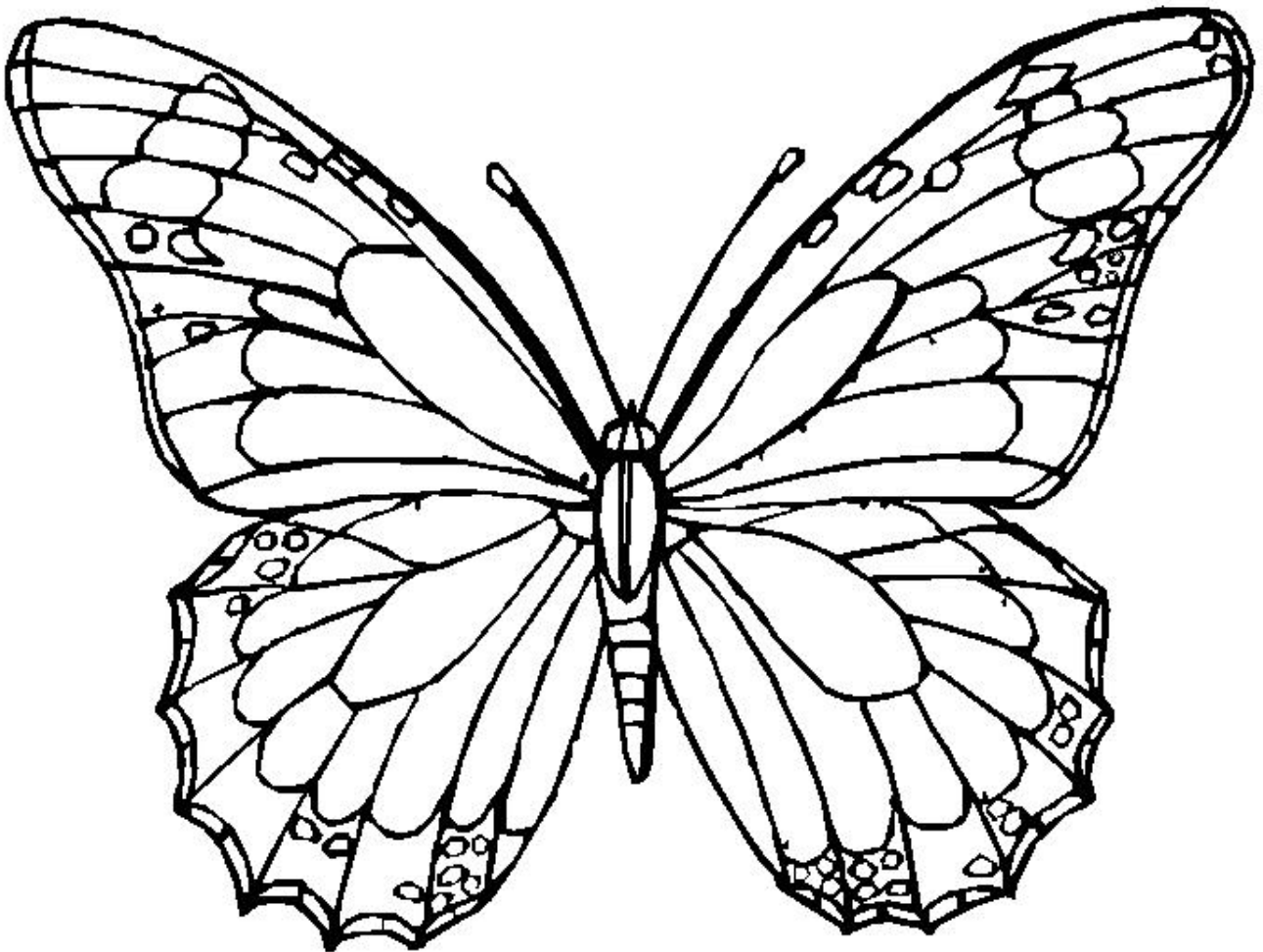


Colouring can be fun.
Even if you're feeling sad, it's OK to have fun.

Colouring can also give you time to think
and to work things out in your head.

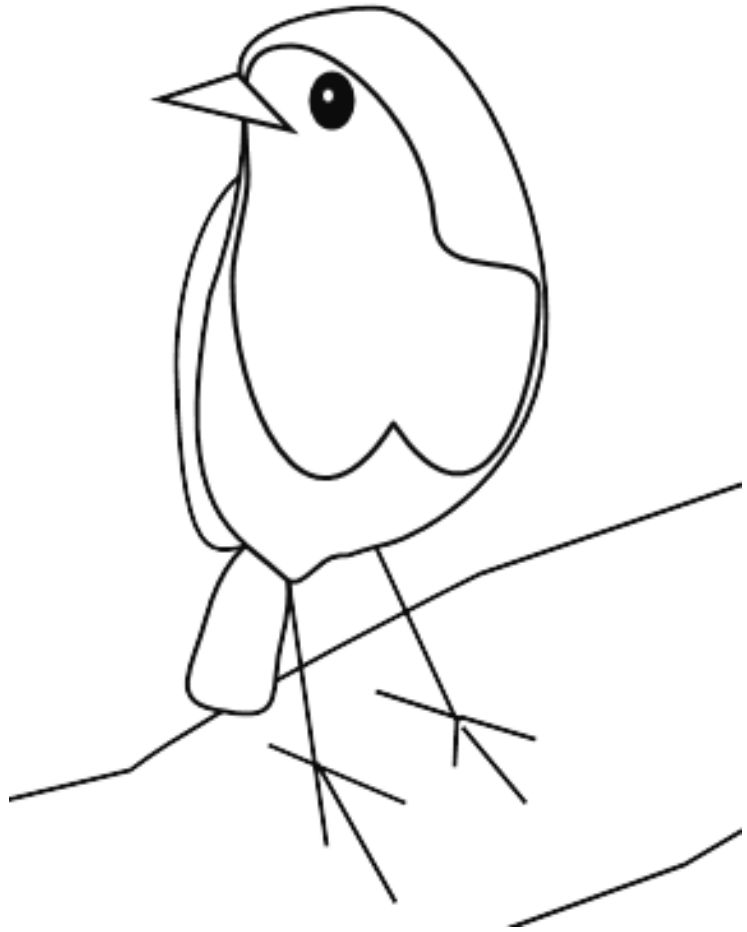
You can be as accurate as you like or go as mad as you like—there's no right or wrong!

Colouring

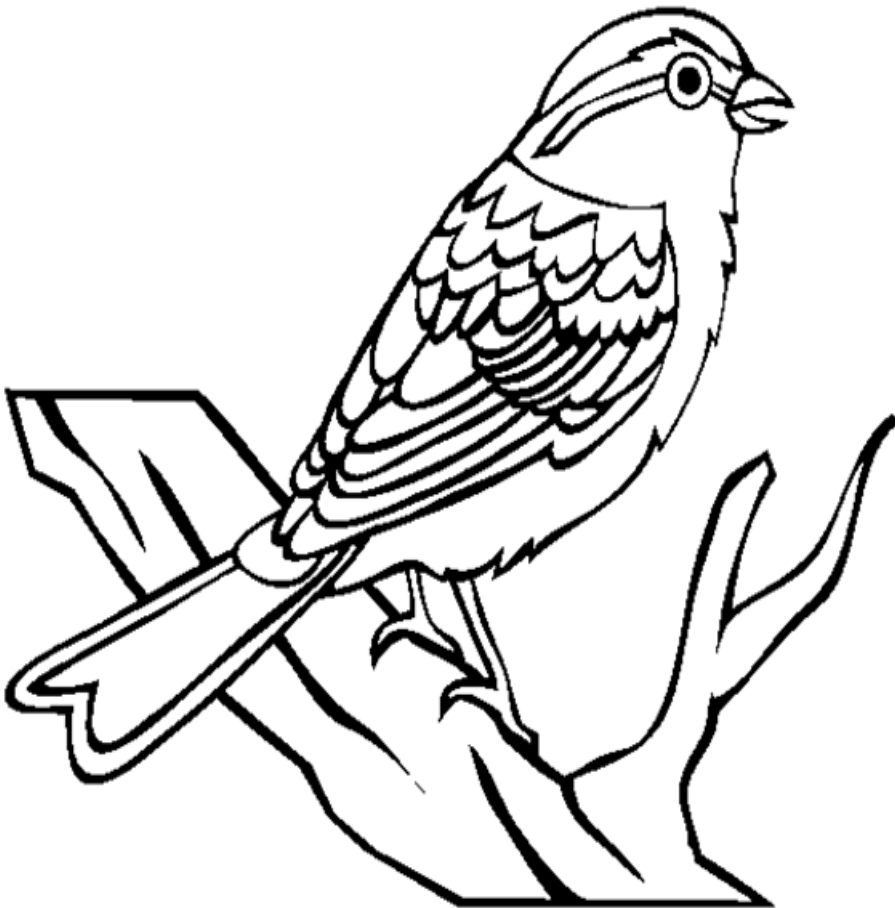


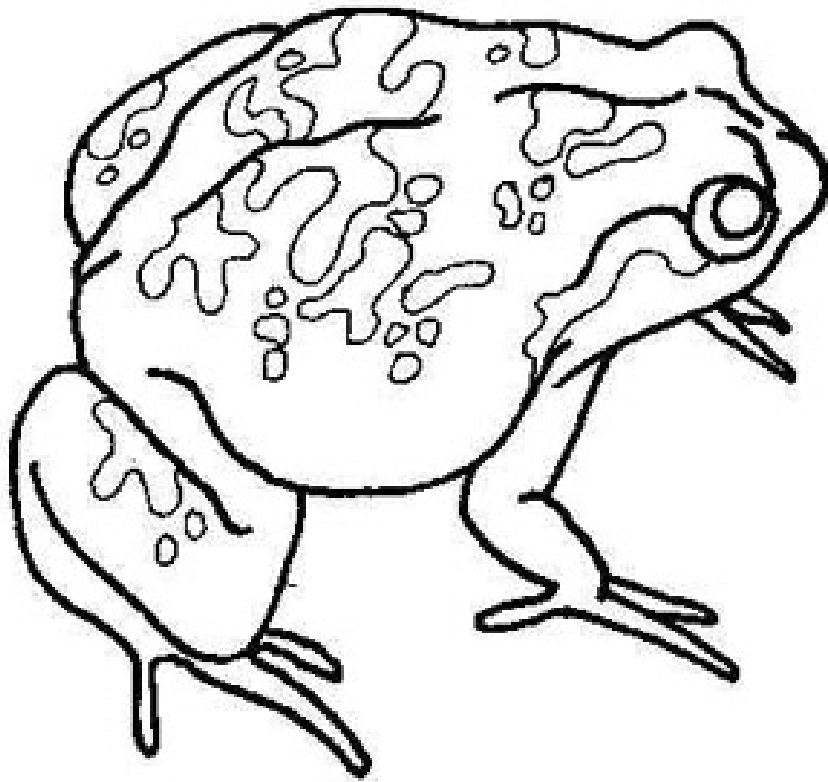
Butterfly

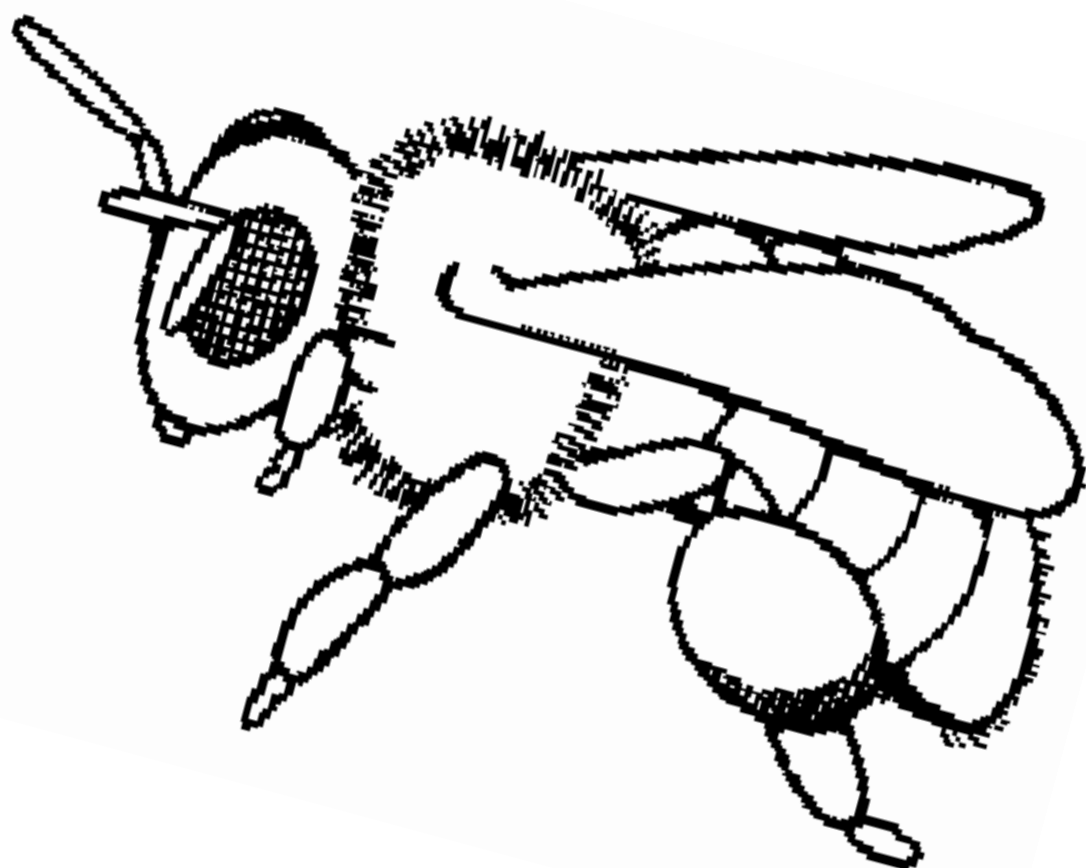
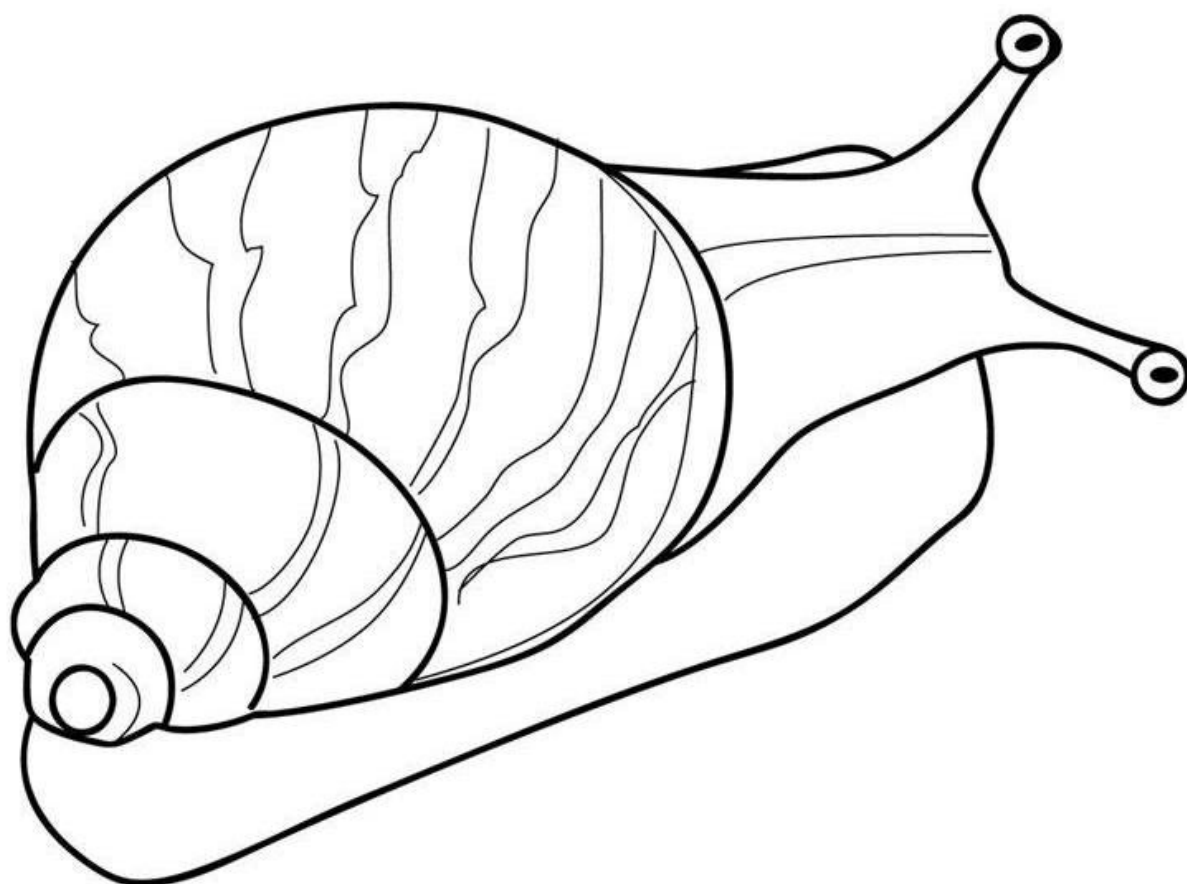
Robin
Erithacus rubecula



Sparrow
Passer montanus

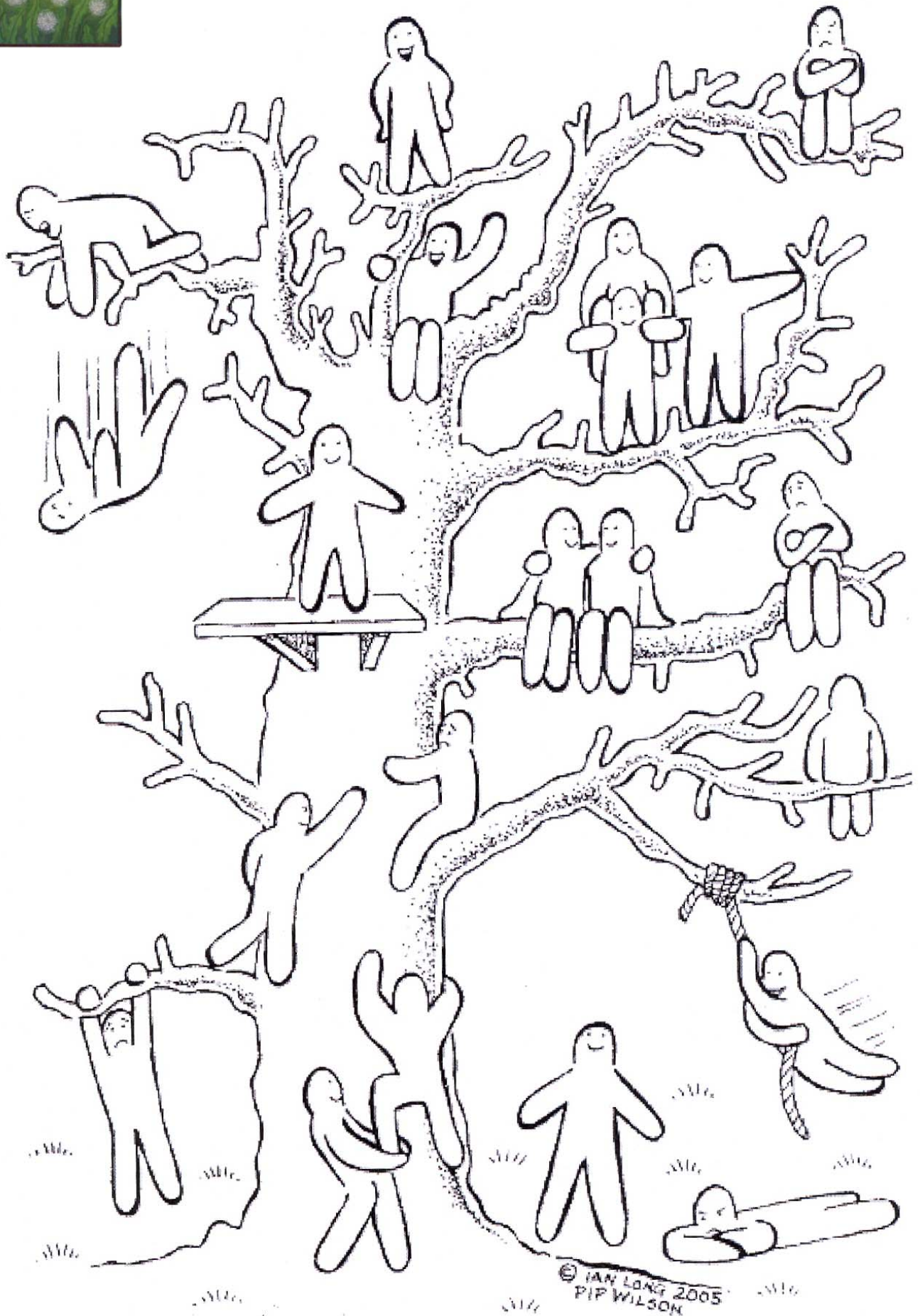








The Blob Tree



Putting Blobs to work

Many of us find it hard to say what we're feeling.

Sometimes it's easier to look at someone else and say if we feel the same as they look.

The Blobs might help...

- * Which Blob looks happy?
- * Which Blob looks sad?
- * Which Blob looks the oldest?
- * Which Blob looks the youngest?
- * Which Blob do you feel you are?
- * Which Blob would you like to be?
- * Which Blob would you not like to be?
- * Choose a member of your family and find a Blob that looks like them
- * Look at the Blob falling from the tree; what do you think it's feeling?
- * Which Blob would you like to have as a friend?
- * Which Blob would you try and stay away from?
- * Which Blob looks kind?
- * Which Blob looks unkind?
- * Look at the Blob hanging from the branch; what do you think it's feeling?
- * Which Blob has the most friends?
- * Which Blob looks lonely?



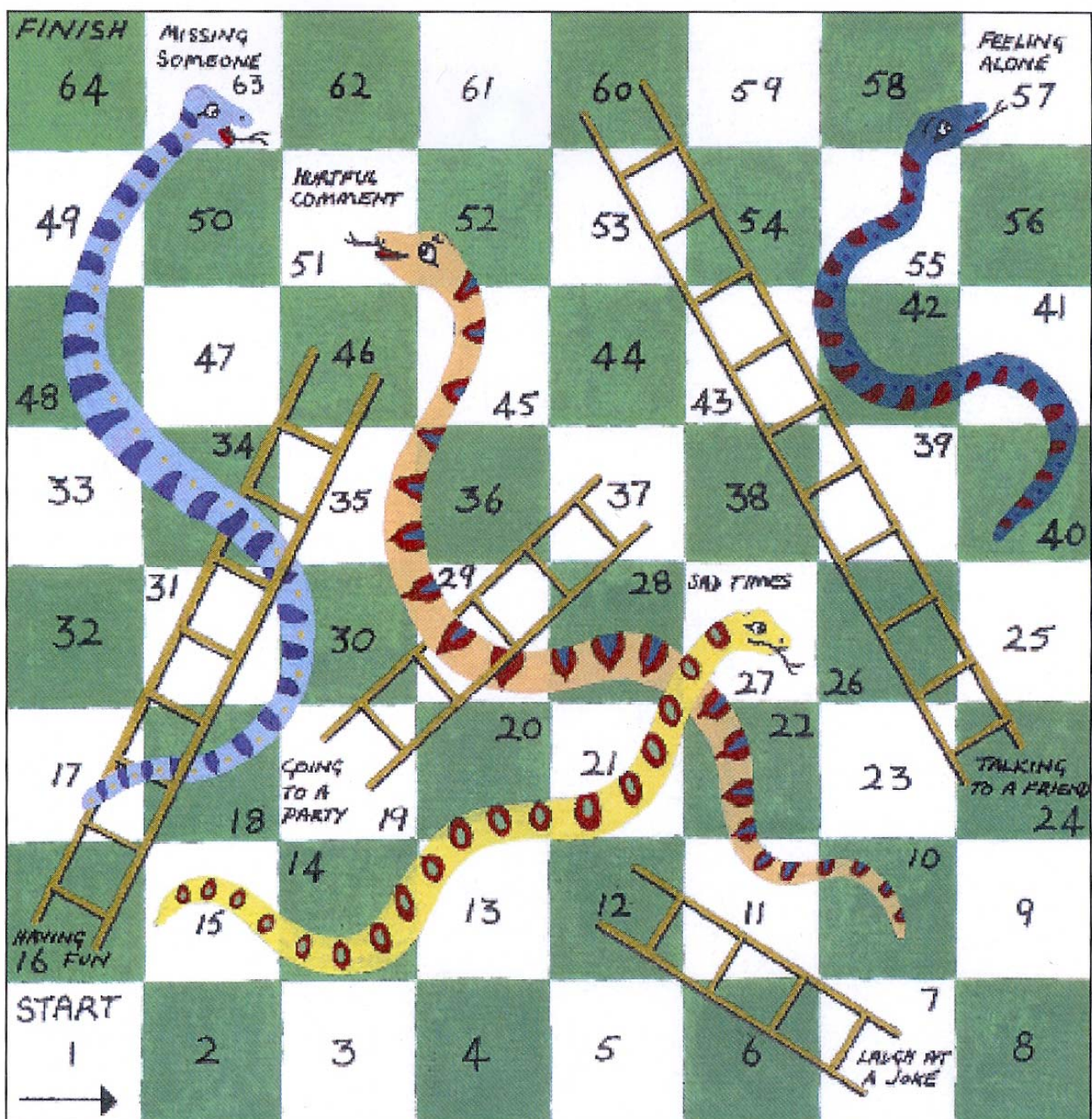
- * If you were a Blob, where would you be on the tree?
- * Look at the Blob lying on the ground; what do you think it's feeling?
- * Make up a story about these Blobs describing as many different feelings as you can
- * With your group or class, make a giant Blob Tree and a set of Blobs showing different expressions and feelings
- * Each morning, choose the Blob that is closest to you and stick it somewhere on the tree



Snakes and Ladders of Loss

Sometimes, if we're sad, it helps to think about what makes us feel better as well as what doesn't. Grab a dice and have a go at the Snakes and Ladders of Loss.

Are the reasons for your snakes and ladders the same or different?





Feelings and Seasons

This is another way of exploring feelings.

If sad things happen to us in one season, it may be a time when we always feel sad. If happy things happen we may feel happy at that time of year.

But all seasons are linked, one would not be possible without the other and one always leads to the next

Have a look at the words in the circle

- Draw a line from each word to whichever season you think it fits into
- Make up some of your own "feelings" words and do the same for them
- Pick a season and think of things that have happened to you in the months of this season—how do you feel about them?
- Which season are you looking forward to?

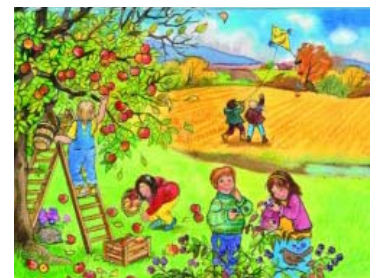
Spring



Summer



Winter



Autumn



"Just remember, in the Winter, far beneath the bitter snows, lies the seed that with the Sun's love in the Spring becomes the Rose"
From "The Rose"





Language Storms

Lots of us find it is difficult to talk about death and feelings of loss and to find the right words.

Here's an idea for a game that might help

Language Storms can be used with any number of people and in any number of different situations—in the car, in the classroom, on a walk, up a tree! You could visit a cemetery to find more words for “dead” or look on the internet for different kinds of loss or use a dictionary or thesaurus.

Everyone tries to think of as many other words as possible for the given word or subject. See how many you can get—you'll find some examples below in case you need them

- **Language Storm “DEAD”**

Kicked the bucket, six feet under, pushing up daisies, brown bread (Cockney rhyming slang), lost, asleep, gone away, passed away. There are also religious euphemisms like in heaven, with the angels, in a better place, taken from us, at peace, at rest, with God

- **Language Storm “LOSS”**

A favourite toy, a pet, a favourite game, a favourite piece of jewellery, falling out with a best friend, going to a different school to your friends, missing out on a holiday or a school trip, breaking up with a boy or girl friend, parents getting divorced, being fostered, being adopted, somebody dying, failing an exam, having your mobile stolen, moving house

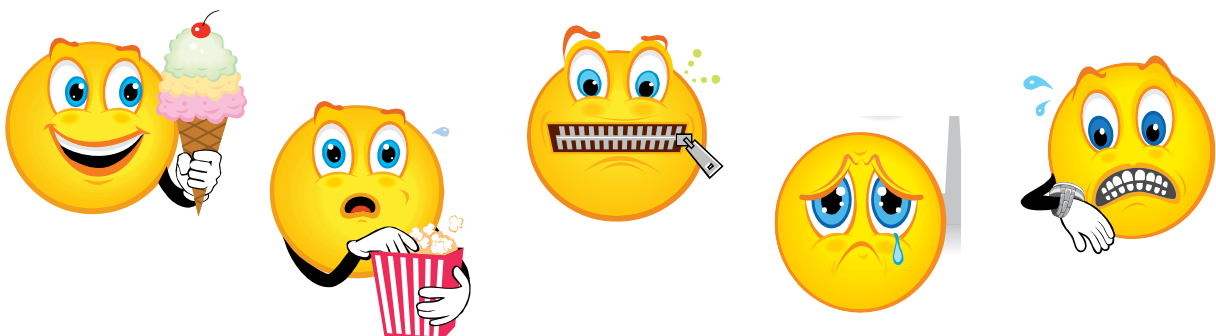
- **Language Storm “FEELINGS”**

Sad, happy, angry, pleased, scared, confident, numb, energetic, empty, excited, small, bouncy, unhappy, OK, alone, hopeful, warm, cold, high, low, smiley, depressed, quiet, noisy, tired, insecure, powerful, positive, frightened, jealous, popular

Language Storm Cards

Try this game ... you'll need some card

- Write your words on pieces of card
- Cut out and stick faces onto pieces of card
- Sort out which word goes with which face





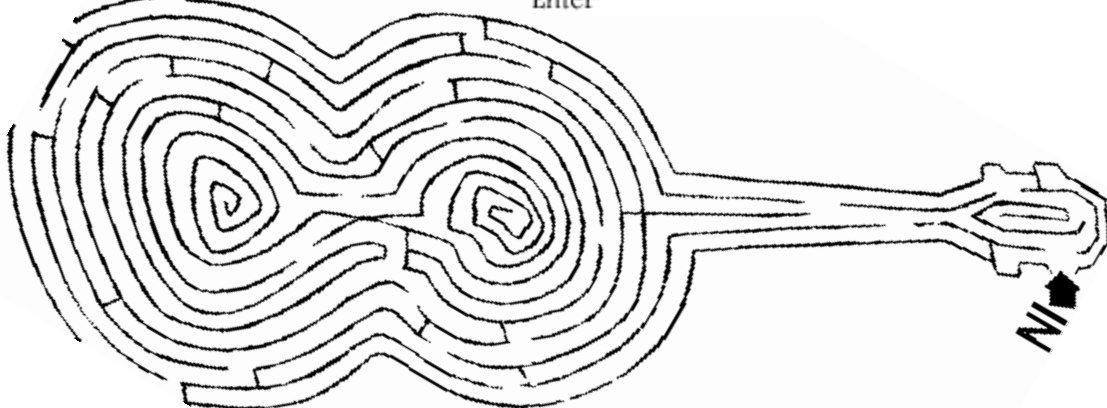
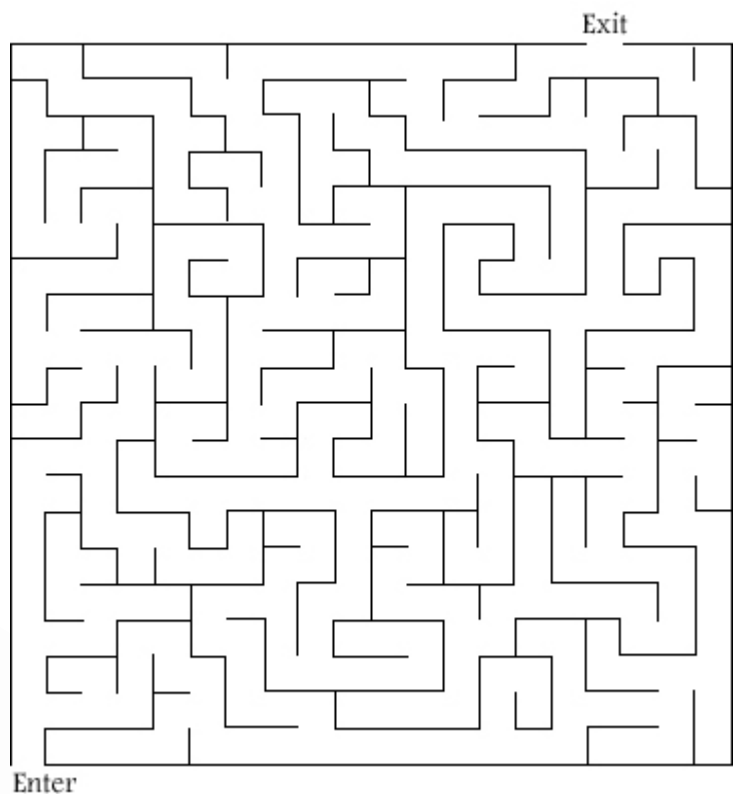
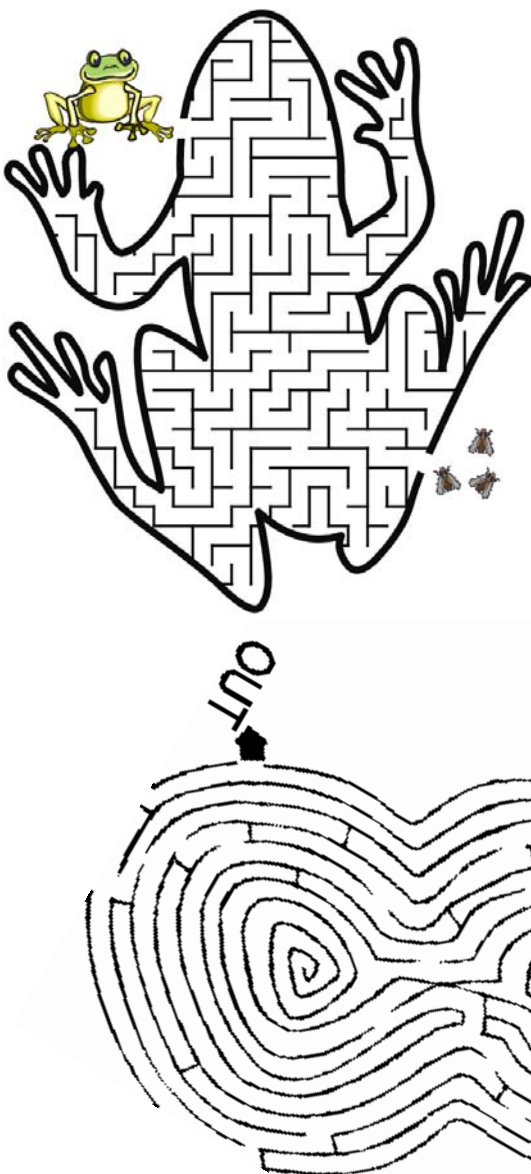
Labyrinths

When any of us feel loss in our lives, for whatever reason, the future can seem very hard, going on can seem full of difficulties. Exploring labyrinths by walking their path can help us to find ways to go forward...

A labyrinth is an ancient symbol for the journey of life. It is a sacred space combining the imagery of the circle and the spiral in one path. We can walk the path just as we walk life's journey. The path is never straight, we may not be sure which way it will take us but, if we keep going, we can be sure that we will arrive in the centre. There is only one starting point (like birth) and only one end (like death) and in between is living.

So are labyrinths and mazes the same?

* try these mazes



Now try this labyrinth....



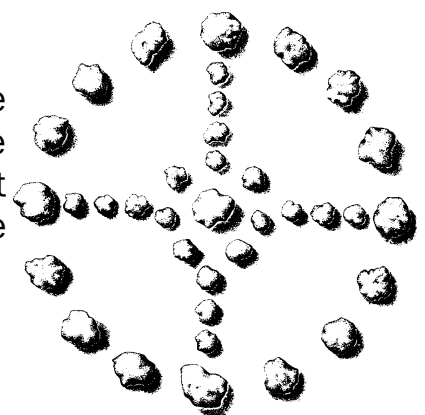
What differences
did you find?

Labyrinths have been around a long time ...

In greek mythology, King Minos of Crete had a labyrinth built in which to hide the Minotaur, a creature that was half man and half bull. The hero, Theseus, killed the Minotaur. He was helped by Ariadne who gave him a strong thread which he used to find his way back out of the labyrinth.

Since then, the ancient pattern of the labyrinth has been found in many sacred cultures around the world from the Hopi to the Australian Aborigines. Labyrinth designs were found on pottery, tablets and tiles dating as far back as 400 years. Many patterns are based on spirals from nature. In Native American culture it is called the medicine Wheel and Man in the Maze. The Celts described it as the Never Ending Circle. It is called the Kabala in mystical Judaism. It is also associated with Christianity.

If you want to draw a labyrinth, you start with a cross. The labyrinth design is found in many churches in Europe; one of the most famous is in Chartres Cathedral in France. It was built in 1200. It used to be “walked” (often on the knees!) in place of the actual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.



A Medicine Wheel

The Chartres labyrinth looks like this ...

Try following the path with a pen or pencil ...

Did you notice that the path takes you to and fro between the four quarters of the labyrinth? They represent the physical, emotional, spiritual and mental parts of us. Loss affects us all in all those four ways. We keep our balance by keeping these four aspects of ourselves in balance.

Labyrinths are giant walking mandalas. Mandalas and labyrinths are archetypal collective symbols that transcend all cultures and religions. Walking a labyrinth is a mini pilgrimage into your own self, an invitation to think about who you are and where you are in life.

The more a labyrinth is walked, the more powerful it becomes.

Ways to walk a labyrinth

There is no right way...

- you could try one of these ways or make up your own...

For these first three walks you will need to choose something to put in the centre of the labyrinth—a bowl, or basket or a bag or a box

The “Goodbye” Walk

Think of someone or something that you’ve lost in your life. It might be a person who has died, or a pet, or someone who has moved away or a favourite toy you have lost. Write a message to them or just write down their name if you like. Walk the path with your message and place it in the bowl and walk out. When everyone has placed their messages, decide together what you would like to do with them to let them go.

The “Memory” Walk

Design your own labyrinth in memory of someone. Either use an existing labyrinth and place landmarks of special things along the way or you could draw a finger labyrinth at home and draw your special landmarks. As you do the Memory walk, stop at each landmark and take care to feel what it means to you. Imagine if you could see the person once more for five minutes, what would you like to say to them? Write this down and place it in the centre of the labyrinth when you arrive. When you leave, decide how you would like to let your message go.

The “Letting Go” Walk

Find a stone or leaf and imagine placing into it all your problems, feelings, and thoughts that are not helpful to have at the moment. Hold the stone or leaf in your hand and concentrate on it as you walk the labyrinth. When you get to the centre, leave it there and walk out. Before you leave, decide what you would like to do with your stone or leaf to let it go.

The “Whatever” Walk

Walk, hop, skip, jump, follow the path in whatever way you feel like—fast or slow, forwards or backwards. If you’re with a group, some people could stand round the outside of the labyrinth and clap hands to a rhythm or play musical instruments or blow bubbles. When you finish your walk, swap places with one of the people round the outside till everyone has done the walk.

The “Score a Goal” Walk

The middle of the labyrinth is the goal. You choose what the goal is. Think of different goals—it might be helping someone once a day or scoring a goal in your next football match or passing a test or exam or walking a dog or it might be a secret goal—anything you choose. If you are with a group, you might decide on one goal for the whole group. Then everyone walks the labyrinth thinking of their goal.

The “Animal” Walk

Choose an animal or bird or insect and walk the labyrinth as if you were this creature. If you want, make the noises they would make.





Mandalas

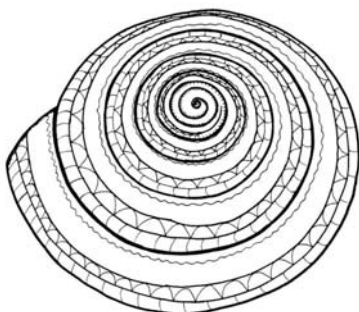
When loss happens and we feel pain, it can be hard to face what we are feeling. If we push our feelings inside us and suppress them, they can make life difficult for us in the future.

Creating a mandala or colouring one in is a way of looking at these feelings. Looking into the centre of a mandala is a way of looking into the centre of ourselves. Have a go!

Mandala is a Sanskrit word meaning “Circle that continues the Essence”. It also means “healing circle” or “wholeness”

The “circle with a centre” pattern is the basic structure of creation in the world as we know it. The planet Earth is part of a solar system which is part of the Milky Way galaxy. Each is a mandala that is part of a larger mandala. It is a pattern seen in astronomy, biology, geology, chemistry and physics.

It is a pattern also found in nature. Living things are made of cells and each cell has a nucleus; in all of them you will find circles with centres. The crystals that form ice, rocks and mountains are made of atoms; each atom is a mandala.



A garden is full of mandalas. See how many you can find. Have a look in flowers or at the rings found in tree trunks or the spiralling of a snail's shell. If you pick a toadstool and dry it out in an upright position over a piece of paper, it will release its spores to form a mandala. Even the tiniest things, sometimes invisible, are all part of the circle of life.

An audience is necessary to create a mandala. Where there is no “you” to see it, there is no mandala

Mandalas are used for meditation, prayer or healing and are always unique. They are usually made for a specific purpose or person, often for a specific ceremony, and then destroyed, like Buddhist sand paintings. Buddhists, Hindus and native Americans of the Southwest all use mandalas.

A subtle version can be found in the Christian ritual of communion. Christ's body comes in the form of a small, circular wafer. The bread of Christ is a tiny white mandala.

The labyrinths in early Christian churches like Chartres are mandalas you walk through. All sorts of spiritual groups use mandalas.



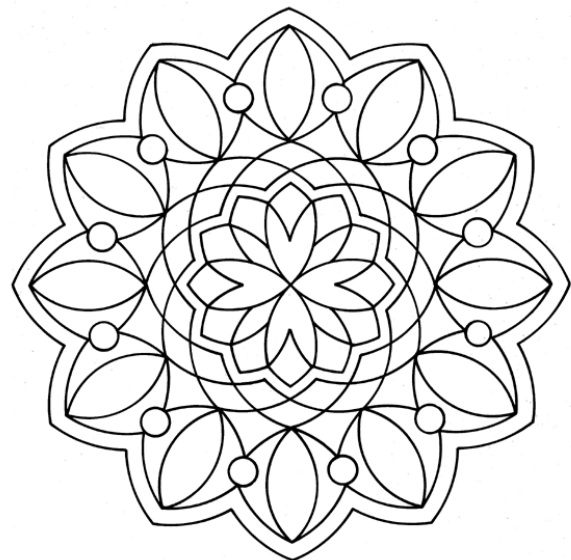
These days, making a mandala is often used in different situations to help people cope when life is hard.

Create your own mandala

- Draw a mandala based on something you've seen in a garden and colour it
- Make up your own mandala and colour it—when you do this, it is said you become part of the circle, the circle of life

Create a mandala labyrinth

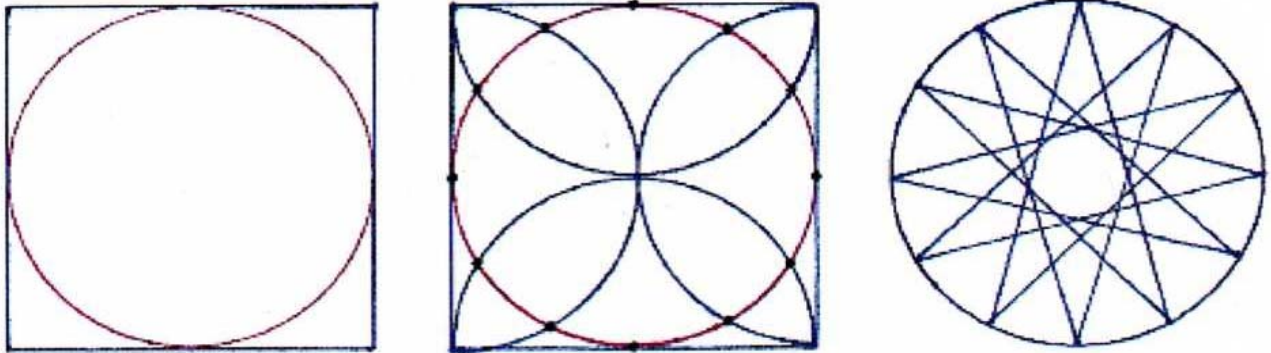
- With your group, laminate and hole-punch everyone's mandala and join them together with string
- Tape some strips of lining paper together to make a giant sheet—draw a
- labyrinth pattern on it
- Or mark out a labyrinth pattern with some thick string or rope
- Lay your mandala chain along the path to form your mandala labyrinth
- Walk it!



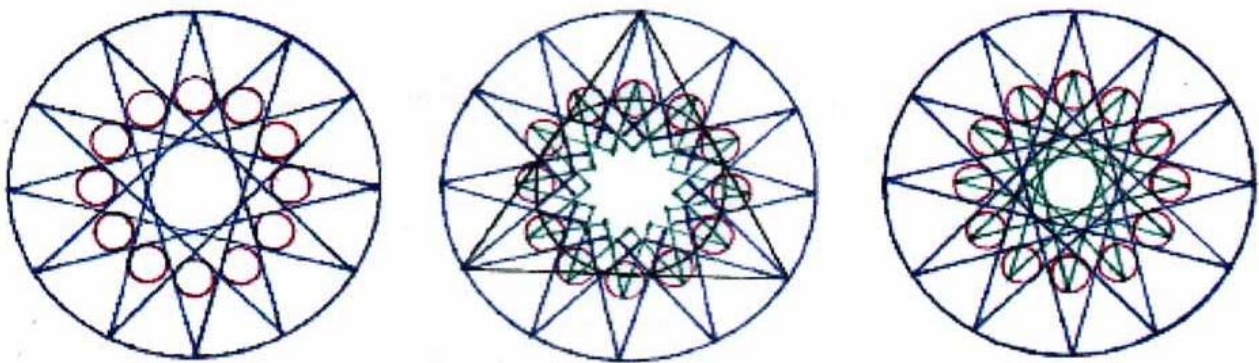
A mandala to colour in

The beautiful stained glass rose windows found in cathedrals are based on the mandala

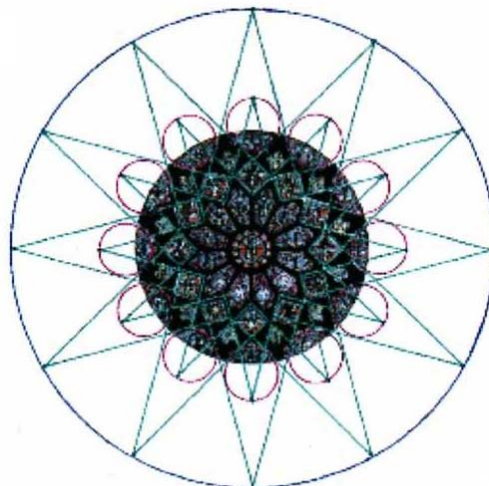
Here's how to create your own—connect every fifth point to create a dodecagram or 12-pointed star—then draw 12 small circles within the rays of the star like this



Find the outer point of each of these circles, and connect them to form a smaller dodecagram star. Then let the geometry show you what size the rose window should be by connecting every fourth point of the large dodecagram star to form an equilateral triangle. The circle inside that triangle will show you the window's size.



And you've made the pattern for the rose window in Chartres Cathedral!





The Language of Flowers

There are lots of stories attached to flowers and plants, lots of meanings and legends too, about healing or protection from harm.
Nature has a lot to teach us!

Spring Flowers

Bluebell—constancy



In the Middle Ages, bowmen used bluebell sap to glue feathers onto arrows. It's said the bluebell keeps her head bowed because she's ashamed of her link with war and death. The bluebell is magical as well as beautiful. Children who picked bluebells sometimes disappeared which is why we have the rhyme "In and out the dusky bluebells". They are also known as Deadmen's Bells so be careful picking them in case you hear them ring!

Dandelion—nature's oracle

The dandelion leaves have a jagged tooth-like edges so in medieval times it was called "dent-de-lion" or "lion's teeth" in French. An oracle is where you go to get a prophecy about the future. There are lots of ways dandelions can tell the future. The number of blows to get rid of the seeds tells the time, the number of seeds left after you have blown on them once tells how many years until your wedding day.



Forget me not – never forget time

A knight and his lady were walking along the banks of the river Danube when the lady saw a pretty blue flower floating on the water; she was sad that it would be swept away. The knight leapt into the water to get it for her but was dragged down by the current. As he was drowning, he threw his lady the flower and cried, “Forget me not!” Forever after the lady wound the flowers in her hair to remember him by. It’s said that if you plant forget-me-nots on the grave of someone you love, the plants will; never die as long as you live. Forget-me-nots are unusual because you can see both blue and pink flowers on the same stem. Some people think that blue is for boys and pink is for girls. So these little flowers symbolise the fact that, whoever you are, you will always be remembered.



Hawthorn – hope



Hawthorn is also called “May” because it flowers in May. It symbolises hope because it signals the return of Spring and Summer. A wreath of May blossom crowns the green Man, a pagan symbol for life. Maypoles used to be made of hawthorn. It’s sometimes called “Fairy Thorn” as it’s believed to be haunted by fairies. In Devon it’s thought unlucky to sit under a hawthorn because the fairies might cast a spell on you! However, if you hang hawthorn outside the cowshed, the cows will give lots of milk. The early Christians associated hawthorn with Joseph of Arimathea, owner of Jesus’s tomb. He was believed to have planted a hawthorn staff in the ground at Glastonbury. The staff sprouted to produce the “Holy Thorn” which was said to bloom on Christmas Day.

Summer Flowers

Daisy – feelings shared

Its old name was “bruisewort” because it was supposed to heal bruises. “Daisy” comes from the Old English name meaning “day’s eye” because a daisy opens its petals in the morning and closes them at night. Grab a whole bunch of daisies with your eyes shut and then count them – that will be the number of years you have to wait before getting married. It’s lucky to step on the first daisy of the year and when you can put your foot over seven daisies at once, then Summer has arrived!



Lavender – distrust

The name comes from the Latin word “lavare” which means to wash. The Romans used lavender water to bathe in. It can be burned to keep away witches and brides were told to bring it into the house to protect against cruelty. People believed that snakes would hide underneath the plant which is how it got its meaning.



Rose – love

The Romans used rose petals to throw over their floors, their heroes, even their wine! They also decorated tombs with roses as they believed this would protect them from evil spirits. Cupid, was given a rose by his mother, Venus, and he gave it the god of silence. It is said that a rose carved into a ceiling meant that the conversation in the room should be secret (it should be “sub rosa”, the Latin for “under the rose”). Venus and Cupid made the rose the flower of love. It’s said that if you wrap a rose in a clean piece of white paper on Midsummer Eve and keep it until Christmas and then wear it in a buttonhole, the first person who admires it will marry you.



Rosemary – remembrance

The Latin name, “Rosmarinus” means “dew of the sea”. It was so called because it grew around the

Mediterranean and became associated in ancient Rome with Venus, the goddess of love, who was

supposed to have sprung from the sea foam.

Because of that legend, it became the symbol of faithfulness and was used at

weddings and funerals, where it was thrown into coffins so that the dead person would be

remembered. Shakespeare wrote, “There’s

Rosemary, that’s for remembrance”, One

legend compares its growth with the height of Jesus saying that after thirty three years it

grows broader, never higher. Christians called

rosemary the “Holy Herb” because Mary draped her cloak over a rosemary bush

during the Holy

Family’s flight to Egypt, turning the colour of

the flowers from white to blue. It was burned

in medieval hospitals as an antiseptic. It’s

said that “where rosemary flourishes, the

woman rules!”



Autumn flowers

Blackberry – envy

Blackberries have become associated with the devil in France and England. In France it's thought that the blackberry is black because the devil spat on it. In England it's said that picking blackberries after Michaelmas Day (29 September) is bad luck as the devil left a curse on them when he fell in some brambles and hurt himself. If you want to cure rheumatism, boils, rickets, whooping cough and eczema, then crawl through a bramble bush backwards!

I'll tear your dress and cling and tease,



Crab Apple – ill nature



The name “crab” comes from an old Scandinavian word “skrab” meaning “scrubby” which is what crab apple trees are like. Peel an apple in one and throw the complete peel over your left shoulder. The letter it forms is the initial of your future husband or wife! When Shakespeare talked about crabs, he didn't mean seaside ones, he meant crab apples.

*When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl.*

Sloe – difficulty

The sloe is the fruit of the blackthorn and it's said that Jesus' crown of thorns was made from blackthorn. Perhaps this is the reason it is supposed to mean disaster if you bring it into the house. Folklore says that blackthorn blooms at midnight on Christmas Eve. Sloes are too bitter to eat but they are used to make wine and sloe gin. They come from the same family as wild plums.



Winter flowers

Holly – am I forgotten?

Holly has always been said to protect against evil. A holly hedge round a field or house wards off bad luck. Belief in the strength of holly comes from the fact that its evergreen leaves and winter berries were linked with eternal life. Cows were said to thrive if a sprig of holly was left in the cow shed! A piece of holly in the pocket will protect against lightning. Some say holly leaves are prickly up to about three metres high and then, where there is no need for protection, they are smooth – rather like in life when things are painful, if you keep on growing through them, smoother times are on the way.



Ivy – friendship

The ancient Greeks gave newly-weds wreaths of ivy so that they would stay faithful to each other. Bacchus, the god of wine, wore an ivy wreath to stop himself getting a hang-over! Ivy growing up the walls of a house will protect it from evil. In Shropshire it was believed that drinking from an ivy cup would cure a child from whooping cough and an alcoholic would be cured if he drank from a cup made of ivy wood. If a man places ten ivy leaves, gathered on Hallowe'en, under his pillow it's said he will dream of his future bride.



Willow – sadness

In the fifth century BC, the Greek doctor, Hippocrates, wrote that chewing the bark of a willow tree could relieve pain and fever (no wonder squirrels don't get headaches!). In 1829, salicin was successfully isolated from willow bark and soon aspirin was developed from it. In the twentieth century over one trillion aspirin were swallowed throughout the world! You can grow a whole new willow tree by taking a stem and sticking it in moist soil. The hormones in willows cause rapid growth and the native Americans made "willow water" to pour on their plants. You could try it to by collecting willow twigs, trimming the leaves and soaking them in water; then pour the liquid on your new plants or soak them in it overnight before planting and watch them grow!

Snowdrop – hope

snowdrops are one of the first flowers to appear in the years and so they symbolise the hope of new life. They sometimes even appear before the snow has melted. Some say they look an angel on a snowflake. Medieval monks used them for healing wounds. Some say it is bad luck to pick them and bring them indoors and young girls who pick them before Valentine's Day (February 14) will not marry that year.



Crocus – abuse not

The monks grew them to make a powerful sleeping pill. You had to be careful not to take too much which is how it got its meaning. It used to be used to make saffron which is how the town in Essex called Saffron Walden got its name. It took 4320 flowers to make one ounce of saffron so it was very expensive and only used by rich people. Both the ancient Greek writers Homer and Ovid talk of the dawn being "saffron robed".



Poems and Prayers

Aim for the moon. Even if you miss it you will land among the stars
Les Brown

The Little Ship

I stood watching as the little ship sailed out to sea. The setting sun tinted her white sails with a golden light ... and as she disappeared from sight a voice at my side whispered, "She is gone".

But the sea was a narrow one. On the farther shore a little band of friends had gathered to watch and wait in happy expectation. Suddenly they caught sight of the tiny sail and, at the very moment when my companion had whispered, "She is gone", a glad shout went up in joyous welcome, "Here she comes".



They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.

From *We will remember them* by Laurence Binyon

In mind a constant thought, in heart a silent sorrow!

From Waterbugs and Dragonflies by Doris Stickney

Down below the surface of a quiet pond lived a little colony of water bugs. They were a happy colony, living far away from the sun. For many months they were very busy, scurrying over the soft mud on the bottom of the pond.

They did notice that every once in a while one of their colony seemed to lose interest in going about with its friends. Clinging to the stem of a lily, it gradually moved out of sight and was seen no more.

'Look!' said one of the water bugs to another, 'One of our colony is climbing up the lily stalk. Where do you suppose she is going?'

Up, up, up it went slowly. Even as they watched, the water bug disappeared from sight. Its friends waited and waited but it didn't return.

'That's funny!' said one water bug to another.

'Wasn't she happy here?' asked a second water bug.

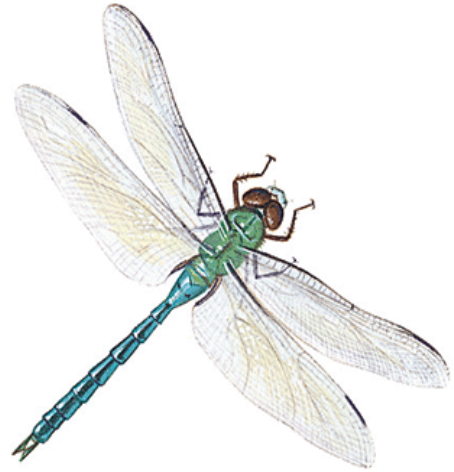
'Where do you suppose she went?' wondered a third.

No one had an answer. They were greatly puzzled.

Finally one of the water bugs, the leader of the colony, gathered its friends together. 'I have an idea.

The next one of us who climbs up the lily stalk must promise to come back and tell us where she went and why.'

'We promise', they said solemnly.



One spring day, not long after, the very water bug who had suggested the plan found himself climbing up the lily stalk. Up, up, up he went. Before he knew what was happening, he had broken through the surface of the water, and had fallen onto the broad, green lily pad above.

When he awoke, he looked about with surprise. He couldn't believe what he saw. A startling change had come to his old body. His movement revealed four silver wings and a long tail. Even as he struggled, he felt an impulse to move his wings. The warmth of the sun soon dried the moisture from the new body. He moved his wings again and suddenly found himself up above the water. He had become a dragonfly. Swooping and dipping in great curves, he flew through the air. He felt exhilarated in the new atmosphere.

By and by, the new dragonfly lighted happily on a lily pad to rest. Then it was that he chanced to look below to the bottom of the pond. Why, he was right above his old friends, the water bugs!. There they were, scurrying about, just as he had been doing some time before.

Then the dragonfly remembered his promise: 'The next one of us who climbs up the lily stalk will come back and tell where he or she went and why'.

Without thinking, the dragonfly darted down. Suddenly he hit the surface of the water and bounced away. Now that he was a dragonfly he could no longer go into the water.

'I can't return!' he said in dismay. 'At least I tried, but I can't keep my promise. Even if I could go back, not one of the water bugs would know me in my new body. I guess I'll just have to wait until they become dragonflies too. Then they'll understand what happened to me, and where I went'.

And the dragonfly winged off happily into his wonderful new world of sun and air.

Some say love, it is a river
that drowns the tender reed.
Some say love, it is a razor
that leaves your soul to bleed.
Some say love, it is a hunger,
an endless aching need.
I say love, it is a flower,
and you it's only seed.

It's the heart afraid of breaking
that never learns to dance.
It's the dream afraid of waking
that never takes the chance.
It's the one who won't be taken,
who cannot seem to give,
and the soul afraid of dyin'
that never learns to live.

When the night has been too lonely
and the road has been too long,
and you think that love is only
for the lucky and the strong,
just remember in the winter
far beneath the winter snows
lies the seed that with the sun's love
in the spring becomes the rose.



He who plants a garden plants happiness
Chinese proverb

For every flower that opens in your garden, another
wound is healed in your heart

More things grow in the garden than the gardener sows
Spanish proverb

A garden is a friend you
can visit any time

Bread feeds the body, indeed, but flowers feed also
the soul
The Koran

From Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt

“Know what happens then?” said Tuck. “To the water? The sun sucks some of it right out of the ocean and carries it back in clouds and then it rains, and the rain falls into the stream, and the stream keeps moving on, taking it all back again. It’s a wheel, Winnie. Everything’s a wheel, turning and turning, never stopping. The frogs is part of it, and the bugs, and the fish, and the wood thrush too. And people. But never the same ones. Always coming in new, always growing and changing and always moving on.”



That’s the way it’s supposed to be. That’s the way it is. You, for instance. A child now but someday a woman. And after that, moving on to make room for the new children.” Winnie blinked and all at once her mind was drowned with understanding of what he was saying. For she – yes, even she – would go out of the world willy-nilly someday. Just go out, like the flame of a candle, and no use protesting. It was a certainty. She would try very hard not to think of it, but sometimes as now, it would be forced upon her. She raged against it, helpless and insulted, and blurted out at last, “I don’t want to die.” “No,” said Tuck calmly. “Not now. Your time’s not now. But dying’s part of the wheel, the right there next to being born. You can’t pick out the pieces you like and leave the rest. Being part of the whole thing, that’s the blessing. You can’t have living without dying.”

Life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one
From The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran

*In mind a constant thought,
in heart a silent sorrow!*

To everything there is a season and a
time for every purpose under heaven
Ecclesiastes 3:1

"Lord of all hopefulness, lead us into the future in hope;
Lord of all eagerness, make us fervent in the service of others;
Lord of all kindness, help us to reach out in love to others;
Lord of all gentleness, surround us and all whom we love,
both living and departed, with your presence and your peace.
Amen"

Lord, please give me courage and strength to
walk alone, So I may turn each stumbling
block into a stepping stone. Amen



"Lord, make us instruments of your peace
where there is hatred let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is discord, union;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy;
for your mercy and your truth's sake.
Amen"



My Story

These young people have been kind enough to share their stories with us. Sometimes reading about what others have been through and how they kept going can make us feel less alone. Sometimes it can give us ideas for something we'd like to write...

Lewie Jones by his sister **Charlie**

My first memory of Lewie is at the hospital the day after he was born. He was really small, swamped by a mountain of blanket. To be honest I didn't even see him at first.

I was looking in the little cot not expecting him to be on the big bed. I couldn't believe that I had waited all this time and yet when Mum said Charlie do you want to hold him I almost said NO. He looked too small and fragile to hold, my hands suddenly felt like big planks of wood. I was very annoyed when my then 4 year old sister held him with complete confidence and looked as though she had been doing it for years. I didn't want to hold him, but I didn't want anyone else to either. So when other visitors turned up, I was worried that someone would drop him. They didn't. And soon I was able to bath him, change his nappy, feed him, put him to bed, take him on walks, push him in the swing. I use to lift him on Imogen's lap so she could take him down the slide. And together me and Imogen entertained and spoiled him like he was the king. King Lewie! I remember once hiding behind the door watching him and Imogen playing both of them giggling. Then Lewie would notice me and climb down backwards off the sofa and toddle over for a hug.

Lewie blue shoes he became because of the colour of his shoes. And on birthdays (with the help of Mum) we would receive a birthday card from him with a blue foot print. Dad would take him to work with him to his work shop, where he would sit at Dad's desk and eat Jaffa cakes. He would toddle round with a spanner in one hand and a soggy biscuit in the other. "He is just like you" people would say to Dad and he couldn't help but smile.

"Where's ma boy" Dad would say as he came in from work and out Lewie would run into Dads arms. "My Daddy" Lewie would shriek, but soon he would be off playing in the garden with his ca-cars.

Saturday 30th of July 2005. Mum decides we need to go out

"Charlie can you get Lewie in the car?"

"I want to" Imogen moaned.

"Imo you can't reach" I replied.

As I got Lewie in the car a feather flew down and landed on his nose. I tickled him and told him to blow, but he didn't understand and licked it instead. I laughed and just brushed it away.

When we returned home from shopping, I got Lewie out his car seat the same feather was caught on Lewie's T-shirt. Oh look Lewie its back.

That evening Lewie was really moaney and restless, Mum was cooking so I put him in his highchair but he screamed out!! and started retching. Mum grabbed him and stripped him down to his vest, he was really sweating.

"Is it a fish bone?" Dad said

"I don't know!" Mum shouted

"Just call an ambulance

"There's no time we'll drive ourselves!"

Mum held Lewie, he kept retching and his eyes started rolling in his head. It was very scary but also very exciting. We got to the hospital and the lady rushed us straight through. They wired him up to this machine to check his oxygen. They needed him to eat to see if anything was stuck in his throat but he wouldn't, he just wanted to sleep.

Me and Imo were starving so Dad took us home. At about half nine Mum called Dad to say she had to stay the night and could he bring some spare clothes. Imo wanted to go with Dad but I said I would be all right at home. You have no idea how much I regret not going back, to see him one last time. I just stayed at home and watched t.v. typical teenager too lazy to get up. I will never forget that.

The next day family started to arrive for a BBQ. Dad explained that Lewie and Mum were in hospital but should be home soon. At about twelve o'clock Dad was told to come to the hospital. I said I was coming too but Grandma told me not to, that made me really angry. At 2 o'clock Auntie Lisa came and told me and Imogen to come with her to the hospital. She had been crying. I kept thinking I know Lewie is poorly but you don't need to cry he is coming home soon, then I thought maybe he has died then I told myself off for being so stupid. We arrived at the hospital and Imogen noticed Thomas the Tank Engine stickers on the wall.

"I'm glad Lewie is in this bit, he will like these."

Lisa didn't answer. Then I felt crushed. I didn't want to go any further. I knew it I could feel he had died. Just by looking at my Auntie's face I could tell.

Imogen's little voice seemed distant and it didn't feel like me walking, I looked at Imogen and I knew what was about to happen and I felt so guilty, like it was my fault, she still had no idea what was about to happen.

We got to some big double doors and walked straight through, but a nurse stopped me. "I'll bring your Mum and Dad out."

"No !!" I screamed and I felt myself push past her, I hated her. I felt like saying how dare you. I completely forgot about Imogen, I knew she was still holding my hand. Mum and Dad came to the door, I knew Mum had been crying, but I had never seen my Dad cry before, it was a shock. I looked into my Dad's eyes and he looked away.

"What!" nobody answered

"What's happened, what's wrong!!" I shouted.

"He's gone" Mum said.

"Your joking!" I screamed "Stop it now your joking -no!!!"

Looking back I feel terrible. I was completely selfish. I left Imogen, the nurses that tried to comfort me I shrugged off.

"Do you want to hold him?" Mum asked. I snatched his body out of her arms and stupidly thought it would be like a fairy tale and if my tears fell on his cheek he would wake up. I sang Barney and Thomas the Tank Engine and the Wiggles over and over in my head hoping he would hear and wake up. We spent ages there. Aunty Lisa took Imo home. My Nanny and Grampy came to the hospital and the police- CID. I wasn't allowed to listen when they interviewed my Mum and Dad which made me so angry.

"My Boy" Dad whispered "He's just asleep"

Finally we had to leave. Saying goodbye was the hardest thing that I have ever had to do. We left Lewie with Dog Dog his favourite soft toy. We got in the car. I sat next to his empty car seat, his juice bottle and coat, as I got out the car I noticed something white on the floor, Yes it was the feather our feather. I still have it. I always will!

For days afterwards the house was full of friends, family, coroners, doctors and health visitors and so many cards and flowers. The phone didn't stop!! At first I was excited to see everyone and I rushed to answer the door, but soon it really hit me why they were here and I was sick of hearing Mum say the same story and I just wanted them to all go away. Dad stayed up stairs he couldn't face seeing everyone.

At his funeral there were so many people they had to stand at the back. His Nursery helpers, people from my Mum's and Dad's works, people from my school I hardly ever speak to. It was lovely.

I am sad because I lost
my remote control car.
Ariful



I don't like heaven
because my cat and
fish didn't come
back from there.
Felix

“After my mother died” by Richard Penn

My family consists of me, my brother Josh (9), my dad and my mum, who tragically died of a sudden asthma attack on the 7th November 2004 when I was 12 and my brother just 7.

It was only after that day that I finally understood the true meaning of the phrase, “You never truly appreciate something until it is gone.” It was then that it dawned on me the full scale of work and time my mother had put into our family and community around us, whether it be being PTA Chairman or decorating the new bathroom. After my mother died, our whole lifestyle collapsed around us. When someone dearly loved and close to you dies, you do not just worry about the fact that you will never see the individual again, you also have to try and contemplate the prospect of the future, and how your life has been turned upside-down with your normal daily routine from waking up, to going to bed being all altered.

When I lay in bed in the following weeks after my Mother’s death, I lay there worrying anxiously about what was to come. Who was to look after Josh and I when my dad was still at work? How could my brother and I produce an evening meal every day that was substantial enough to live off?

However, now we have adapted and changed to fit and suit the constraints of our everyday lives and also what has happened. Now we have a daily routine that works and I think all of us have realised what has occurred and contemplated its consequences. The difficulties nowadays are minor and are to do with, say, picking me up or my brother up from school when we have a rugby match after school. So I have to miss my normal bus and find someone to look after my brother during the school holidays when our child minder is away. But now I am getting the age where I can look after Josh and take more responsibility for myself.

Over time what I think is improving is our realisation of my mum’s death and our adaptation to living with its problems. For example now I don’t really worry about the future any more than anyone else. And her death does not affect my lifestyle nearly as much as when my mother first passed away.

I lost my dog. I dropped
my dog on the road. I felt
worried because I did not
know where it was.
I found it. I was happy.
Jericho



I lost my Mum. I felt
scared. I thought I
wouldn't see her again.
I found my Mum at
Argos. I felt happy.
Lucy



My brother Jamie died.
I was sad. My sister
wasn't born then.
I really loved Jamie.
I'm sad Jamie's in heaven.
Luke





Information about Loss and Bereavement

- * Research has shown that children need truthful clear answers to their questions
- * They need loving and supportive acceptance of whatever their reactions might be
- * They need opportunities to talk about how they're feeling if they want to and also to know that it's OK not to talk
- * They need their familiar daily routine to continue as much as possible
- * It is helpful to talk about the person who has died or gone away rather than attempting to carry on as if nothing has happened
- * If someone has died, it is much more helpful to use the words "died" and "dead" than euphemisms like "gone to sleep" or "gone away" or "lost"
- * Children in general are unable to stay with their grief for any length of time; it is quite normal for them to dip in and out of it like jumping in and out of a puddle. They may be sad one minute and off out to play the next
- * Special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas and Mothers' and Fathers' Days may be especially difficult; an acknowledgement of this can help
- * At school, if curriculum activities centre round one of these days or around death or loss, it's helpful to discuss this in advance and give choices and alternatives when possible
- * At school, the provision of somewhere quiet to go if things get too much can be helpful
- * At school, bereaved children may find it hard to concentrate so need to be shown understanding; however they also need to be treated the same as everyone else as far as possible

Some thoughts on children's understanding of death and their possible reactions

All children and young people, like adults, will react in different ways

Under 5 years

Children under 5 years old cannot understand that death is final and irreversible so will ask the same questions over and over again and keep expecting the person who died to reappear. They may be concerned about the physical well-being of the dead person. They think in very concrete terms and can easily be confused by euphemisms. They can think of time as a moving circle. Their daily routines are made up of repeated events, so with death, we live, we die, we live again. Their thinking can also be magical, if they can have imaginary friends who come and go, then so can a dead person. They may be more angry and destructive than usual, have more tantrums or revert to more babyish behaviour. They are very sensitive to separation so routine and reassurance are very important.

5 – 11 years

Children gradually begin to understand that death is irreversible and will happen to everyone but they still resist the idea that it will happen to them (or in some cases become obsessed that it might). This denial may lead them to act as if nothing has happened. On the other hand, they may become obsessed by the subject of death and be unable to think about anything else. They may feel guilt and need reassurance that their behaviour did nothing to cause the death.

Feelings may run deep and need help to surface; looking at photos together, talking about memories, talking to friends and teachers can help. They begin to get a sense of the injustice of things. They begin to see themselves less as the centre of the universe and begin to understand others' feelings more; they may try to protect family members from more pain by keeping their feelings to themselves. Or there may be other reasons for keeping feelings secret; they may feel bad about a feeling. For instance, if the death has been inevitable, they may feel a sense of relief that they can now get on with their own lives. Children react in countless different ways. They can only tolerate grief in small doses and will then need to change the subject, to escape, to go and play.

Teenagers

Teenagers' feelings of grief are complicated by their attempts to become independent adults whilst needing the support they received as children. They too may feel guilty as if they are in some way responsible for the death. If a parent has died, they may try to take on their responsibilities. Their understanding that death is universal and inevitable means it's also personal and teenagers may need to keep this thought at a distance. They may feel very fearful. They may find it easier to confide in friends rather than family members.

Signs of Grief

These are some of the more common signs of grief in children and young people

- Crying
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nightmares
- Bed wetting
- Attention seeking
- Becoming more aggressive
- More clingy
- Worried
- Fearful of change
- Sick
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Having relationship problems or eating problems
- Having suicidal thoughts

In most cases, with love, support and continued routines, these symptoms will pass. However, they should become a cause for concern if a child becomes withdrawn and ceases to be able to function on a daily basis. Specialised help should then be sought.





Support Groups

A Different Journey

www.careforthefamily.org.uk/adj

Support for those who have lost a partner at a young age and their children (Christian but open to all faiths and none).

ACT

(Association for Children with Life-threatening or Terminal Conditions and their Families)

www.act.org.uk

Support and information for families.

Adult Sibling Grief

www.adultsiblinggrief.com

Support for those who have suffered the loss of an adult sibling.

ARC (Antenatal Results & Choices)

www.arc-uk.org

Support and information to parents throughout the antenatal testing process.

Association of Child Psychotherapists

www.acp.uk.net

Will provide child psychotherapist within the NHS in their area although will need referral from GP.

Babyloss

www.babyloss.com

An online resource for anyone whose life has been touched by pregnancy loss, stillbirth or neonatal death.

BACP

(British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy)

www.bacp.co.uk

Information on counselling and psychotherapy in the UK.

Bereaved Parents Network

www.careforthefamily.org.uk/bpn

Support for parents who have lost a child. (Christian but open to all faiths and none).

British Institute of Learning Disabilities

www.bild.org.uk

Provides books that explain death and bereavement to children with learning disabilities.

C.A.S.T.S

(Caring for All Suicide Trauma Survivors)

www.casts.org.uk

Support and counselling to anyone bereaved or affected by suicide.

Cancerbacup

www.cancerbacup.org.uk

Up-to-date cancer information, practical advice and support for cancer patients, their families and carers.

Careline

www.ukselfhelp.info/careline

Confidential crisis telephone counselling for children, young people and adults.

CHASE Hospice Care for Children

www.chasecare.org.uk

Support for life-limited young people and their families.

Child Death Helpline

www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

A freephone service for all those affected by the death of a child - not a counselling service.

Childhood Bereavement Network

www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Information, guidance and support services for bereaved children, their families and carers.

Childline

www.childline.org.uk

Free national helpline for children and young people in need of help or counselling.

CLIC Sargent

www.clicsargent.org.uk

Support for children suffering from cancer and leukaemia and their families.

Cruse Bereavement Care Helpline

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Support for anyone who has been bereaved.

Cruse Bereavement Care Youth Line RD4U

www.rd4u.org.uk

A website for children and young people aged between 12 and 18 who have been bereaved.

F.S.I.D.

(Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths)

www.sids.org.uk

For parents whose babies have died as a result of Sudden Infant Death.

Grief Encounter

www.griefencounter.com

Helping bereaved children and young people rebuild their lives after a family death.

Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service

www.jvisit.org.uk/jbcs/index.htm

Support for the Jewish Community.

Lone Twin Network

www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/26739811

Support for anyone whose twin has died, at whatever stage of life.

Meningitis Research Foundation

www.meningitis.org

Support and information for those bereaved as a result of meningitis or septicemia.

Miscarriage Association

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Support and information for those suffering the effects of pregnancy loss.

National Council for One Parent Families - Lone Parent Helpline

www.loneparenthelpline.info

Practical help and information.

Papyrus

www.papyrus-uk.org

Resources and support for those dealing with suicide, depression or distress - particularly teenagers and young adults.

RoadPeace

www.roadpeace.org

Support for those who have been bereaved as a result of a road crash.

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org.uk

A confidential listening service.

SANDS Helpline

(Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society)

www.uk-sands.org

Support for parents who experience the loss of a baby during or after the birth.

SIBBS

www.tcfsiblingsupport.org.uk

Support for people who have suffered the death of a brother or sister.

SOBS National Helpline

www.supportline.org.uk

Confidential emotional support for children, young adults and adults.

The Child Bereavement Charity

www.childbereavement.org.uk

Support and resources for all those affected both when a child dies and when a child is bereaved.

The Compassionate Friends (UK)

www.tcf.org.uk

Support for bereaved parents and their families when a child has died.

Winston's Wish

www.winstonswish.org.uk

Support, information and guidance for bereaved children, young people and for those caring for bereaved families.

Youth Access

www.youthaccess.org.uk

Provides young people with access to a counsellor nearest them, UK-wide.



Book List

Lifetimes

The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children

by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen
ISBN: 9780553344028

Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine

Your Activity Book to Help when Someone has Died

by Diana Crossley
ISBN: 9781869890582

Waterbugs and Dragonflies

Explaining Death to Young Children

by Doris Stickney
ISBN: 9780826464583

Michael Rosen's Sad Book

by Michael Rosen
ISBN: 9780744598988

Badger's Parting Gifts

by Susan Varley
ISBN: 9780006643173

Gentle Willow

A Story for Children About Dying

by Joyce C. Mills
ISBN: 9781591470717

Goodbye Mog

by Judith Kerr
ISBN: 9780007149681

When Dinosaurs Die

A Guide to Understanding Death

by Laurence Kransy Brown et al
ISBN: 9780870293214

Sad Isn't Bad

A Good-Grief Guidebook for Kids Dealing with Loss

by Michaelene Mundy and Robert W. Alley
ISBN: 9780870293214

Help Me Say Goodbye

Activities for Helping Kids Cope When a Special Person Dies

by Janis Silverman
ISBN: 9781577490852

Tuck Everlasting

by Natalie Babbitt
ISBN: 9780747564171

Secret Friends

by Elizabeth Laird
ISBN: 9780399233340

Red Sky in the Morning

by Elizabeth Laird
ISBN: 9780434947140

Cloudland

by John Burningham
ISBN: 9780099711612

Remembering Grandad

by Sheila and Kate Isherwood
ISBN: 9780192723680

Hold my Hand Grandpa

by A.B. Herold
ISBN: 9780192790149

I Miss You

by Pat Thomas
ISBN: 9780764117640

Drop Dead

By Babette Cole
ISBN: 9780099659112

Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope

by Donna O'Toole
ISBN: 9781878321285