



Yoga & Mindfulness

FOR CHILDREN
ACTIVITY & COLORING BOOK

Jennifer Cohen Harper MA, E-RYT, RCYT
..... Illustrated by Karen Gilmour.....



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Jennifer Cohen Harper MA, E-RYT, RCYT, founder of Little Flower Yoga, is a leading voice in the children's yoga and mindfulness community. She is the author of *Little Flower Yoga for Kids: A Yoga and Mindfulness Program to Help Your Child Improve*

Attention and Emotional Balance, and the co-editor of *Best Practices for Yoga in Schools*. Jenn provides therapeutic classes to children and families, and continuing education to mental health and education professionals. She is the board president of the Yoga Service Council, dedicated to making yoga accessible to all regardless of circumstance. Her work has been featured in prominent publications including *The New York Times*, *The International Journal of Yoga Therapy*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Yoga Journal*, and endorsed by thought leaders including Daniel Siegel, M.D., Sharon Salzberg and Congressman Tim Ryan.



Karen Gilmour has been drawing, painting, coloring and creating for as long as she can remember. Her art has been seen in books, on back to school supplies and on the walls of classrooms and kid's rooms. When Karen isn't creating art,

she is busy as the director of Alluem Kids, an ever growing yoga program for kids, teens and families at Alluem Yoga in Cranford, NJ. You can see more of Karen's work by visiting: www.karengilmour.com

Little Flower Yoga is dedicated to bringing the life skills of yoga and mindfulness to children and families in developmentally appropriate ways, in a joy-filled environment. LFY serves thousands of students in school and community based programs, trains children's yoga teachers around the country, and offers continuing education to allied professionals including counselors, social workers, classroom teachers, and occupational therapists. LFY teachers are trained to engage, encourage, and inspire all children, while offering powerful tools to help navigate challenging emotions and experiences. Learn more at www.littlefloweryoga.com



WELCOME

Welcome to the *Yoga and Mindfulness Practices for Children Coloring and Activity Book*. We hope you enjoy exploring it!

Yoga and mindfulness have a lot to offer to all of us. The practices and activities in these pages can help you get stronger and more flexible, manage feelings of anxiety, learn to navigate challenging situations without becoming overwhelmed, and much more. But perhaps the most important thing these practices can help with is the ability to be more connected to yourself — your body, your mind and your emotions. When you are more connected to your own experience, you can make better choices about how to care for yourself and how to respond to the world around you.

As you explore the activities on these pages, the most important thing is to notice what's happening with you. What are you feeling in your body, in your mind, and in your emotions as you try the practices? Does your experience change or stay the same as you hold poses, or as you try them multiple times? How does your body feel as you complete the activity sheets? Do you notice yourself always doing some types of activities and always avoiding others?

As you practice, do what feels right to you and trust your own body. If something doesn't feel right (if it hurts, makes you uncomfortable, freaks you out a bit) pause and check out your feelings, and then make a decision about what to do that works for you in the moment. Have fun, work hard, and be curious about your experience.

Jennifer Cohen Harper
Karen Gilmore


Little
Flower
Yoga


INTRODUCTION


The 5 Elements


The practices in this book are split into five activity types, or elements, that together offer you a complete experience of yoga and mindfulness. Explore the book however you would like, and if you want to try combining the activities on these pages into a longer practice, consider including one activity from each of these five elements.


Beginning Practices: You'll find a few pages with practices like Finding Your Yoga Seat, Mountain Pose, and Final Relaxation, that are a part of many other activities, and you might want to get familiar with them first. 8

 **CONNECT:** Activities that help you connect to your own feelings and thoughts, to the world around you, and to other people 15

 **BREATHE:** Different ways to use your breath, and explore the impact that it has on your energy level and emotions 39

 **MOVE:** Practices that help you build strength, balance and flexibility, explore what your body is capable of, and develop your own personal power 53

 **FOCUS:** Activities to help you notice what your mind is working on, strengthen your ability to focus and learn to manage distractions 79

 **RELAX:** Opportunities for your mind and body to rest and restore 91

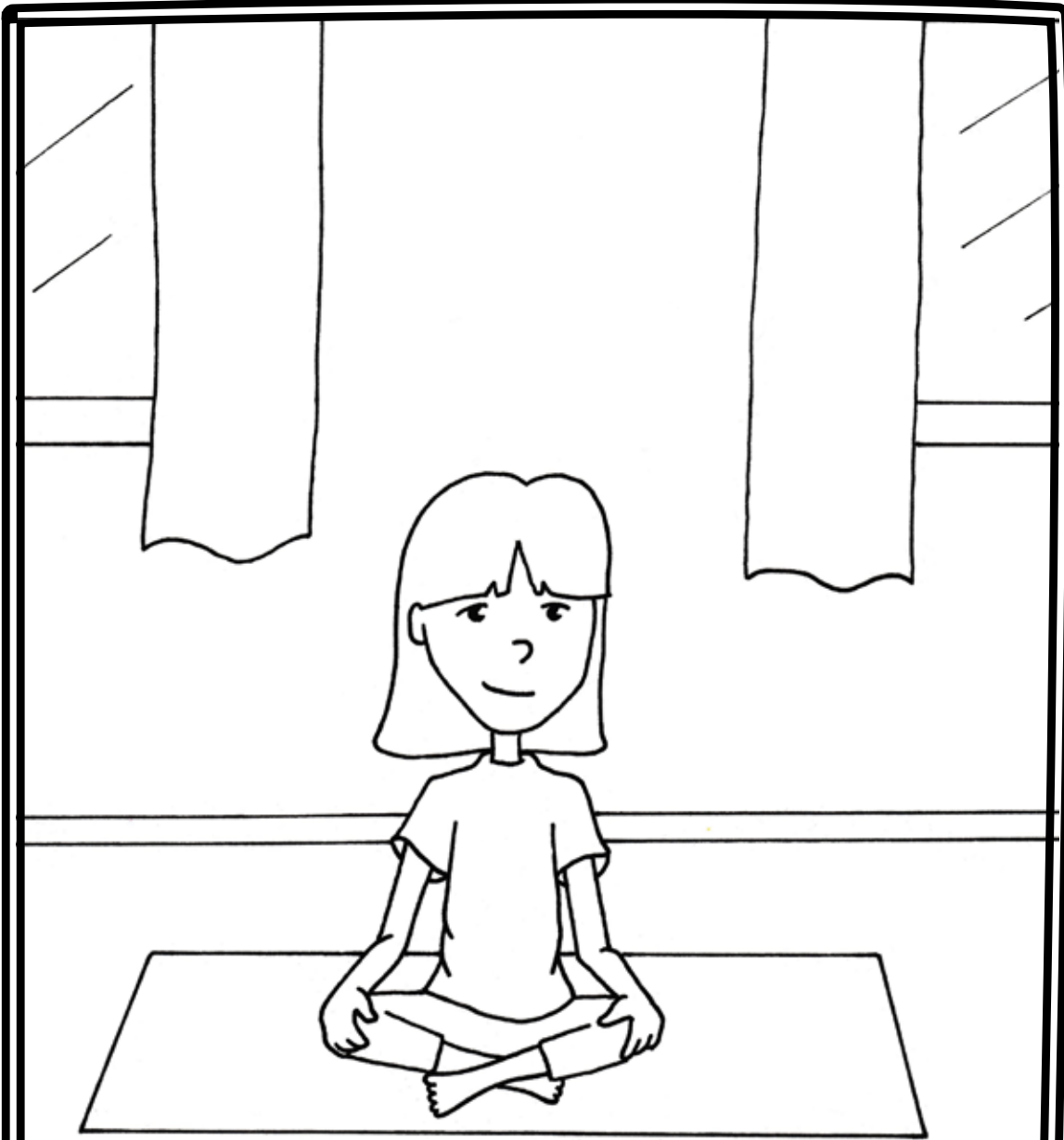
Finding Your Yoga Seat

Choosing your yoga seat is like finding a home base for your yoga practice. It's important that it's comfortable for you, and that you are able to rest in this position. You might choose a yoga seat for yourself that is on the ground or on a yoga mat, or you can have your yoga seat be in a chair. It's up to you, and may change from time to time. The idea is that you choose a way to sit that feels steady, and that lets you sit up tall.

Sit down and notice what your body is doing - Is it leaning to one side? Is it tilting forward or leaning backwards? Do you feel comfortable? Now experiment with different ways to place your legs and feet. You can try sitting with your legs crossed, or in a position called "Easy Pose" with one ankle in front of the other, or with one ankle on top of the other. If you are in a chair, try placing your feet flat on the ground.

Once you have chosen your leg position, sit up tall. Imagine what your body would feel like if you were very proud, and also a little bit relaxed. Each time you take your yoga seat, see if you can find this feeling.

Each time you practice, consider starting in your yoga seat with a few steady breaths.



**FINDING YOUR
YOGA SEAT**



Five Senses Awareness

You can do this sitting or standing. First, bring your attention to anything around you that you can see. Look around. Take your time to notice what is in your environment....Now bring your eyes to rest on one steady spot, or if it's comfortable, close your eyes. See if you can remember what you saw around you. Picture it in your mind and hold it there for a moment or two.

Now imagine opening your ears wide and listen for any sounds around you that you can hear. They can be far away sounds outside of this room, close by sounds, or even the sounds being made by your own body.

Next pay attention to what you can smell. There might be good smells, or bad smells, or some of each in the air. Take a few slow inhales, and see if you can find one or more scents in the air around you.

Now focus on what you can taste. First notice what tastes you can perceive while your mouth is closed. Does the taste change if you move your tongue around your mouth? Does it change if you open your mouth?

Finally, bring your attention to what you can feel. What part of your body is connected with the ground? How do you feel the pressure on the place where you are being held? If you check in with the muscles of your body, can you notice any other feelings? How about the feeling of your clothes on your skin? The air on your face? Do you have glasses, jewelry, or anything else on your body that is creating a sensation?

Take a few slow breaths, and when you are ready, open your eyes or look up.



FIVE SENSES



Kind Wishes

Sit up tall. Close your eyes or look at one spot that isn't moving. If there are other people in the room, imagine that you are sitting all by yourself. Notice what it feels like to sit with yourself.

Imagine someone that you care about very much walking into the room and sitting down right in front of you. What does it feel like to sit with this person?... Let's send them some kind wishes. Say to yourself, either out loud or in your mind:

....May you be happy...May you be healthy...May you be safe....May you be strong

How did you feel when you sent kind wishes to this person? Happy? Proud? Sad? Any other feelings? Was it easy or hard to send kind wishes to this person?

Now close your eyes again and imagine someone you think is a little annoying or frustrating. Maybe your sister or brother when they are driving you crazy, or a friend you had an argument with recently. It could even be a teacher or a parent. Imagine that person walking into the room and sitting down in front of you. What does it feel like to sit with this person?... Let's send them some kind wishes. Say to yourself, out loud or silently,

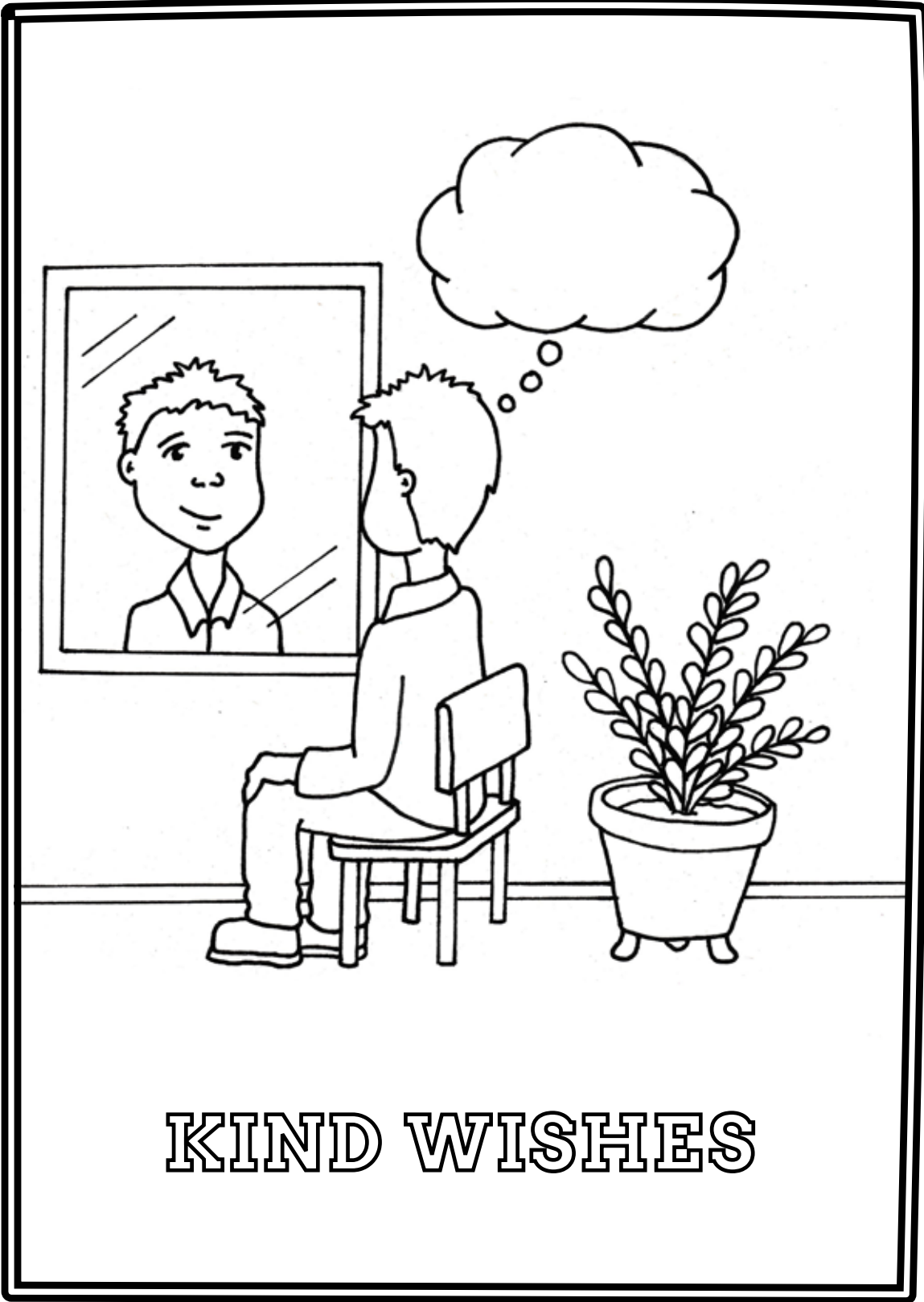
....May you be happy...May you be healthy...May you be safe...May you be strong

How did it feel to send this person kind wishes?

Now close your eyes, and imagine yourself sitting with a mirror in front of you. Look into the mirror and notice what it feels like to sit here with yourself... Now send some kind feelings to yourself, by saying

....May I be happy...May I be healthy...May I be safe...May I be strong

Notice what it feels like to send these kind wishes to yourself. Take a few steady breaths, and when you are ready, open your eyes.



KIND WISHES

Kind Wishes Exploration

Who are the people in your life that it's easiest to be kind to?

Is it ever hard for you to be kind
to other people? When?

Is it ever hard to be kind
toward yourself? When?



Mindful Communication Practice

Having another person listen carefully and compassionately to what you are saying, and listening to them in return, is an important part of connecting to each other. When you are an active listener for another person, you help them find their own words. Often when people talk to each other we are distracted, or thinking about what we are going to say in response to what we are hearing. In this activity you will work with a partner to practice listening, and experience talking while someone is listening to you.

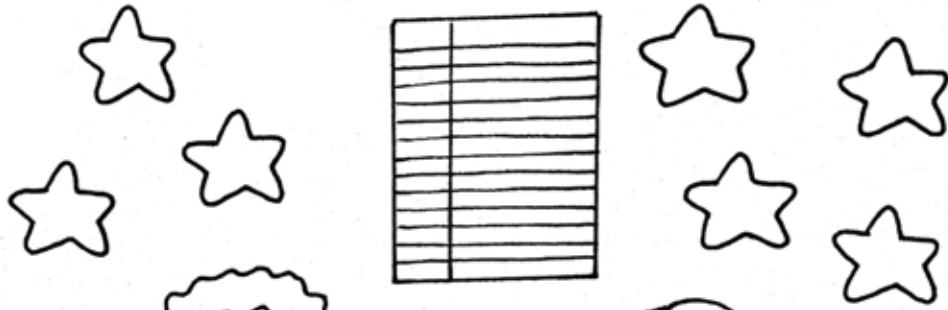
Find a friend or family member to share this practice with. Choose one of the questions below to ask each other. Set a timer for a specific amount of time (about 3 minutes would be a good start) and take turns being the speaker and the listener for that set amount of time each. When you are listening, be an active listener and stay tuned in to your partner — you can nod, smile, say things like uh huh and I hear you. But don't ask questions, interrupt, or make comments about what is being said.

While you are the listener, pay attention to your partner but also notice your own thoughts, feelings and body while you are listening. Is listening challenging? Are you wanting to ask a question? Are you getting anxious for your turn? When you are the speaker, notice how it feels to talk without interruptions or questions. If there is some silence that is ok also, just wait until either the speaker wants to talk again, or the timer is finished.

Possible questions and topics for mindful communication:

- What are some things that make you happy or feel meaningful in your life?
- How do you manage when you are feeling upset or overwhelmed?
- What is something you are proud of?

BE A GOOD LISTENER



**MINDFUL
COMMUNICATION**

Mindful Communication Exploration

How did you feel when you were the listener? _____

Your Body: _____

Your Mind: _____

Your Feelings: _____

.....

How did you feel when you were the speaker? _____

Your Body: _____

Your Mind: _____

Your Feelings: _____

.....

Did you notice anything else? _____

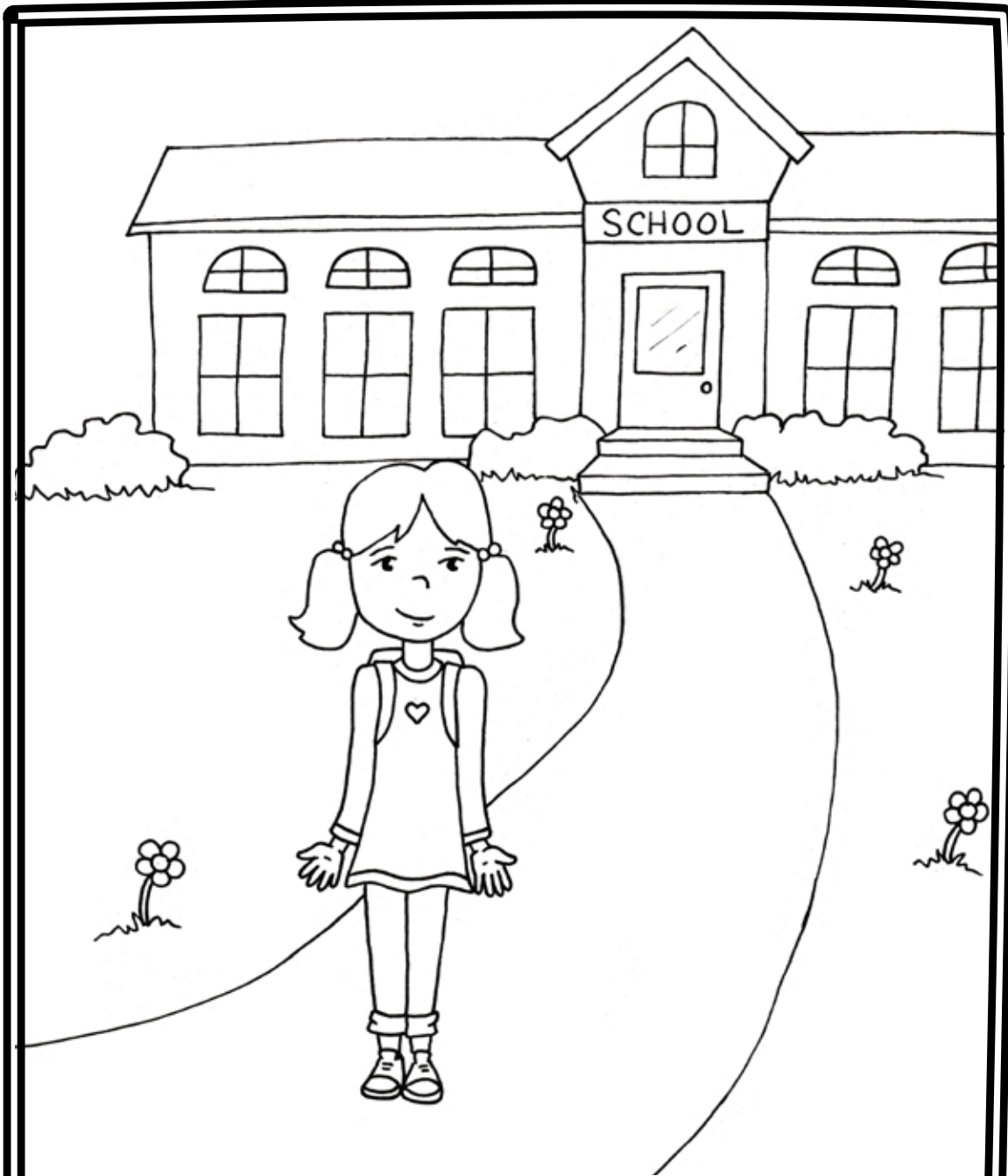
Mountain Pose Exploration

Stand in Mountain Pose, take a few slow breaths, and do a scan of your body. Starting with your feet, and ending with your head, bring your attention to each part of your body and check in with how it is feeling in this pose today.

Now you are going to wake up your body. Bring your attention to your toes and explore how they move. Wiggle them, pick them up, spread them out, and then place them back down. Now move your feet and ankles. Roll them in circles, point and flex your foot, and make any other movements that your feet want to make. Next move your legs and bend your knees. Pick up each knee high, and then bend them as deeply as you can. What other movements can you make with your knees?

Keep moving up your body to your hips and explore how they move. Make big circles with your legs, maybe give each leg a good shake. Make circles with your hips. Continue moving up your body, pausing at each joint to move it any way that feels good. Move your shoulders, arms and hands, your neck. You can even move the muscles in your face (try scrunching your nose, opening and closing your jaw, moving your tongue around and whatever else you can think of).

After you've moved your whole body, come back to Mountain Pose. Take one more scan, going slowly from your feet to your head, of how your body is feeling. Notice if this Mountain Pose feels any different from your first.



MOUNTAIN POSE EXPLORATION

Mountain Pose Exploration

Use the space below to write about or draw
what you can experience with each of your senses right now.

How did your body feel in your first
Mountain Pose?

How did your body feel in your second
Mountain Pose, after doing some
movement?

Is there anything else you noticed during this activity?

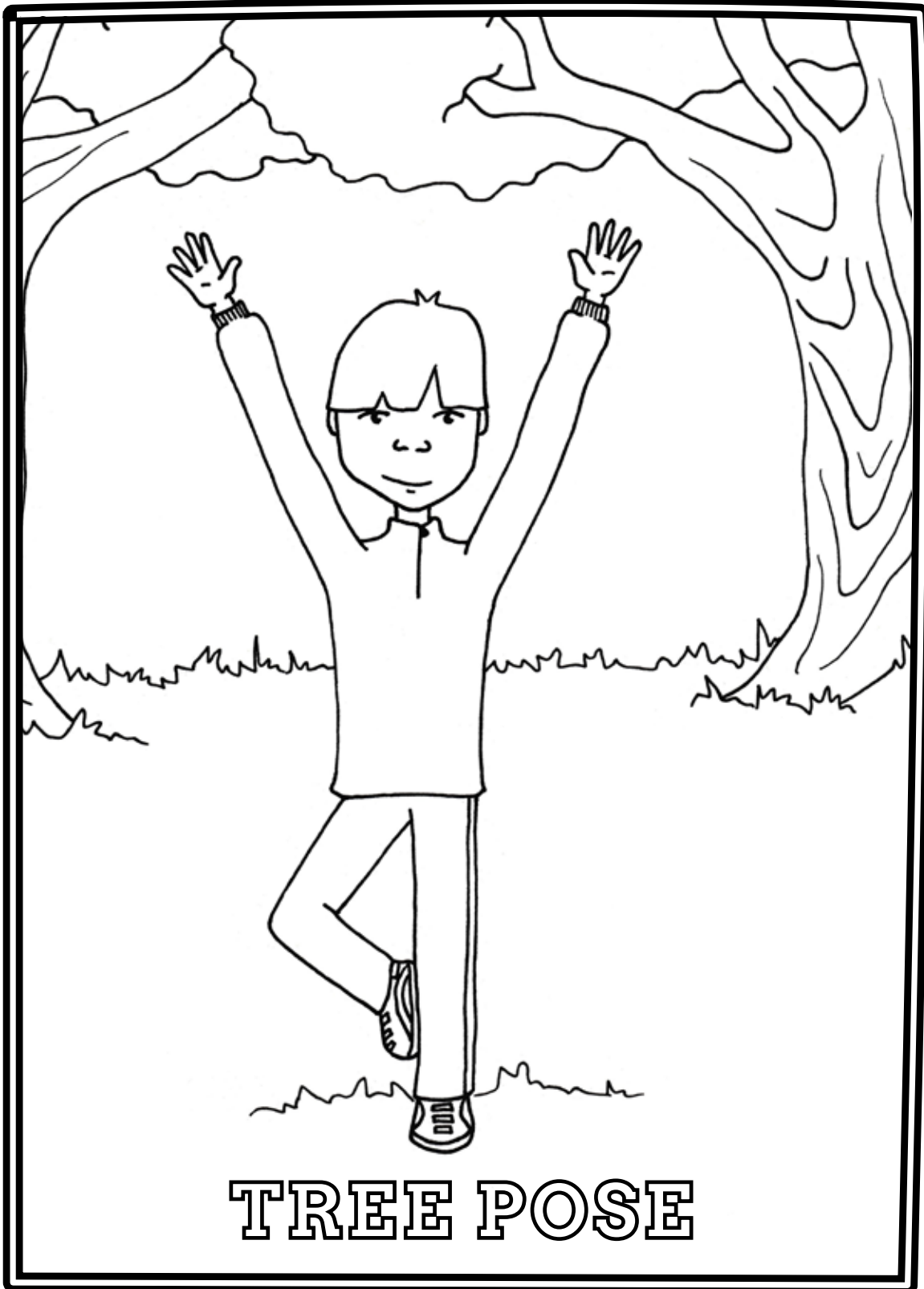
Tree Pose Exploration

Begin standing in Mountain Pose. Find a place to rest your gaze that is straight out in front of you. Keep staring at that spot to help you balance. Slowly lift your right foot up off of the ground. Bend your knee and turn it out to the side, so that you can place the sole of your right foot on the inside of your left calf. You can also lift your foot to the inside of your thigh, but make sure not to place it on the side of your knee.

Try to relax the foot of your standing leg. Notice if you are curling up your toes, and if so wiggle them a little bit. Imagine your standing leg growing roots deep into the ground to hold you steady. Press your foot into your leg, and your leg back into your foot. Lift your arms overhead like branches reaching for the sun.

When you are ready to switch sides, turn your right knee to the front, pause, and then slowly lower it down. Then practice Tree Pose with your left leg.

Now practice Tree Pose again, but this time, try an experiment. While you're holding the pose, look up, then right, then left, then down...move your eyes quickly and notice what happens in your body. Now try looking at something that is moving, such as leaves blowing on trees, cars going by, or anything else that has a bit of movement to it. How do you feel? Finally try closing your eyes, and see what happens to your balance.



TREE POSE

Tree Pose Exploration

How did you feel in Tree Pose?

What happened when:

You looked around? _____

You looked at something that was moving? _____

You closed your eyes? _____

Did you notice anything else?
