

# SPARKING IMAGINATION

**Promote agency and encourage students to activate and articulate their own thoughts by putting them in the role of artist. Ready. Set. Create!**



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# CUDDLY CHARACTERS

**Materials Needed:** each student should have one stuffed animal/comfort object of their own (if they don't have one, any item of significance will work)

Use this activity to bring students' cuddly best friends to life!

1. First, have students make space enough for them to move and explore. Make sure each student has a "cuddly," and if they don't, allow them to choose an object from the learning space!
2. Start by guiding students through an exploration of their cuddly friends as puppets. Have students make their stuffed animals breathe, move and walk through space. Ask them: *How does your "cuddly" walk? What sounds do they make? How do they jump? How do they sit?*
3. Once students have spent some time discovering the ways their cuddly friends move, tell them they are going to become their cuddly friends for this activity.
4. Now, lead students in a full-body shake out to reset themselves. Once the shake out is over, they have become their cuddly friends.
5. Ask them questions similar to those in **Step 2**, this time focusing on the way they physically embody their characters. *If your "cuddly" was human, how would it get from place to place? Would it move slowly, or quickly? Does your "cuddly" skip, hop, walk, run? What sounds does it make when it moves? Is its voice high or low? What does your "cuddly" pay attention to? How is it feeling? Is it excited, nervous, confident?*
6. Allow students enough time to feel comfortable embodying their cuddly friends. They should all feel as though they've had sufficient time to explore and experiment, giving life to their fluffy pals.
7. Then, let students know that in a moment, they will each get the opportunity to introduce themselves as their "cuddly," and to demonstrate what their cuddly looks like walking across the room.
8. When students are ready, it's time to share! Give each student the opportunity to introduce themselves to the rest of the group as their cuddly, embodying all of the characteristics they've explored throughout the activity!

**BONUS:** If time permits it and students so desire, they can also demonstrate what their cuddly looks like as they move around the room!

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

*How did it feel to act as your cuddly?*

*What did you notice about your friends' performances? How were their cuddlies different from yours?*


*What made you successful in this activity?*

*What were some challenges you encountered?*






# ADVENTURES IN SPACE

**Materials Needed:** music/soundtrack for your space adventure, scissors, a hole punch, markers/crayons, a flashlight, the handout on the following page of this School Tool.

Take your students on a space adventure! Craft characters, discover planets and explore soundscapes to spark new out-of-this-world fascinations!



- Tell your students to imagine that their learning space is now a space station where they study planets, comets and asteroids! As astronauts and space explorers, they are fascinated with life on other planets and you want to see what they imagine planetary pals and aliens in space look like.
- Have your students color in their new planetary pal on the handout provided. Help them punch out the two holes on the planetary pal's feet for their fingers to go through. Their fingers act as the planetary pal's legs! When they are done creating, collect everyone's planetary pals and let them know they will see them again soon.
- Tell your students that today, they are going on a trip to outer space! As a group, get into an imaginary spaceship and blast off! Create a soundscape (sounds effects made with the body or different objects in the room that help to create environment and mood) as everyone blasts off into space. Encourage your students to continue to explore sounds throughout the space adventure. *What sounds do you hear as we fly through the clouds and out of the earth's atmosphere? Here comes a meteor shower! What does it sound like as we dodge it?*
- Let your spaceship crew know that it is very dark in outer space. To simulate space, turn off the lights in the room (or, to modify for more timid students, dim the lights). Use a flashlight as the headlight of your spacecraft to help you navigate through space!
- Have students take note of some things they might pass by to fully visualize their dream space trip.
  - *Do you see the moon? What does the moon look like? Is it made of cheese? Of candy?*
  - *What does earth look like from way out here? How many other planets do you see? What are the planets' names?*  
(HINT: These could be real or imagined)
- See if you can see a comet or a shooting star! *What does it look like? Where did it come from and where is it going?*
- You see a planet in the distance! As a group, fly your spaceship to that planet and land on its surface. You are the first explorers to discover this planet, so you get to name it! Now your students are ready to put on their space helmets, exit the spaceship and explore.

### Guide the journey:

- Touchdown! You have just exited your spaceship and landed on this planet. *What does it sound like when your feet touch the surface? Can you walk normally? Do you have to jump? Do you have to swim?*
- *Can you hear music or sound on this planet? What does it sound like?*
- Move your hands through the air on your planet - *does it make a sound? What does it sound like? How is the atmosphere different than the air on earth?*

- Your team of space explorers have made yet another discovery - you have found life on this planet: planetary pals! Bring out the finger puppet planetary pals and have your students meet their new friends. Give your students time to explore this planet with their finger puppets. They can play games, tell stories and continue to listen to all the interesting sounds in outer space. To add to their experience, once they are done, make sure the students keep their finger puppets and bring them to the show!

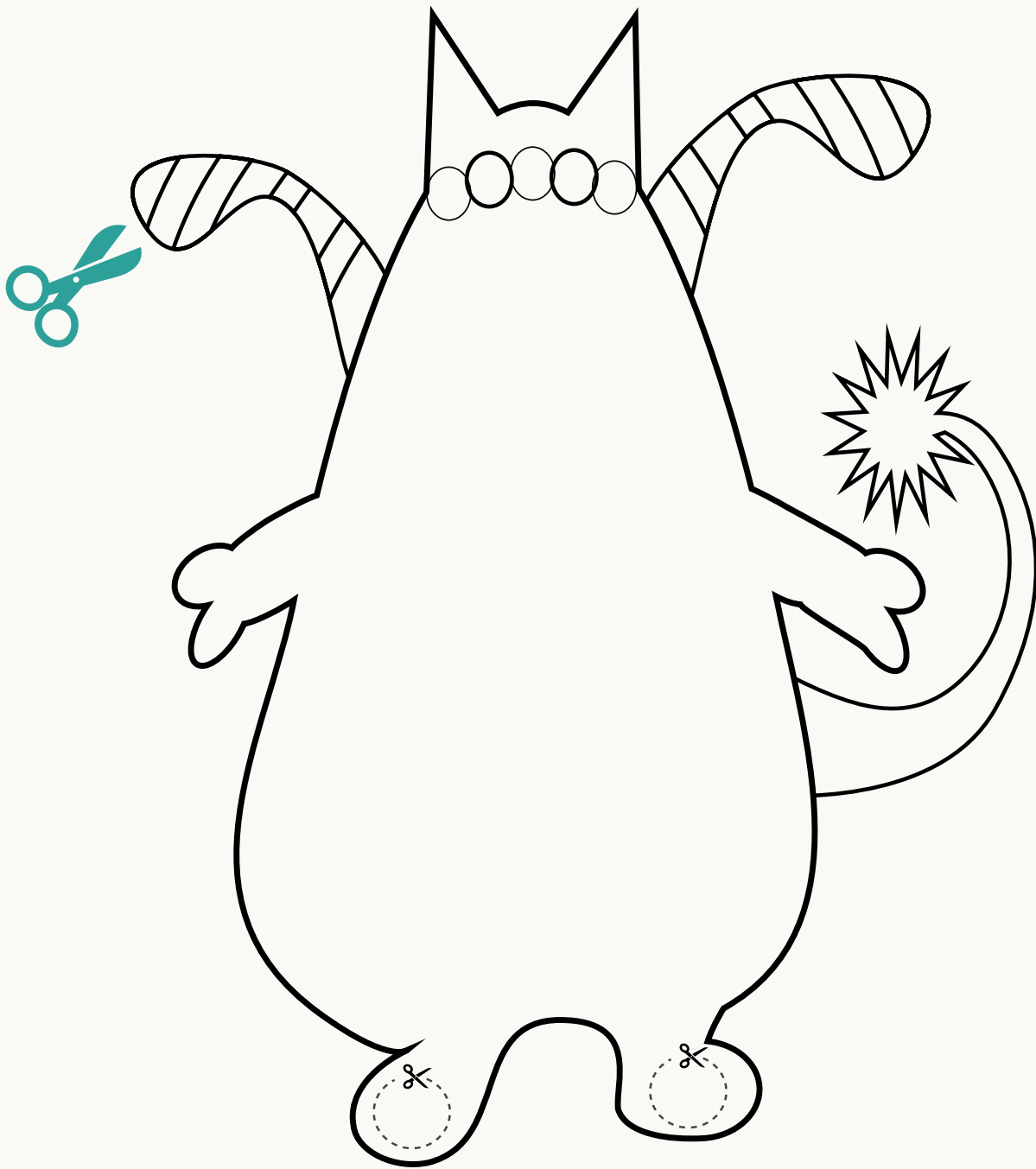
### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

*What were some of your favorite moments from today's activity?*

*What was it like to bring a character you created to life?*



# ADVENTURES IN SPACE: MY PLANETARY PAL



# THE ROPE ZONE

**Materials Needed:** large chart paper, markers, colorful rope or yarn

Using your imagination, and a bit of string, utilize the activity below to journey to new and exciting places without ever leaving your learning space!

1. Begin by telling students that you're going to guide them on an adventure and that they should prepare to go on an imagination exploration where they will discover all the hidden lands in their learning space.
  - *How is it different from home out here?*
  - *See if you can identify anything in the sky! What does it look like? Where did it come from and where is it going?*
2. Acting as scribe, ask students to call out faraway places, real or imaginary, that they would like to visit. Jot that list down on large chart paper to use later.
3. Introduce your students to your magical piece of rope, the entryway into the magical rope portal! Tell students that the place the portal takes you is decided by the shape the rope is in. For instance, a triangle-shaped rope might take you to the land of Oz!
4. Invite a student to create a shape with the rope and randomly select a place from the group-generated list to be your first stop. Have everyone follow you as you step over the rope and into a brand new realm. Ignite students' imagination by asking questions like: *What sounds do you hear? What do you see? What does it smell like here? What is the weather like?*
5. Explore night or day where the portal has taken you. Decide which points are dark and bright, and dim the lights accordingly. Use a flashlight to help you navigate through the unknown!
6. Have the students take note of some things they might pass by to fully visualize their journey.
  - *Do you see any strange or unfamiliar animals? What do they look like? How do they move?*
7. Now, allow students to explore. Invite a student up repeating **Steps 4 through 6** until the group-generated list of places has been exhausted.
8. Prompt students to think of ways to use imaginative exploration to better understand other things you are studying together.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

*What does the word "imagination" mean to you?  
Did this activity change that for you?  
What was your favorite part of this activity?*



# BE A BOSS FOR A DAY

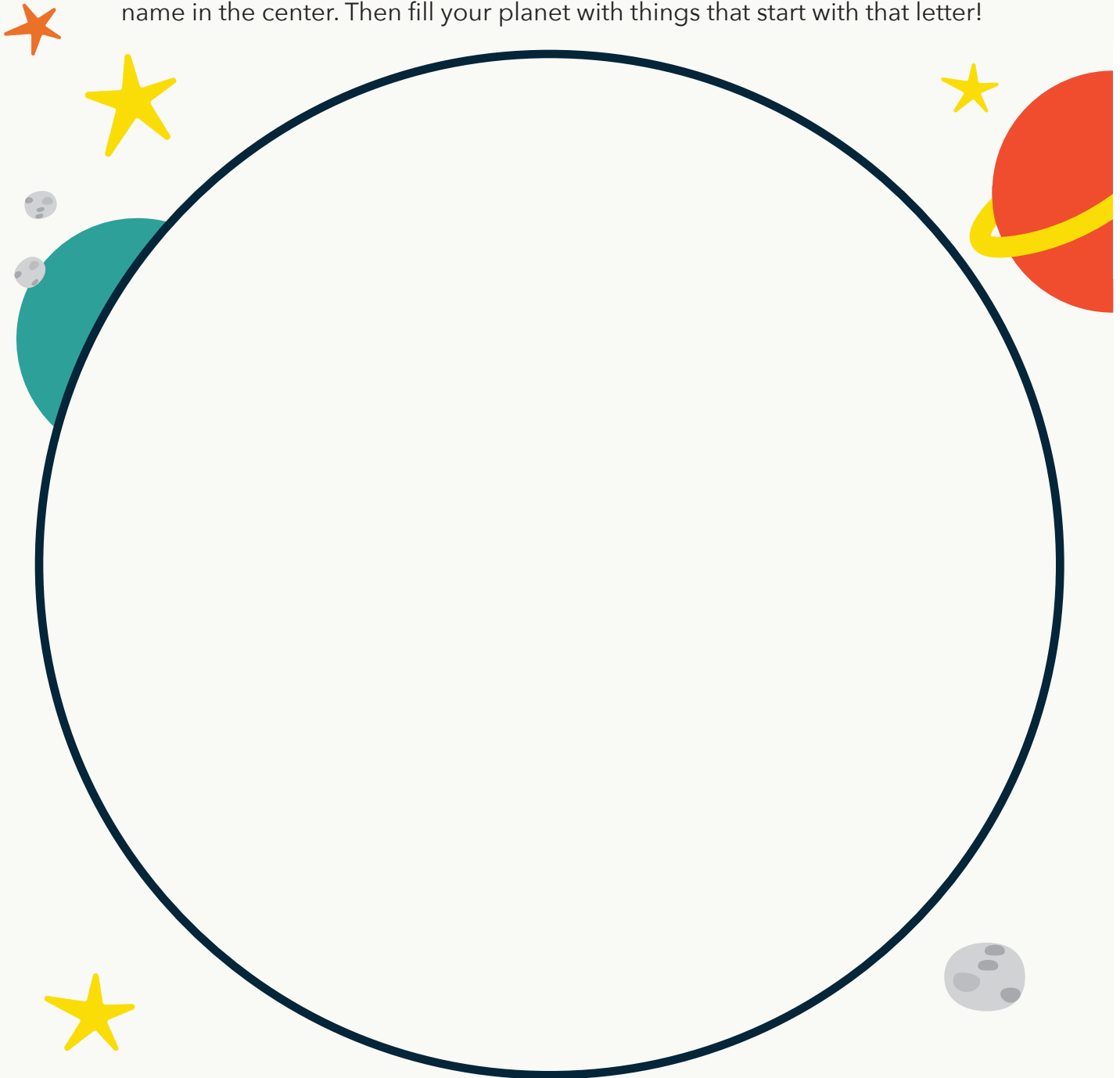
Typically, in a space meant for learning, the teacher's in charge. But, what if you could be in charge for the day? Just imagine it! Would you have a classroom or something outrageously different? What would it look like? What kinds of objects would be in your room? Think about it!

Design a world in which you are the boss and then draw it below!



# YOUR VERY OWN PLANET

Create a planet inspired by the first letter of your name! Draw the first letter of your name in the center. Then fill your planet with things that start with that letter!



# I JUST CAN'T SLEEP

What makes you so excited you can't sleep? How do you get through a restless night?

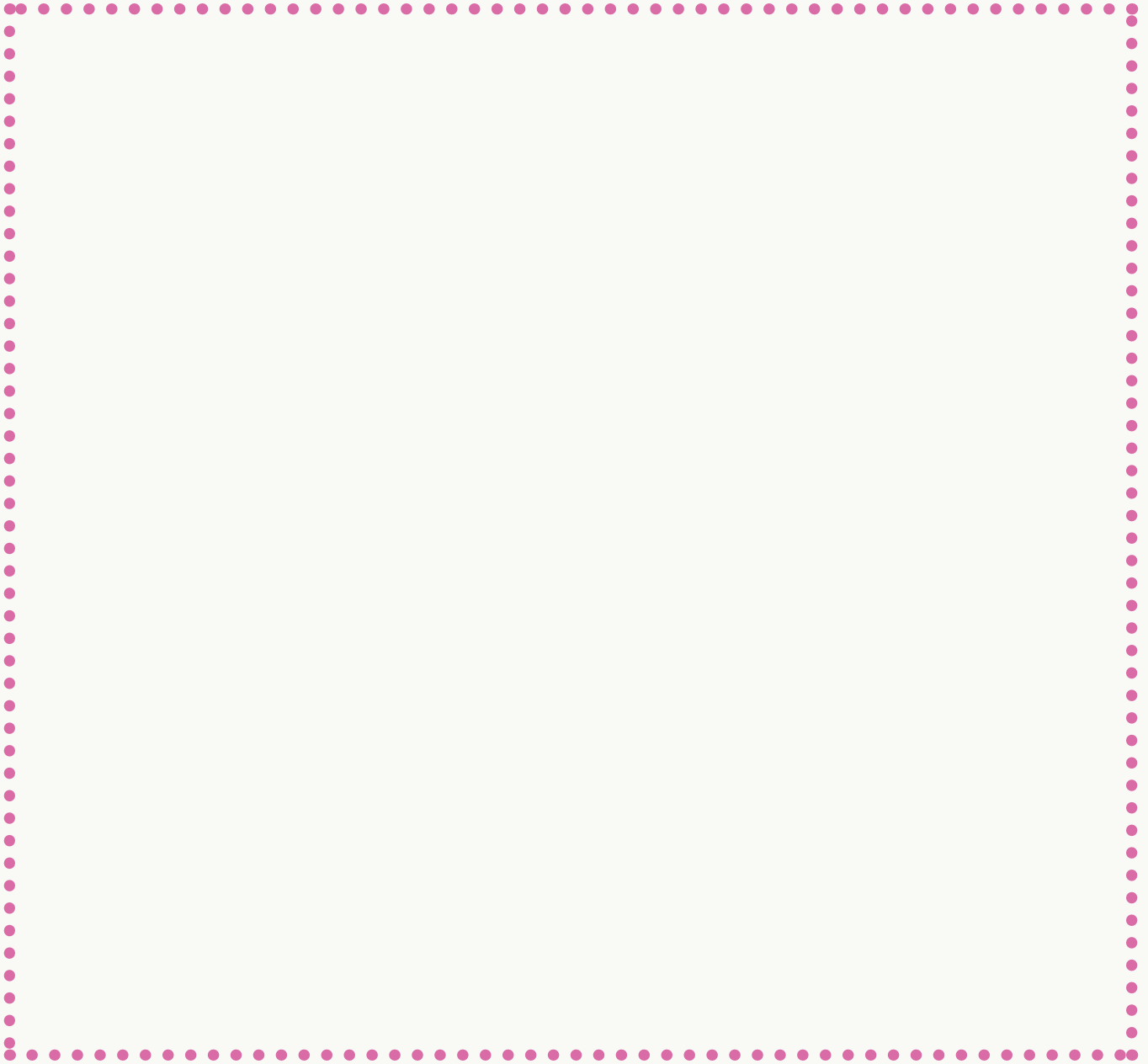
In the space below, draw and color it!





# ★ ★ MY DREAMWORLD ★ ★

Use your imagination to draw an imaginary world all your own! Is there an imaginary friend in your imaginary world? Don't forget to include them, too!





# UP, UP AND AWAAAAY!

It's time to head to outer space! If you could turn any piece of furniture into a spacecraft and jet off to space, which would you choose? Imagine it as a spacecraft that can take you flying through the cosmos, then draw it!

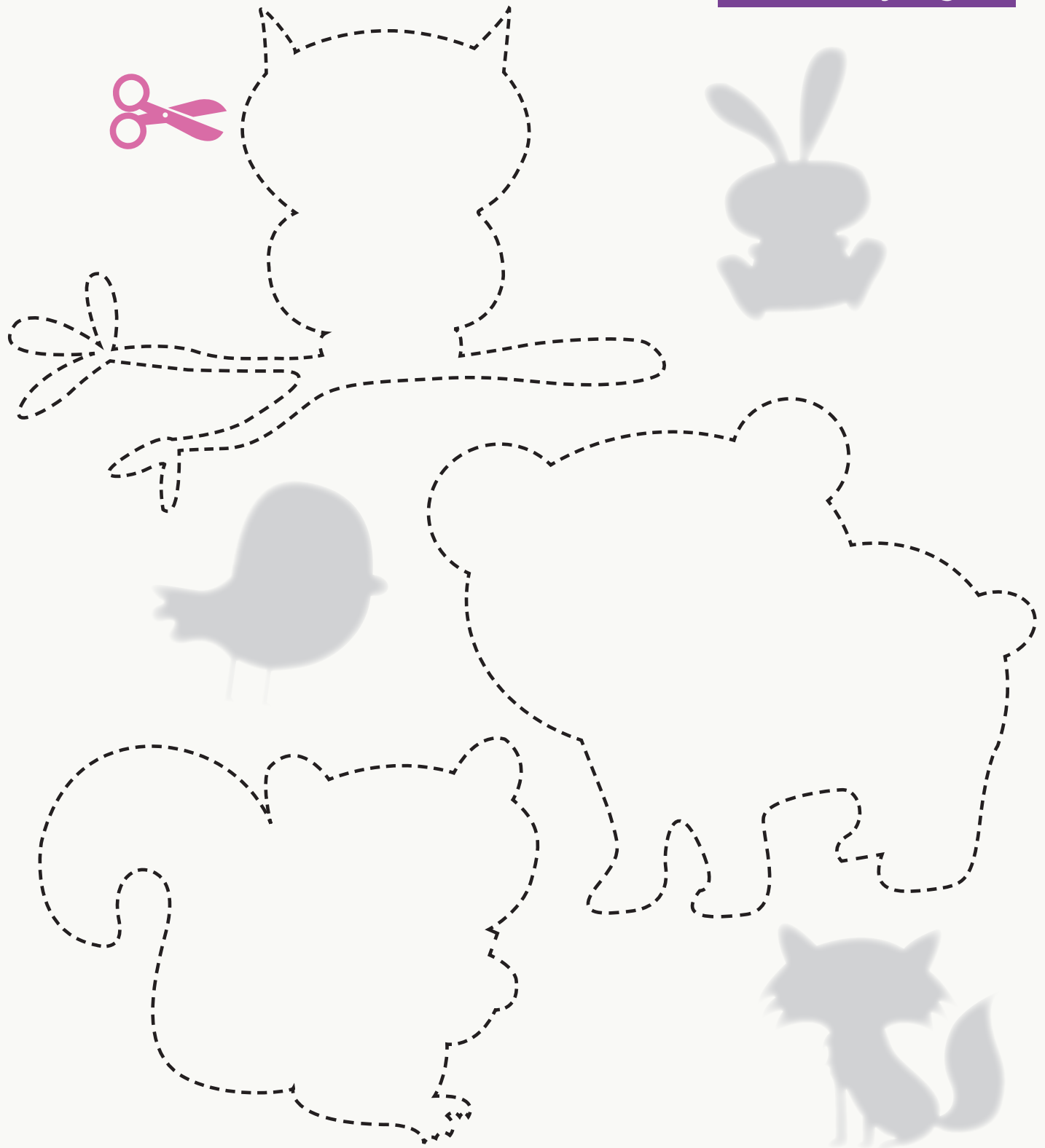


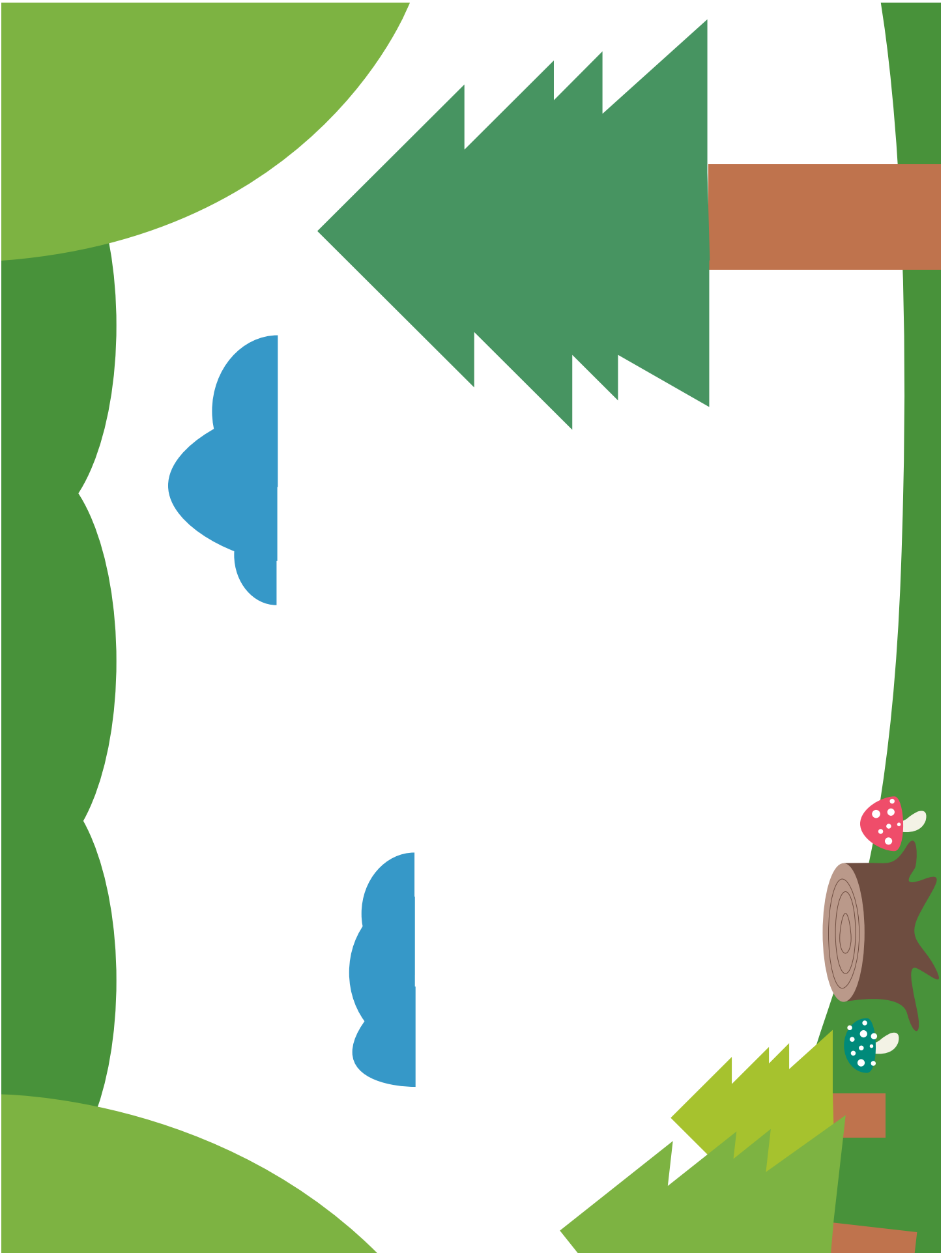
# THE SHADOW PLAY'S THE THING

There are so many different animal creatures that live in the forest. With an adult's help, cut out the forest creature outlines! Then, tape or glue them to popsicle sticks to create your very own shadow puppets! Using a flashlight and your assortment of animal friends, make your very own shadow play on your learning space wall!



**BONUS:** Use the forest template on the following page and, with a partner's help, take your animal shadow puppet(s) on a woodland adventure through the forest by projecting your animal shadows onto the forest page!

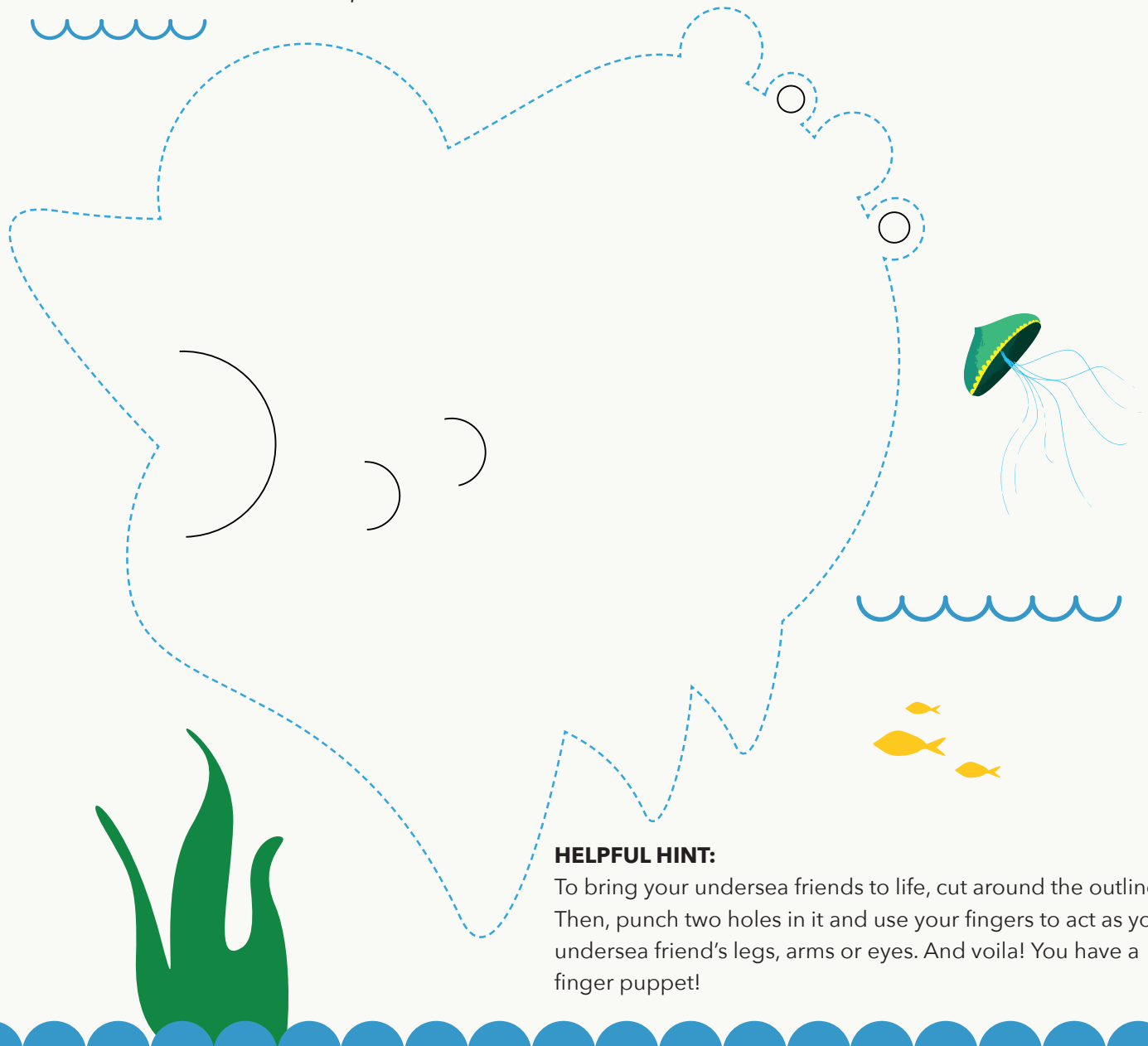




# MY UNDERSEA FRIEND

The earth's oceans are filled with all kinds of amazing creatures. Think about the different sea creatures you know of, like whales, jellyfish or even starfish!

Use your imagination to create your very own sea creature within the outline below. *What colors are they? How do they communicate? What kinds of emotions does their face express?* Now, take some time to draw them!

**HELPFUL HINT:**

To bring your undersea friends to life, cut around the outline. Then, punch two holes in it and use your fingers to act as your undersea friend's legs, arms or eyes. And voila! You have a finger puppet!



# WHAT MAKES ME UNIQUE?

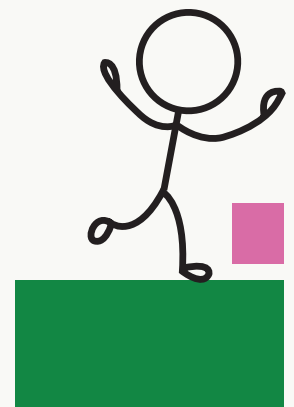
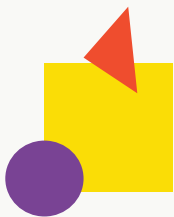
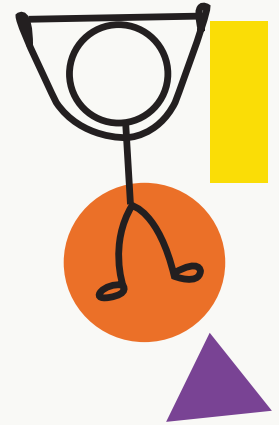
Each of us is different, inside and out. *But what exactly makes you who you are? In what ways are you like others? In what ways are you unique?* Maybe your hair is super curly or your left eye is a different color from your right eye, or one ear is smaller than the other!

Think about it and then draw your beautifully unique qualities in the space below!



# THE SHAPE OF ME

Take a look at the shapes on this page. Then, in the space provided, draw a person or thing trying to make these shapes with their body. See the examples on this page for inspiration! Finally, when you're done, try to make a triangle, circle and square using your entire body. If you need to, ask a friend or family member for help!





# GETTIN' COZY

All around this page is the word "cozy," a fun little word meaning comfortable, in eight different languages. What does the word "cozy" mean to you? What do you do and where do you go to be your most comfortable? In other words:

What's your cozy zone? Think about it and then draw it below!



# THE FOUR SEASONS

What are your favorite activities to do in each of the four seasons? For each time of the year, what do you wear? Which of the four seasons is your absolute favorite?

Now, pick a season—any season—and use the space below to design an outfit for enjoying that season!



# MY FAVORITE THINGS

In the jar below, draw your favorite thing. As you're drawing, be sure to ask yourself: What does it look like? What does it smell like? What does it feel like? Does it taste like anything? What does it sound like? Share your drawing with a partner and have them draw their favorite thing in your jar. Then, you'll have made your very own mixture of Friendship Jam—with a twist!



## Unit Plan Brainstorms

### **KIDS' CHOICE** (ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL STUDIES)

What if kids could be decision-makers—even just for a day? Try it out! You've designed your days in your learning space. Now it's time to let the kids have a say. As a class, choose a day to be "opposite day" in your learning space in which you let them choose how their daily routine is structured or approached. To help guide this exercise, work with students to create a list of different ways they might want to change how their day in the room goes. For instance, allow kids to choose how a full day is structured, have volunteers help you lead your morning meeting or have kids choose transitions between daily routines. Finally, have a group discussion about what it was like for them to be able to make the big decisions, celebrating each kid's individual voice!

### **PAPER TRANSFORMATION** (VISUAL ART)

*How many things can you create with a single sheet of paper? A favorite animal? A doll? A bouquet of flowers?* Give your students time to create many different things with a single sheet of paper. Once they have made their individual creations, see how they all fit together in a large display.

### **PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES** (ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, SCIENCE)

Go on a scavenger hunt with your students to find different objects and pieces of furniture that could be re-imagined as a means of transportation! Then, when you've finished, brainstorm as a group which modes of transportation exist right here in New York City, and how they might be transformed into high-flying airships, undersea vessels and more!

### **SO YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT TALENT** (THEATER)

Have your students work together to flip the concept of traditional talent shows on its head by putting on a Virtual No Talent Show! That's right! Start with having each student grab an object that represents their talent, which could be singing, dancing, drawing, painting, a magic trick or even tongue twisters—and have a show-and-tell. For example, tongue twisters might be represented by a braided pretzel! Then, once everyone has shown their object, tell students that they are going to make their talents funny by practicing and showing off their skills as if they'd never done them before. For instance, if one of your students is skilled in the basics of tap, they would be tasked with acting as if they'd never seen a tap shoe before! Once everyone has found their "no talent," put on a funny showcase!

## Unit Plan Brainstorms

### OUR PET (VISUAL ART)

Have your students explore what it means to care for an animal! Ask your students questions like: *If we had a shared pet, what would it be? What would its name be? How would we take care of it? How can we turn our learning space into a space that can be shared by us and our pet?* As a group, create that pet—as an imaginary friend!! **Note:** *Your shared pet could also be real, created with open-ended materials!* Next, tell your students that, using open-ended materials, they are going to create a habitat for this pet that will “live” in their home. Research the natural habitats of your chosen animal. After each student builds a habitat for the shared pet, ask for a student volunteer to present their habitat to the group. As the student shares, ask them to also include a soundscape of what they think their environment sounds like. Each week a new student(s) will be responsible for the care of the pet, so that all students share in the growth of their new animal friend.

