

Activities for Families on the Move

Supporting children's
well-being during
challenging times

Section 1: Overview for Families

Welcome! We are glad you're here and hope you and your children are able to find some rest and comfort as you settle into this new place. Being in a new place can feel overwhelming. You and the children with you might be feeling some relief to be in a safe place. You might also be struggling with difficult emotions from leaving everything you know and needing to adjust to so much that is new. Many families also feel stress from the uncertainty of this time. All of this can strain family relationships. Children might be bored or restless and parents and caregivers often have less help from others outside of your immediate family – with fewer chances to take a break.

During challenging times, parents can support the wellbeing of children in different ways. It is normal for anyone, including children, to have strong physical and emotional responses. You may notice changes in their sleep, eating, emotions, concentration, or even a lack of interest in the things she or he used to enjoy. Children may be extra clingy, withdrawn, or act more aggressively than usual. Some children may act as if nothing occurred. Try to be supportive of your children when they are responding differently than they usually do. These are normal reactions to exceptional events.

Although this might be a challenging time, there are still some things that you can do with children to help them feel better, learn things that will help prepare them for the days ahead in the United States, and have fun. This activity booklet is just a start to give you some activities that you can do with your children – to stay positive and make the most of this time. You may feel better, too!

The pages that follow provide ideas for activities, including:

- Creating a Rhythm and Routine
- Activities for Families with Young Children (creative, physical and educational activities)
- Online Resources of activities for children and families, including free English language lessons, parenting during quarantine, and links to cultural orientation guidebooks, videos and apps for phones
- Activities for Older Children and Adolescents

Section 1: Overview for Families

Here are some other ideas to support your children during these challenging times:

- Listen: Give children opportunities to talk about what they are feeling. Encourage them to share concerns and ask questions.
- Comfort: Use simple tools to comfort and calm children, like telling stories, singing with them and playing games. Praise them frequently for their strengths, such as showing courage, compassion and helpfulness.
- Reassure children that you want to keep them safe. Provide them with correct information through trustworthy sources. Give children information about their situation in a way they can understand. Try to be as honest as possible. Help your children understand what happened and what may happen in the future.
- Try to re-establish routines (eating, sleeping, playing and regular tasks). This gives the child a feeling of security, consistency and control. Keep a normal wake-up and sleep time for everyone as much as possible.

When you or your children's reactions are severe and last for a long time or if you feel like it is too hard to cope, you may need to talk someone. Everyone needs support sometimes. Please speak to your contact from the organization that is helping you. They can find someone to help you.

Section 2: Creating a Rhythm and Routine

Having a consistent schedule is very important for children's wellbeing. It helps them feel safe and secure, keeps them learning, and helps reduce family stress. A great way to have consistency for your children is to create a daily schedule, with regular wake-up, sleep and meal times. At times, you might need to shift the schedule because of appointments or other activities, but keeping the general rhythm and routine of your schedule will help the whole family. You might also choose to keep weekends less structured, but having those days be the exception rather than the rule, makes them feel special.

Have the children help you create the schedule if possible. Every structured day should include times for:

- Education
- Physical activity
- Creative activity
- Recreation/play
- Free time

Below are some ideas to help you get started with a schedule and different types of activities. If you make your own version of a daily schedule, make sure to include all of the topics identified above. Depending on your child's age, the length of time that they can focus on one subject or topic may vary. Younger children might not be able to spend hours on education at one time, so break up the day and rotate activities to keep them interested. You could even assign someone different every day to be the time keeper; The time-keeper will let others know when to move on to the next activity.

Weekly Schedule Example

Monday-Friday:

- 8:00am: wake-up
- 8:30am: breakfast
- 9:30am: physical activity
- 10:30: education
- 12:30: lunch
- 1:30pm: education
- 3:00pm: creative activity
- 4:00pm: recreation/play
- 5:00pm: dinner
- 6:00pm: family time/free time
- 7:00pm: getting ready for bed
- 8:00pm: bedtime

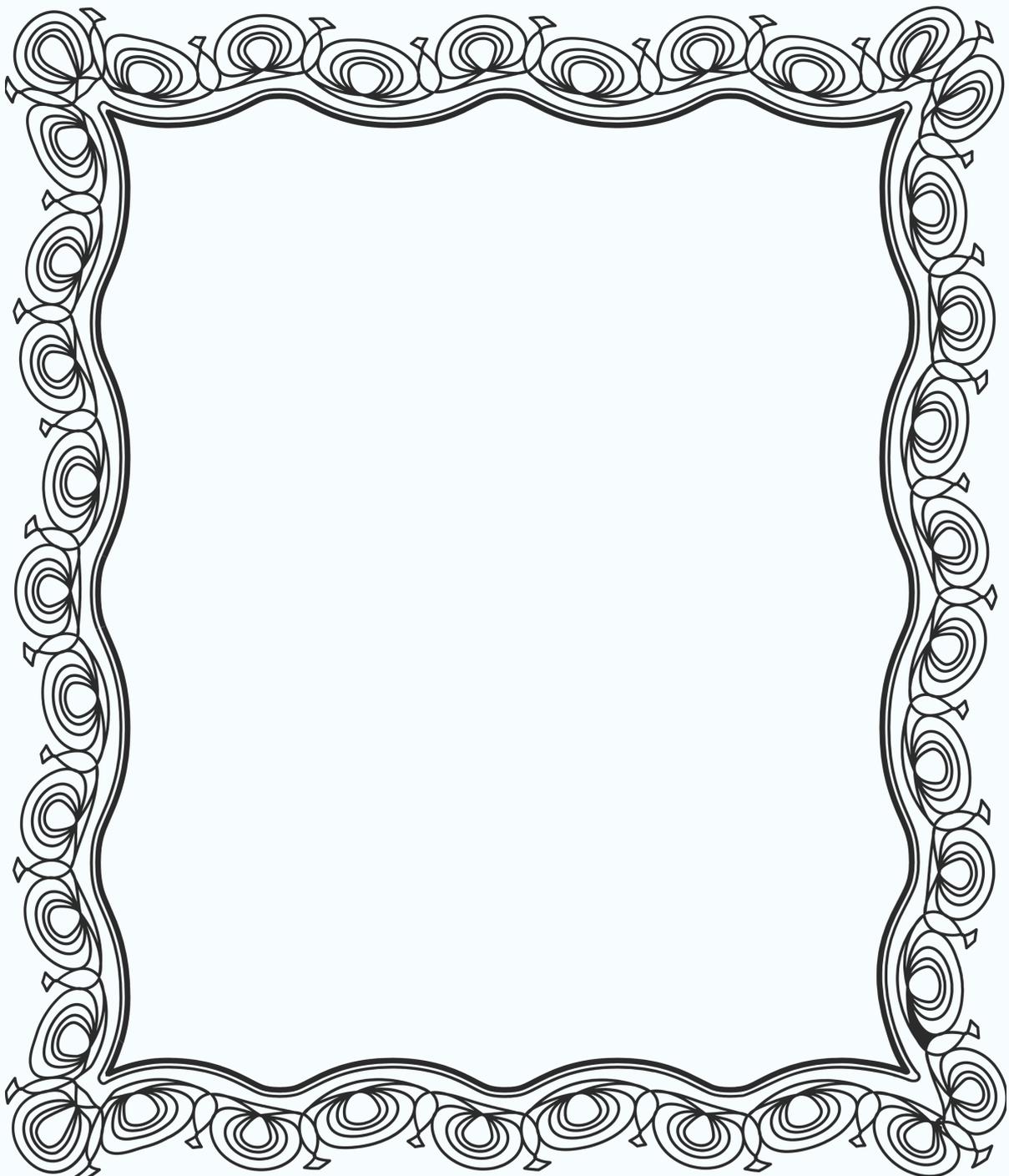
Section 3: Activities for families with children

Creative activities

- **Music Band:** See what items around your space that you can use (safely) to create music. Have your child try to make different types of music with different materials. Does one of you like to sing? Make a song together!
- **Coloring pages:** While coloring might not seem unusual, it helps people calm down (even you!). You or your child can use the attached coloring pages or blank pages to color.
- **Fort:** Help your child build a fort with sheets, pillows and other items in your space. After you build the fort, you can make up stories together. Have your child come up with the idea, and then you create the story. Then you come up with an idea and have the child create the story. Also, they can spend alone time in their fort for some of the educational activities, and then show you what they did when they finish.
- **Draw Your Feelings:** Give your child drawing materials and blank paper. Have them draw different types of feelings they have, and then share with you. The child can later use the images when they might be having a hard time expressing themselves with words. Attached to this packet is a sheet with faces with different types of emotions. You can use this as a guide to get you started, but allow your child to make their own face emotions. The child can later use the images when they might be having a hard time expressing themselves with words. When you are talking to them about their feelings, try to keep an open mind and not to make any assumptions. Be curious and ask questions. It's also OK if your child doesn't want to talk about them.
- **Make your flag:** Give your child paper and drawing materials. Have them create a flag that represents themselves and/or your family. Have them think about what represents themselves? What are their favorite things? Favorite colors? Favorite memory? Later, you can pretend to have a parade, so that everyone marches around the room with their flags.

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- **Self-portrait:** If there is a mirror in your space, have your child to sit in front of it and draw themselves. Afterwards, sit down together, explain what you like about the drawing, and have a conversation about it. Ask questions like, “How do you see yourself? How would you like to be seen?” Make sure that you use language that your children will understand for their age. If they enjoy drawing themselves, they can draw you or someone else next!



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Physical Activities

- **The Floor is Lava:** Scatter pillows, blankets, cloth etc. around the room that are 'safe areas'. Set a timer (or decide what number to count to) and have the one person calls out, "The floor is lava." All other players must get to the 'safe' spot before the time runs out. Take turns setting the timer and calling out. Keep going until only one person remains, and they are the winner.
- **Obstacle Course:** Using the items in your space, work with your child to build an obstacle course. See how quickly they can get through it without stopping. You can also time them (or count) and challenge them to get through the obstacle course faster each time.
- **Slow Leak:** Have your child stand in a space with enough room to move around and lay down. Have the children pretend to be balloons floating in the air. When they breathe in the balloons expand and they stretch out. When someone says 'slow leak' the children should exhale - their balloons get empty, and they float to the ground. Have children pay attention to their body and feelings. After you go through the exercise, talk about how both of you are feeling, Are you relaxed? Tired? Calm? Take some time to relax after this activity.
- **Get Moving:** Even though you're indoors, what physical activities can you do to move your body? You can try:
 - Stretching,
 - Running in place,
 - Jumping jacks,
 - Push-ups/sit-ups/squats
 - Move your bodies for a set amount of time without moving. How do you feel after?

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Educational Activities

- **Mindfulness Scavenger Hunt:** This stress-relieving activity provides coping skills that help children be in the present and focus on things they can control. Create a scavenger hunt that allows the child to find the objects and complete challenges, using their five senses (sight, touch, hearing, smell and taste). To start, find different objects and hide them around the room. Also, create different “challenges” for your child, such as listening for the sound of a car or other noise or having them smell a piece of fruit with their eyes closed and guessing what it is. Then, ask your child to go on a “scavenger hunt” to find each object and complete the challenges. Have the child tell you the items that fit into each of the categories (sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste).
- **Animal Safari:** Have your child draw different animals – one animal per piece of paper. Then, hide each paper in a different part of your space. Have your child find each paper and then tell you what they know about the animals.
- **Missing Someone:** Have your child write a letter to someone they are missing (the person doesn't have to be alive, or it can be a place or object they are missing). Guide them to express themselves freely in the letter. They can fold it up and keep it somewhere safely afterwards.
- **Future Self:** Have your child write a letter to themselves to read when they are older. What do they want to say about what is happening to them? Are there secrets they want to share? Are there stories about their past? Allow them to think and express themselves freely. They can fold it up to and keep it somewhere safe when they are done.
- **Gratitude Journal:** Using blank paper, create a list of things you are grateful for, no matter how small it may seem. This activity can be good for anyone to do, especially when it feels like there is not much to be grateful for. Come up with items every day and continue adding to the list.

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Online Activities

For videos in English, you can use closed-captioning on your laptop for children that can read.

- [Cosmic Kids Yoga\[1\]](#) online yoga video for younger children (English) and [Spanish yoga videos for kids\[2\]](#) and for teens/adults
- [GoNoodle\[3\]](#) website with games and videos for children. The main page also includes links to their free apps so you can access it from a smartphone. There is also a section in Spanish titled [¡Vamos! GoNoodle\[4\]](#).
- [Swordkit\[5\]](#) (English): Kid-friendly workouts (strength, agility, flexibility, balance, warm-ups and cool-downs, and more)
- [Kidz Bop\[6\]](#) (English) and [Spanish\[7\]](#): Dance along videos for kids
- [Live webcams\[8\]](#) from zoos and aquariums
- [PBSKids\[9\]](#) has educational videos and games for younger children. Here's a [link\[10\]](#) to their games in Spanish!
- [TheKidzPage.com\[11\]](#) (English) has learning games and activities (including online coloring pages)
- [All About Empathy Video\[12\]](#) a YouTube video that teaches children about empathy
- [Stress Management for Kids and Teens\[13\]](#) a YouTube video that teaches children about stress and how to manage it
- [Anger Management for Kids\[14\]](#) a YouTube video that teaches children about anger and how to manage it
- ['My Hero Is You'\[15\]](#) a story book for children of COVID-19 (in many different languages)

Links

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/user/cosmickidsyoga>

[2] <https://spanishmama.com/spanish-yoga-videos-for-kids/#yogakids>

[3] <https://www.gonoodle.com>

[4] <https://www.gonoodle.com/tags/W2gjaX/vamos-gonoodle>

[5] <https://app.sworkit.com/collections/kids-workouts>

[6] <https://www.youtube.com/user/KidzBopKids/featured>

[7] <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjtR4PLY6JAdg0pFh1yalGQ>

[8] <https://familyguide.com/webcams-at-zoos-and-aquariums/>

[9] <https://pbskids.org>

[10] <https://pbskids.org/games/spanish/>

[11] <http://thekidzpage.com>

[12] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltp21tly8nM&feature=youtu.be>

[13] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Nf2Pzcketg>

[14] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_FMxPo4xDM

[15] <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/my-hero-you-storybook-children-covid-19>

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Activities for older children and adolescents

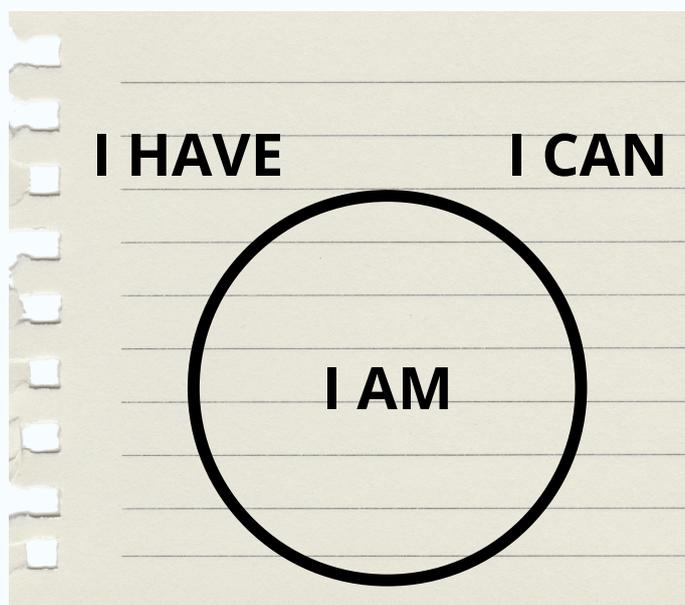
Older children and adolescents should feel free to engage in any of the activities already described. The ones listed in this section are geared more specifically for older children and adolescents.

I am, I have, I can: Take a piece of paper and turn it to “landscape” direction, so the long side is the top and the bottom. Draw a very large circle in the center of your paper. Your circle should be as big as possible. Do not worry if your circle is not perfectly round!

Inside your circle, write “I am...” Write in small letters, so you still have room to write and draw other things inside the circle. What are the different ways you could finish a sentence that begins with the words, “I am...”? You might think of who you are to other people in your life, or other words that describe who you are. Draw images that show who you are, inside the circle.

On the left side of your paper, outside the circle, write, “I have...” Leave space to write and draw other things. What are the different ways you could finish a sentence that begins with the words, “I have...”? You might think of things you own, but you can also think of your abilities and your relationships with others. Draw images that show what you have, outside the circle on the left side of your paper.

On the right side of your paper, also outside the circle, write “I can...” Leave space to write and draw other things. What are the different ways you could finish a sentence that begins with the words, “I can...”? You might think of your skills and also things that you can do. Draw images that show what you have, outside the circle on the right side of your paper. Add to your drawing if you wish. You can decide for yourself when you have completed it.



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Ourselves inside and out: Start by sitting somewhere comfortable. Put a piece of paper on a clean, flat surface. Have your paper and pen or pencil ready. Close your eyes for a minute and try to think of six different words that describe you. Don't say them out loud, just think about them. Try to include at least one word that describes something about you that you are proud of or feel good about.

Open your eyes and take out your pencil and paper. Draw a very big circle in the middle of the paper. This circle represents you - your mind, your face, yourself. Remember the six words you thought of to describe yourself. Maybe some of these words describe what you are like on the inside, and some describe what you are like on the outside. In the space inside the circle draw what you are like on the inside. Try to express yourself by drawing, but write a few words if that helps you to better express yourself. Outside the circle, draw or write what you are like on the outside. Remember, there's no right or wrong way of doing this exercise. If you enjoy drawing yourself, you can draw someone else next!

Silence and sounds: What are the sounds you hear every day, but don't usually notice or pay attention to? Read these instructions first so you know what to do while you are lying with your eyes closed. If you want, you can set a timer for 5 minutes or ask a sibling/parent to let you know when 5 minutes have passed so you know when to open your eyes again.

Find a comfortable place to lie down with your eyes closed. Put your piece of paper and your pencil near you. Cover your eyes with your hands or a piece of clothing if that helps you to relax. Try to let your breathing become slow and easy. As much as possible try to draw the breath to your stomach. You might be able to hear your own breathing, or even your heart beating. Lie quietly and listen to the sounds you can hear. Listen to all the many different kinds of sounds you can hear. Start with the loudest sounds, and then listen to the other sounds you notice. Keep listening.

After 5 minutes, open your eyes and sit up. Find your piece of paper and your pencil or pen. Write down all the sounds you heard. Try to use creative language to describe them or draw them. Keep your list and repeat the activity whenever you want and in other places.

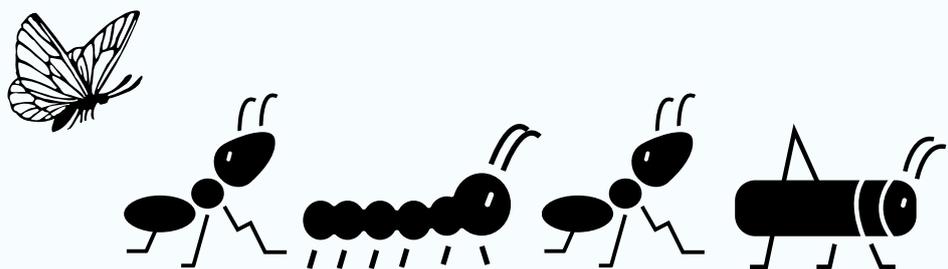
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Notice how the sounds you hear may be different. Repeat the activity whenever you feel stressed, overwhelmed or just need a little break.

Animal, Insect, Bird Stories: In this activity you will imagine that there are different animals in your household. This is just for fun and to spark your creativity. Start by closing your eyes and remembering something that you have done today. It can be a regular thing, like washing your face, or something unusual.

Now imagine there was a bird above you at that moment, looking down from above. What would the bird see or hear? What would you and the others in the situation look like from above? What would the bird think was happening? How would the bird feel? Write the story of what happened as if you were the bird. Continue the bird's story for as long as you wish.

Now imagine there was a small insect below you, walking on the floor at that same moment. Write the story of what happened as if you were the insect. Continue the insect's story for as long as you wish. Now imagine there was an animal that was seeing the room from almost the same level as you. For example, it could be a cat, a dog or another animal that was sitting and watching from a window. What would you look like from the animal's perspective? What would the animal think was happening? How would the animal feel? Write the story of what happened as if you were the animal. Continue the animal's story for as long as you wish.



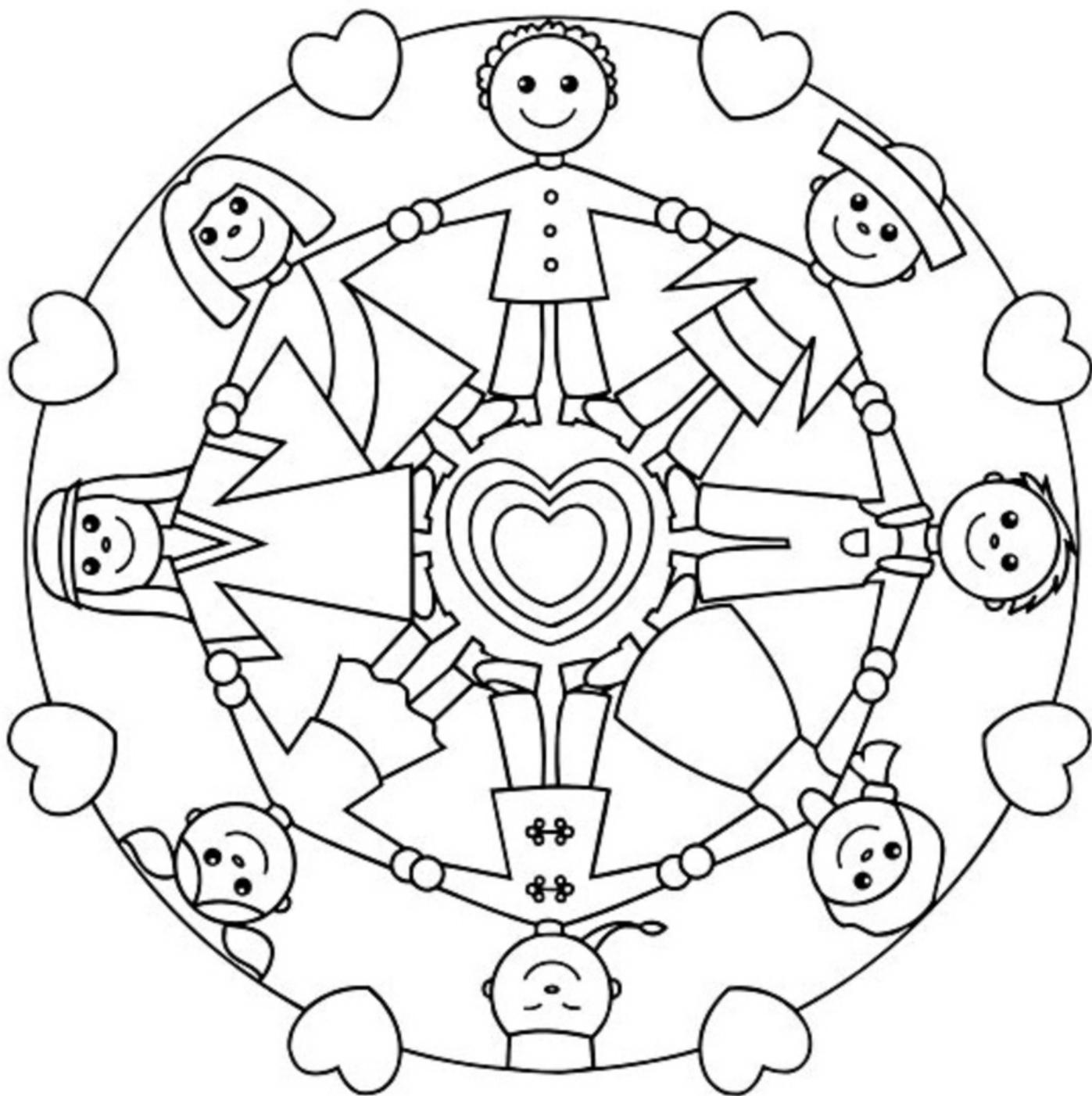
Additional Resources

- Parenting in the pandemic:
 - <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19-parenting-tips>
 - <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-care/pandemic-family-well-being>
- Supporting your child in school:
<https://coresourceexchange.org/lessonplan/supporting-your-child-in-school/>
- 'Strengthening Services for Refugee Parents: Guidelines and Resources' (for service providers):
<https://coresourceexchange.org/lessonplan/supporting-your-child-in-school/>
- 'Raising Teens in a New Country; A Guide for the whole family':
<https://brycs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Raising-Teens-New-Country.pdf>
- CORE Welcome to the USA Guidebook:
https://coresourceexchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2012-English-Welcome_Guide.pdf
- CORE USA Cultural Orientation Exchange Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhSnIgeXQ8Q>
- Settle In (Mobile App from CORE): <https://corenav.org/en/settle-in/>
- CORE Resettlement Navigator (can choose from multiple languages):
<https://corenav.org/>
- Free online ESOL lessons: <https://www.esolcourses.com/>

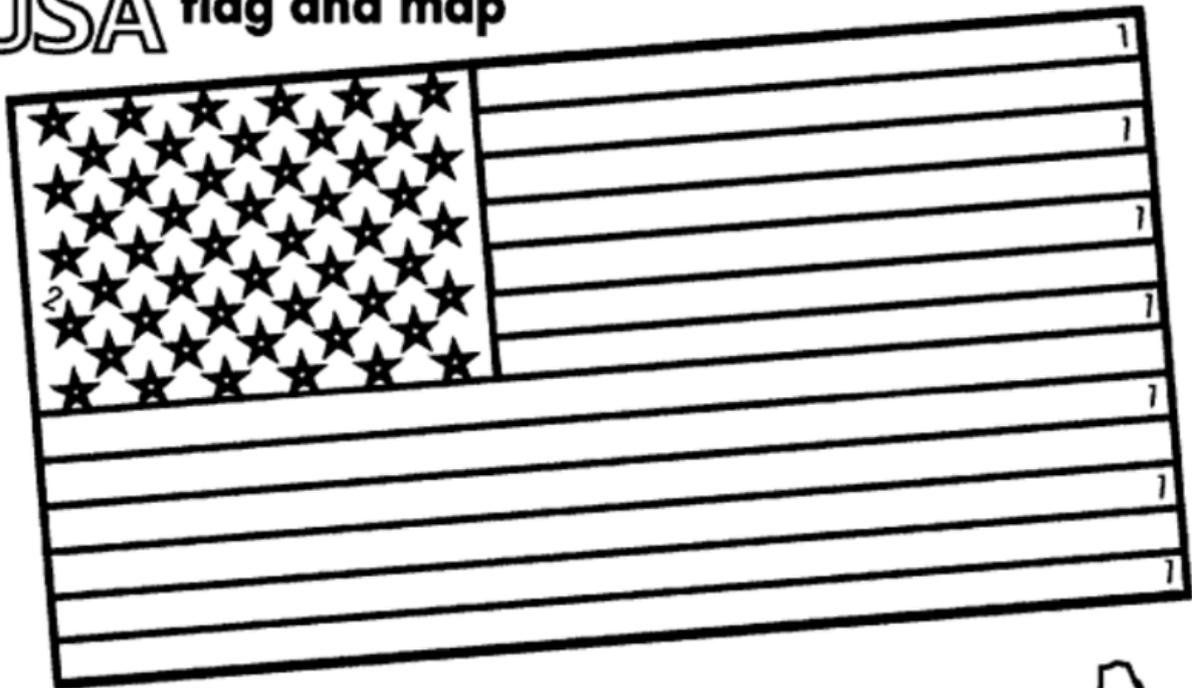
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

¿COMO TE SIENTES?

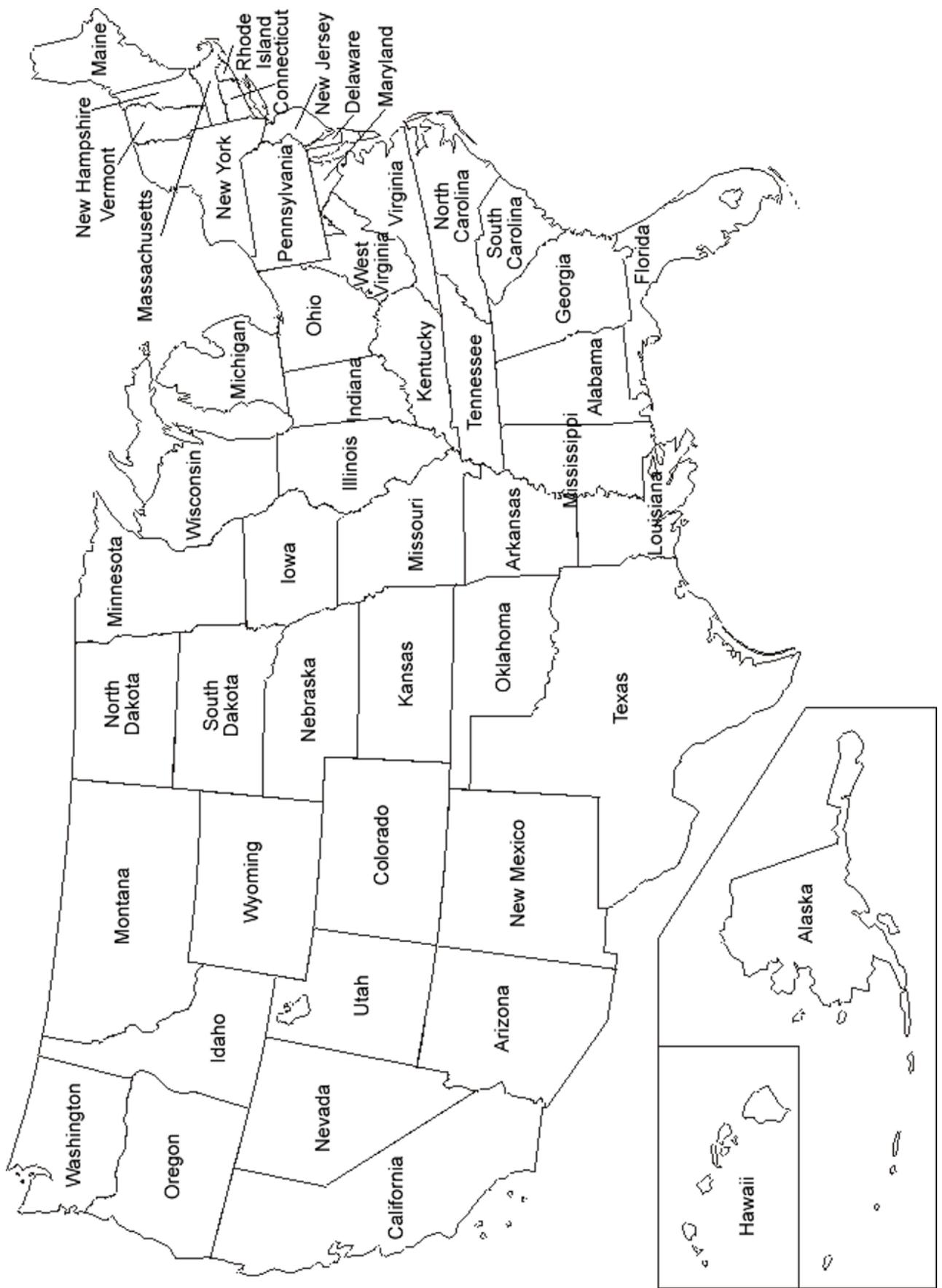
<p>CALM</p>  <p>CALMADO/A</p>	<p>HAPPY</p>  <p>FELIZ</p>	<p>SAD</p>  <p>TRISTE</p>	<p>SILLY</p>  <p>GRACIOSO/A</p>
<p>NERVOUS</p>  <p>NERVIOSO/A</p>	<p>ANNOYED</p>  <p>FASTIDIADO/A</p>	<p>TIRED</p>  <p>CANSADO/A</p>	<p>SHY</p>  <p>APENADO/A</p>
<p>SURPRISED</p>  <p>SORPRENDIDO/A</p>	<p>HUNGRY</p>  <p>HAMBRIENTO/A</p>	<p>ANGRY</p>  <p>ENOJADO/A</p>	<p>CONFUSED</p>  <p>CONFUNDIDO/A</p>
<p>SLEEPY</p>  <p>SOÑOLIENTO/A</p>	<p>SICK</p>  <p>ENFERMO/A</p>	<p>HURT</p>  <p>LASTIMADO/A</p>	<p>EMBARRASED</p>  <p>AVERGONZADO/A</p>
<p>DISAPPOINTED</p>  <p>DECEPCIONADO/A</p>	<p>WORRIED</p>  <p>PREOCUPADO/A</p>	<p>EMOTIONAL</p>  <p>EMOCIONAL</p>	<p>ANXIOUS</p>  <p>ANSIOSO/A</p>



USA flag and map

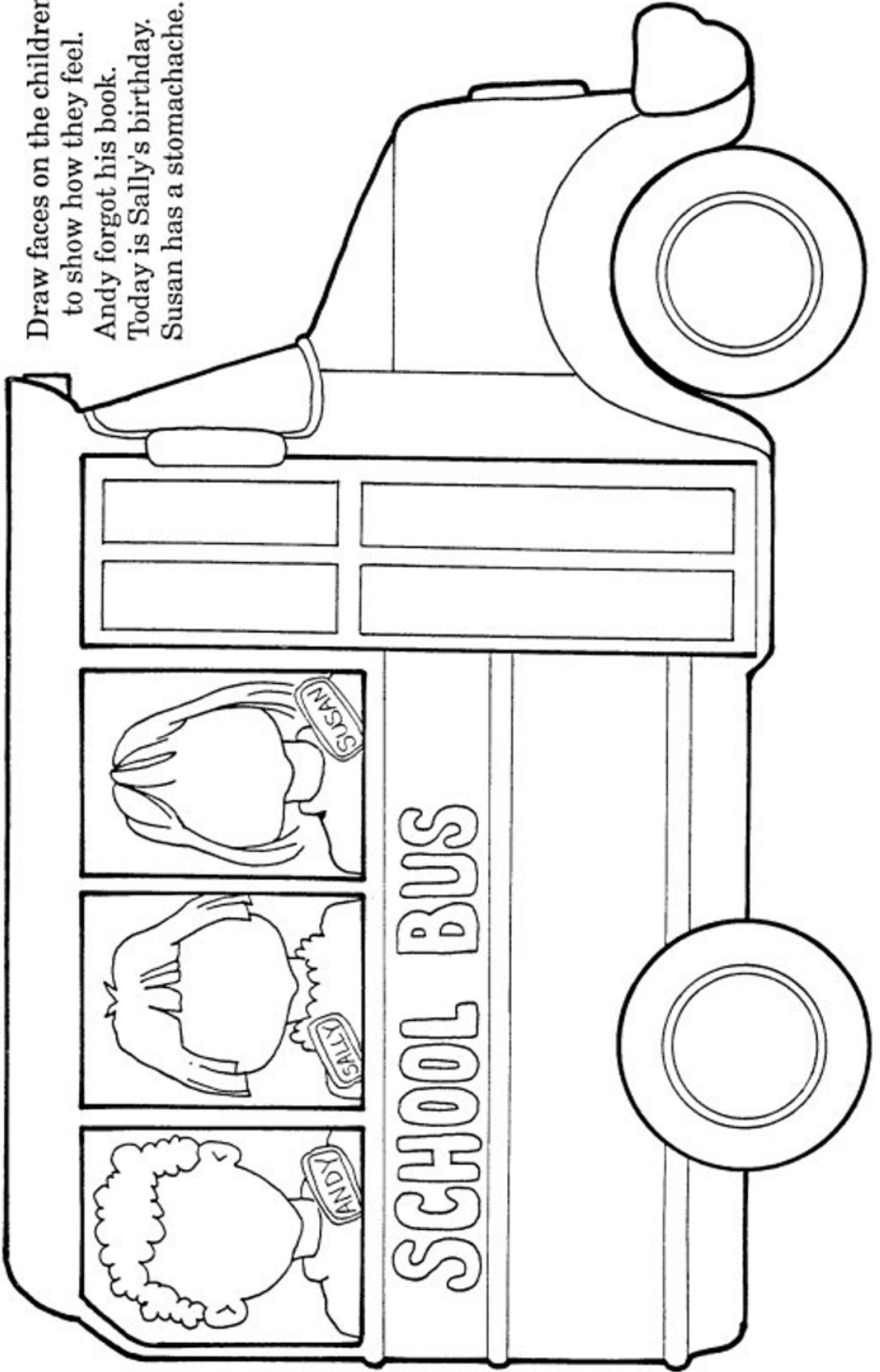


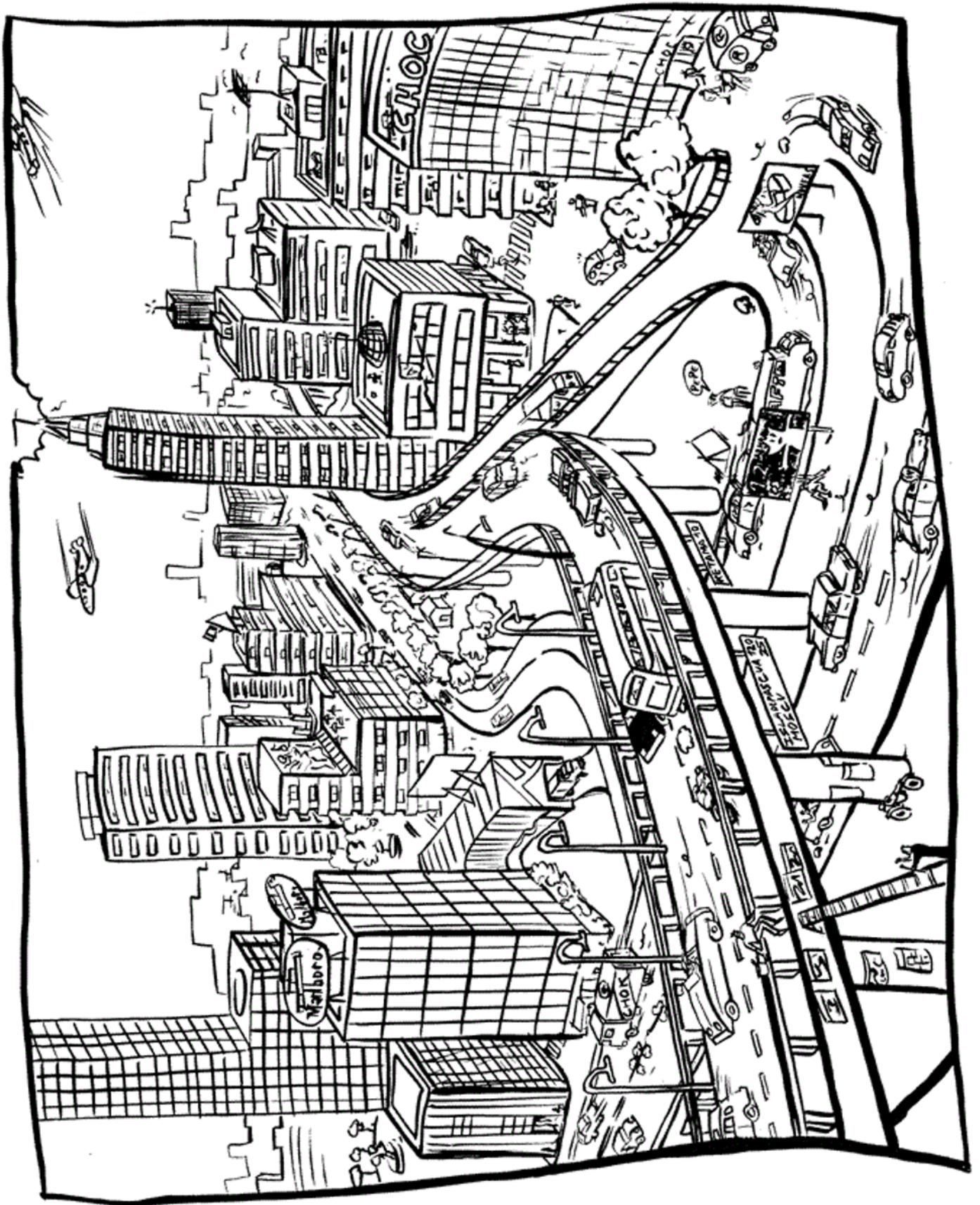
To color the flag of the United States of America, use Crayola® Crayons, Colored Pencils, or markers. Color the shape numbered 1 red and 2 blue. Leave the rest of the flag white.

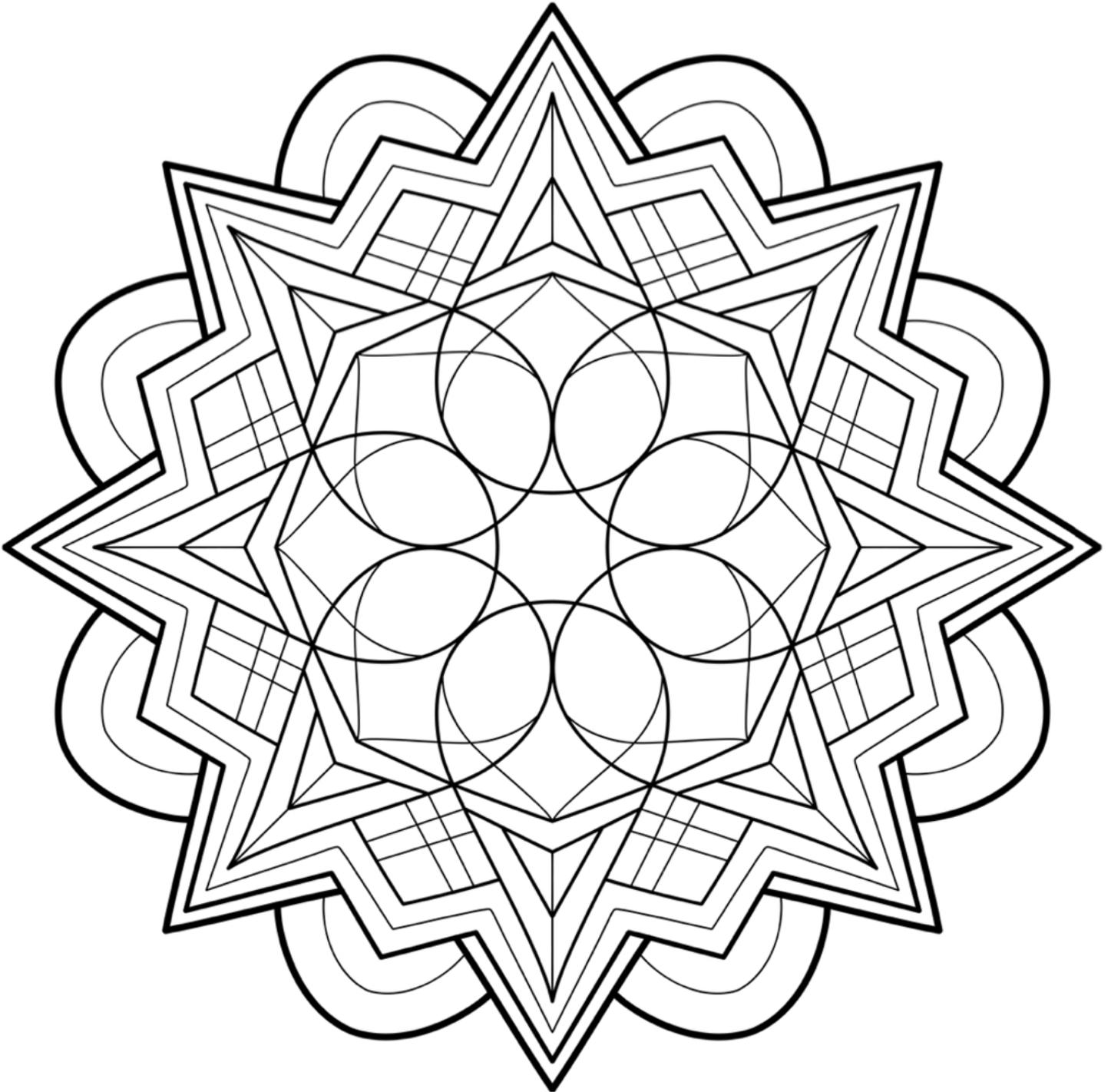


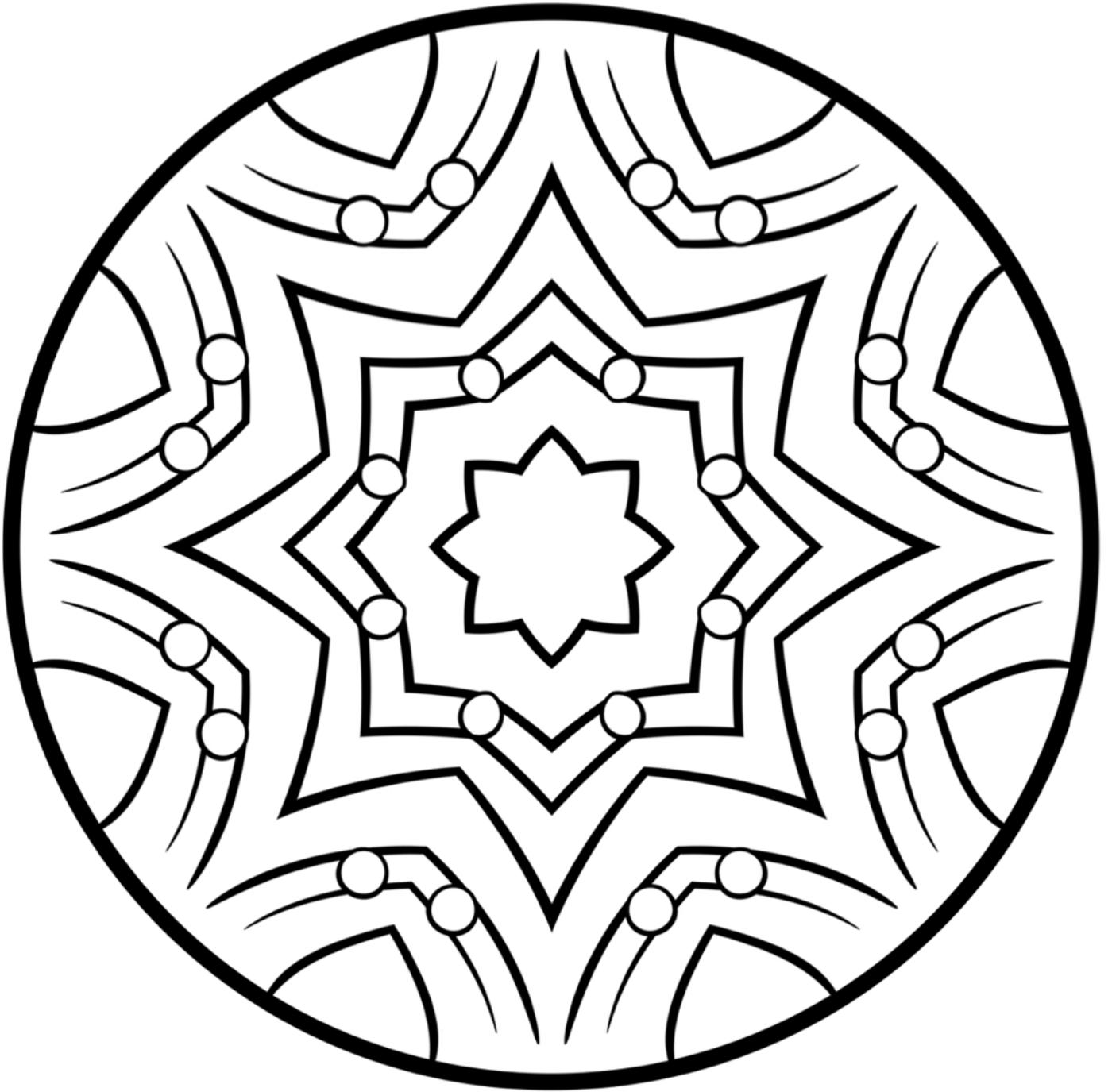
FACES SHOW FEELINGS

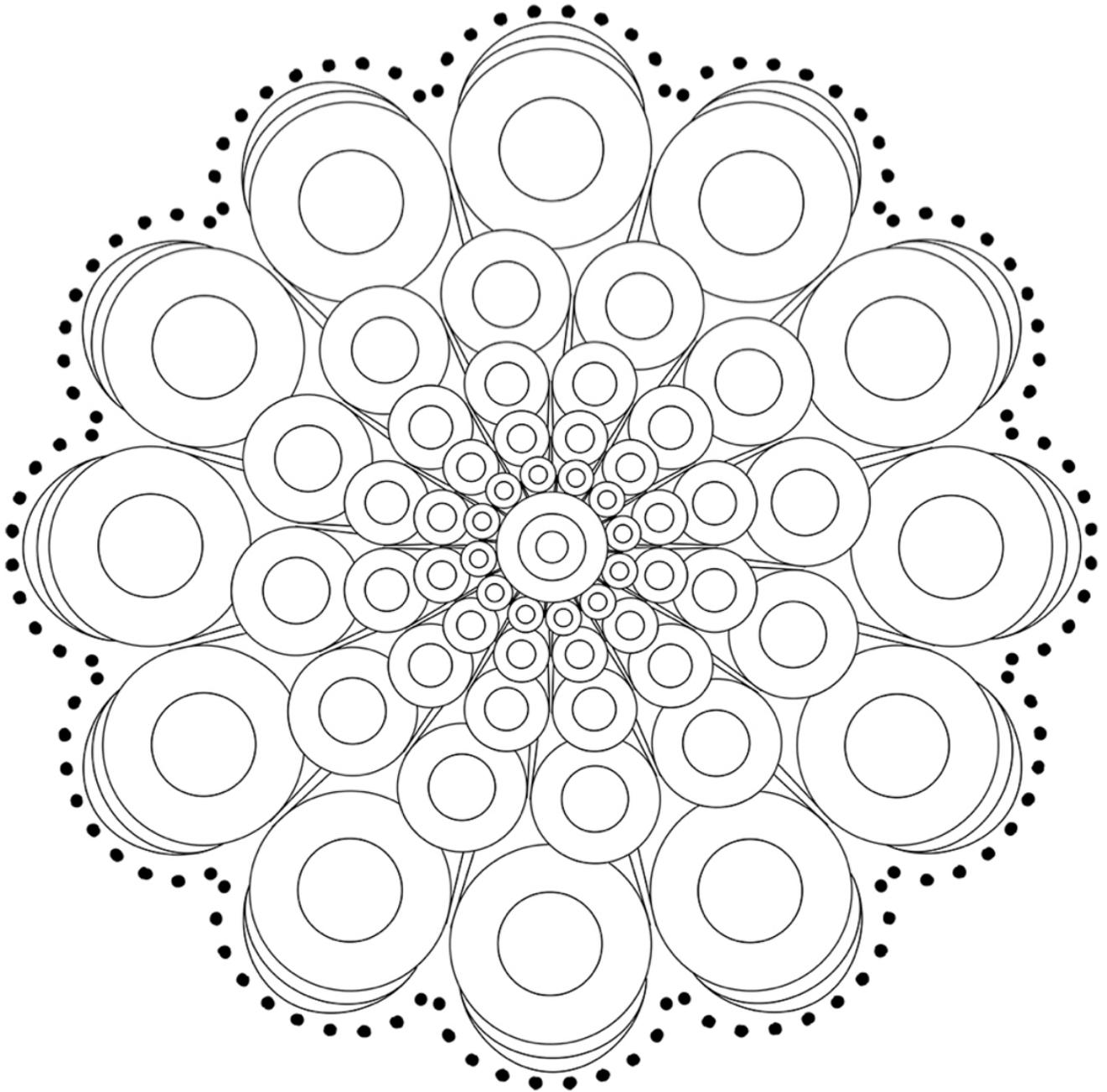
Draw faces on the children
to show how they feel.
Andy forgot his book.
Today is Sally's birthday.
Susan has a stomachache.

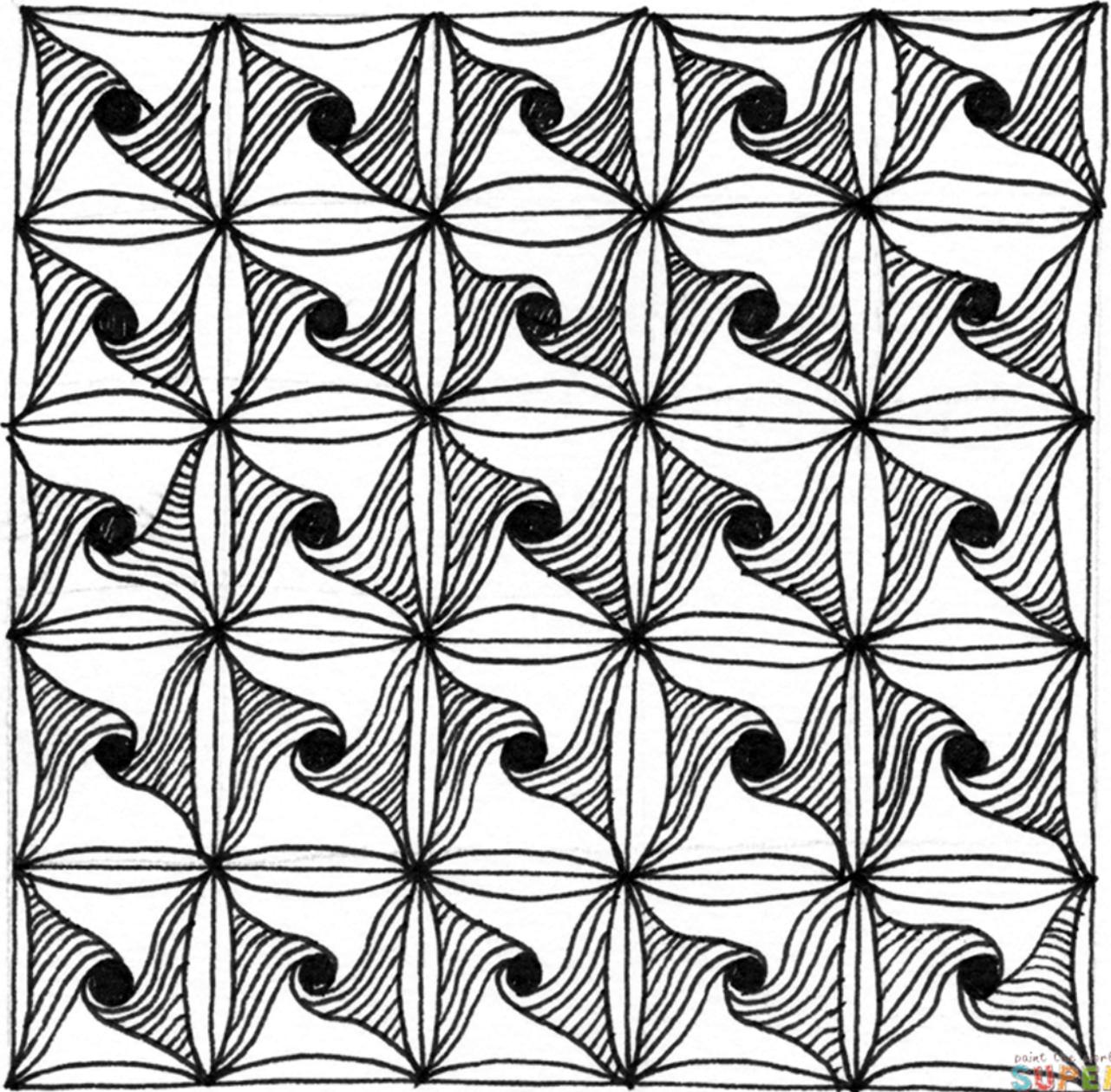












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