

Children and Divorce

workbook

Children Teaching Children
About Divorce

A Professor Child Production



www.professorchild.com

© 2012 Professor Child, LLC

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-------|
| Introduction to the Workbook..... | 2 |
| Chapter 1: What Divorce Means to Me..... | 3 |
| Chapter 2: How I Heard..... | 4 |
| Chapter 3: My Biggest Worry..... | 5 |
| Chapter 4: What Has Changed Since the Divorce? | 6 |
| Chapter 5: Caught in the Middle..... | 7 |
| Chapter 6: Things That Help..... | 8 |
| Chapter 7: Back and Forth..... | 9-10 |
| Chapter 8: If I Had a Magic Wand..... | 11 |
| Chapter 9: My Parents' Relationship Now (Part I)..... | 12-13 |
| Chapter 9: What I Love Most About My Family (Part II)..... | 14-16 |
| Chapter 10: Hopes and Dreams..... | 17-18 |
| Chapter 11: Advice to Kids..... | 19-24 |
| Chapter 12: Advice to Parents..... | 25-29 |
| Chapter 13: I Am..... | 30-31 |



Introductions

Thank you for your purchase of Professor Child's film, *Children and Divorce*. We hope this corresponding workbook will help children continue to heal by expressing their feelings through discussions and creative activities.

Before your child begins the workbook, we recommend that you both watch *Children and Divorce* from the beginning to the end. When your child begins the workbook, we suggest that you both watch the film one chapter at a time and complete that chapter's discussion questions and exercises before moving on to the next chapter. We recommend focusing on one or two chapters at a time to ensure the child has plenty of time to absorb the discussion and exercises.

Throughout the workbook, we refer to a "safe person". Please take the time to discuss the definition of "safe" with the child with whom you are working. You may define a safe person as someone who is dependable and trustworthy and will protect him or her from harm. Make sure the child understands that a safe person is someone in whom they may confide without fear of a negative consequence. Follow up with this question: "Who would be safe for you to talk to?"

We would like to continue this dialogue with you. We encourage you to provide us with feedback on the film and workbook. We love to hear from parents, counselors, teachers, and the children who use our tools.

~the Professor Child Team

Chapter 1: What Divorce Means to Me

“Divorce means to me that my parents weren’t happy being married to each other and that they split apart so that they could be happy again.” Canon

Discussion Questions:

What does divorce mean to you?

How does divorce make you feel?

If divorce were a color, what color would it be? Why?

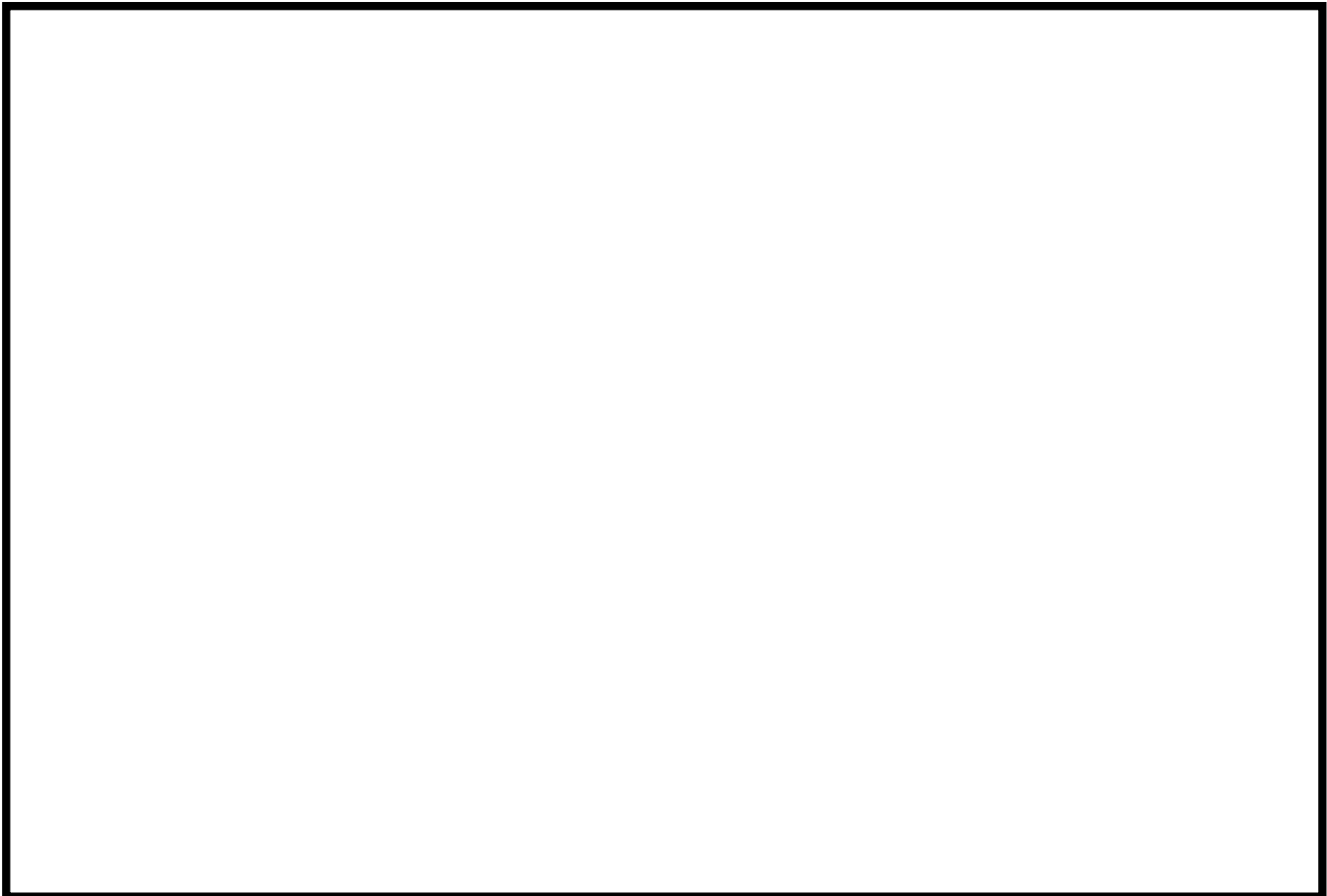
If divorce were an animal, what animal would it be? Why?

Exercises:

Draw a picture of the animal that you feel represents divorce.

or

Draw a picture of what divorce looks like to you.



Chapter 2: How I Heard

“My mom is crying on the bench and I’m like, ‘what’s wrong?’ and she’s like, ‘daddy and me are getting separated.’ I’m like, ‘what does that mean?’ and she talks to me about it and I start losing my mind. I was crying.” Brynn

Discussion Questions:

Where were you when you were told your parents were getting a divorce?

Who was there when you were told?

Who told you?

What did they say?

How did you react?

Did they tell you why they were getting a divorce?

Why do you think your parents got a divorce?

What would be the best way for parents to tell kids they are getting a divorce?

Exercises:

(Before) Draw a picture of how you felt when you were told that your parents were divorcing.

(After) Draw a picture of how you feel about it now.

What is the same about these pictures? What is different?



Chapter 3: My Biggest Worry

“My biggest worry was me not getting to see my dad a lot and that we wouldn’t get to go on another whole family trip.” Silvie

Discussion Questions:

What worries did you have when you found out your parents were divorcing?

Did you tell anyone about your worries? If so, who? If not, why?

Did you ever blame yourself? Why?

Did you ever blame anyone else? If so, who and why?

Do you think it’s ever a child’s fault when parents divorce? Why?

Exercise:

Write down some worries you have about your parents’ divorce.

Give your list of worries to a partner. Have that person pretend to be you. Your partner will tell you all of the things he/she is worried about. Your job is to give advice to help ease your partner’s worries.

List of worries...



Chapter 4: What Has Changed Since the Divorce?

“I think that divorce has changed me as a person because I think it’s made me stronger and more emotional at the same time.” Mac

Discussion Questions:

How have you become stronger since the divorce?

How have you become more emotional?

Do you feel divorce has changed who you are? If so, in what ways?

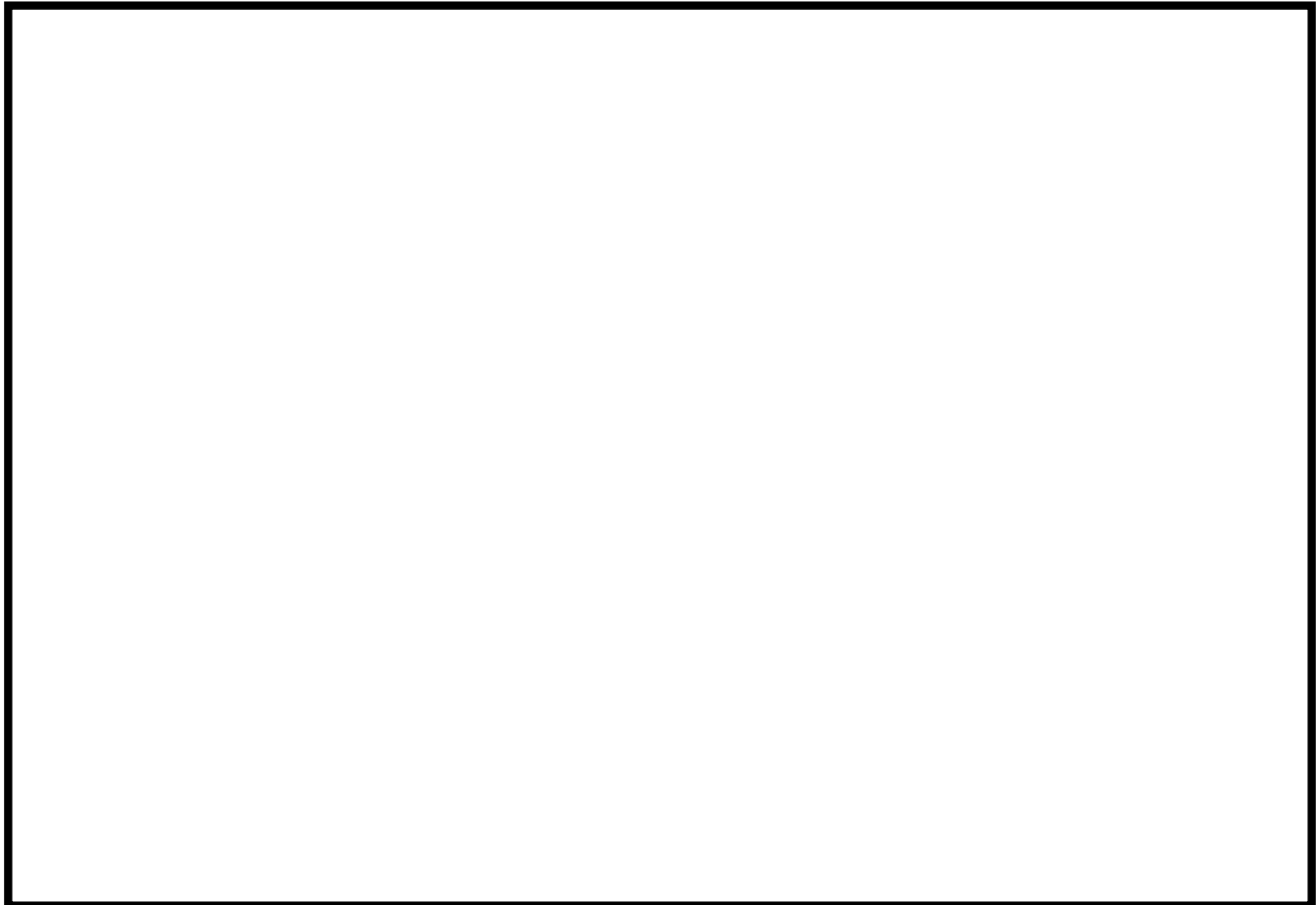
What has changed for you since the divorce?

Exercise:

Gather some magazines, newspapers, stickers, glue, tape, scissors, markers, etc.

Find pictures and words that represent what “change” means to you.

Make a collage using these words and pictures.



Chapter 5: Caught in the Middle

“Sometimes I do feel like I have to choose sides.” Silvie

Discussion Questions:

Have you ever felt like you had to choose sides? How did you handle it?

Brynn said she often feels like she’s in the middle of her parents’ problems because her parents have told her to be careful about what she says at each parent’s house. Because of this, she feels that she has to keep secrets from them.

Do you think kids should have to keep secrets from their parents?

Silvie said that when her parents were fighting she would get in trouble if she said that one parent was right. Instead, she tries to stay out of their arguments as much as she can.

Have you felt like taking sides when your parents fight?

What do you usually do when they fight?

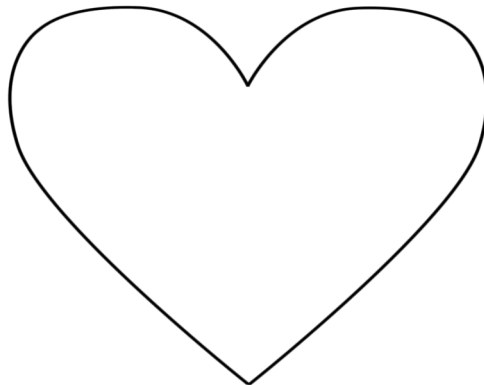
Sammy’s advice for staying out of the middle of parents’ problems is to go to a friend’s house, invite a friend over, go to your room to play with something or watch TV.

What do you do to stay out of the middle?

Exercises:

Prop up one or two stuffed animals and pretend they are your parents. Tell them how you feel about being caught in the middle. You can also do this exercise with a safe friend/adult.

Pretend this is your heart. What does your heart look and feel like when you are caught in the middle of your parents’ problems?



Chapter 6: Things That Help

“It’s way easier when you talk to somebody about it and not be afraid to ask people for help.” Silvie

Discussion Questions:

| Child | Things That Helped |
|---------|--|
| Silvie | focus on the better things instead of the bad things |
| Macy | going to a counselor |
| Brynn | talking to and getting advice from her parents |
| Canon | spending equal time with each parent |
| Sophia | calling her other parent when she is away from him/her |
| Cameron | joining a support group |
| Mac | talking with a sibling |
| Sammy | talking to a best friend |

Which of these things have you done?

What else have you done to feel better?

What other things have you done to help cope during difficult times?

Exercise:

Write a thank you note to at least one person who has helped you through your parents’ divorce. Make sure to tell them what they did that was most helpful.



Chapter 7: Back and Forth

“The hardest thing about my parents being divorced is not being able to see the other parent.” Mac

Discussion Questions:

Do you feel this way? If not, what do you think is the hardest part of going back and forth?

Macy said that she doesn't like not seeing her dad a lot. However, it helps to talk to her dad on the phone almost every day.

How often do you see and talk with each of your parents?

Do you wish it was different?

Brynn spends most of her time at her mother's house, so it's "different" at her dad's house.

Do you ever feel different when you're at one of your parents' houses?

What is different?

Mac's schedule for spending time with family is two days with his mom, two days with his dad, followed by five days with his mom and five days with his dad. Then the schedule repeats.

What is your schedule?

What do you think about it?

Both Mac and Sammy said one of the hardest parts of going back and forth is packing up things they need and taking them from house to house. Sammy said he sometimes forgets things and they have to drive back to the other parent's house to get them.

What is the hardest part of going back and forth for you?

Is there anything your parents could do to help?

Sophia said sometimes she feels like a mess.

What do you think she means by this?

Do you ever feel this way?



Exercise:

Pretend you have the authority to decide the perfect “back and forth” schedule. Fill in what it would look like. Don’t forget to add in the times when you will switch back to the other parent’s house. Sometimes kids don’t want to switch back and forth. If you feel this way, write it on the schedule.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| School year schedule: | |
| Weekdays: | |
| Weekends: | |
| Holidays: | |
| Spring break: | |
| Summer break: | |
| Winter break: | |

Do you feel comfortable sharing this schedule with one or both of your parents? If so, do it!

Chapter 8: If I Had a Magic Wand

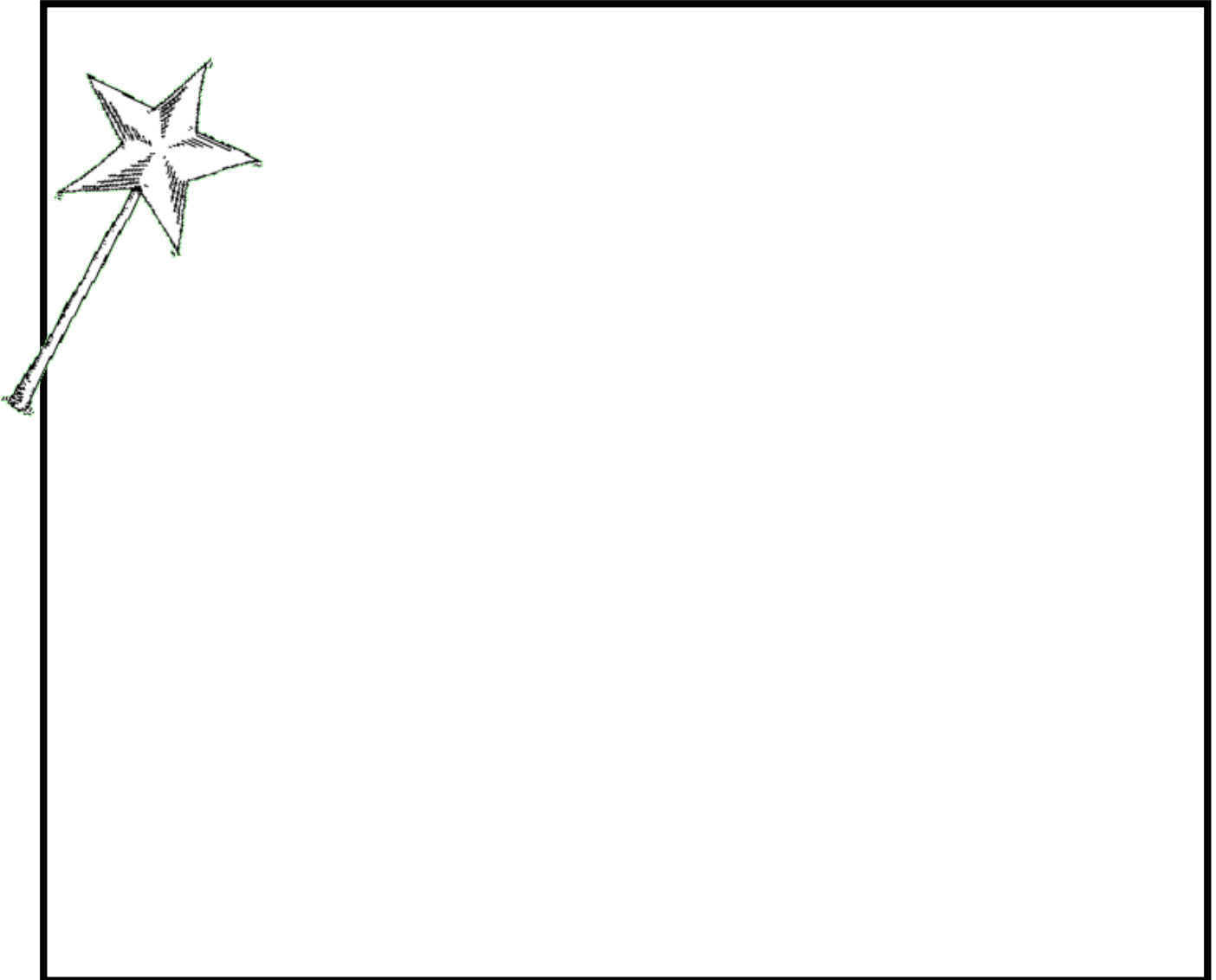
“If I had a magic wand I would put my parents back together. People say it’s never going to happen, but I would SO put them back together!” Brynn

Discussion Questions:

If you had a magic wand, what would you wish for?

Exercise:

Draw your wishes coming true.



Chapter 9: My Parents' Relationship Now (Part I)

"My parents don't say the kindest things about each other, but I'm sort of used to it." Brynn

Discussion Questions:

Brynn, Sammy, and Mac all said their parents need to be kinder to each other. How do your parents treat one another now compared to when they were married?

How do you think it makes children feel to hear their parents fight?

How do you think it makes children feel to hear their parents laughing and getting along?

What are your drop-offs like? Do your parents talk to each other? What are their conversations like?

How do your parents talk to each other during phone conversations?

If you could, would you change the way your parents talk to each other? How?

Do you feel that your parents made the right decision to get a divorce? Why?

Exercise:

Draw a picture of what your parents' relationship looked like when they were married.
Write some words on the pictures to describe their relationship then.

Draw a picture of what your parents' relationship looks like now that they are divorced.
Write some words on the picture to describe their relationship now.

| My Parents Then | My Parents Now |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| | |



Chapter 9: What I Love Most About My Family (Part II)

“What I love most about my family is we don’t have any secrets and we’re pretty open with each other, which is nice.” Canon

Discussion Questions:

Sammy loves that his family is really close.

Canon likes that his family doesn’t keep secrets and they are open with each other.

Sophia likes that her family is always nice, kind and understanding.

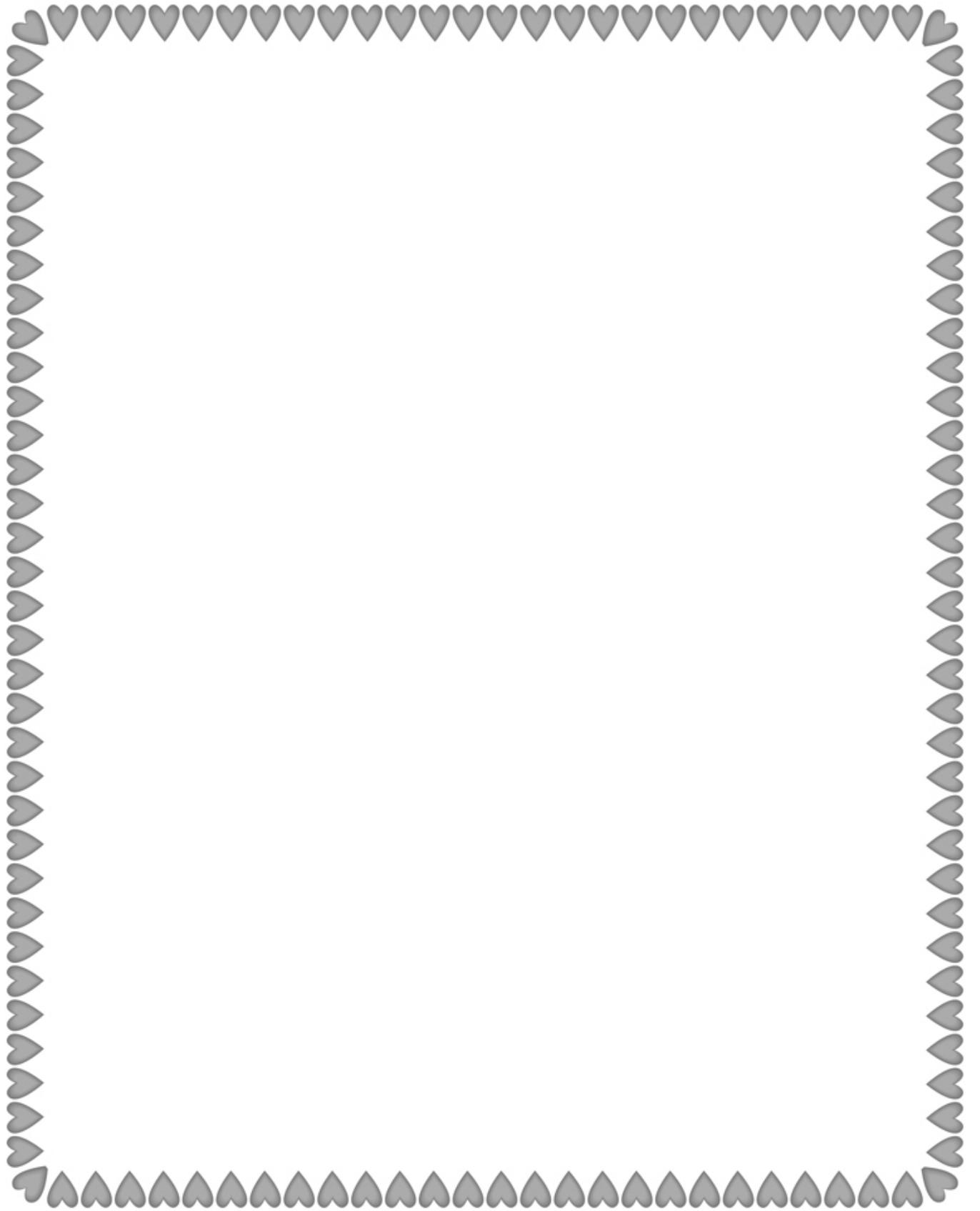
Mac loves how supportive his family is.

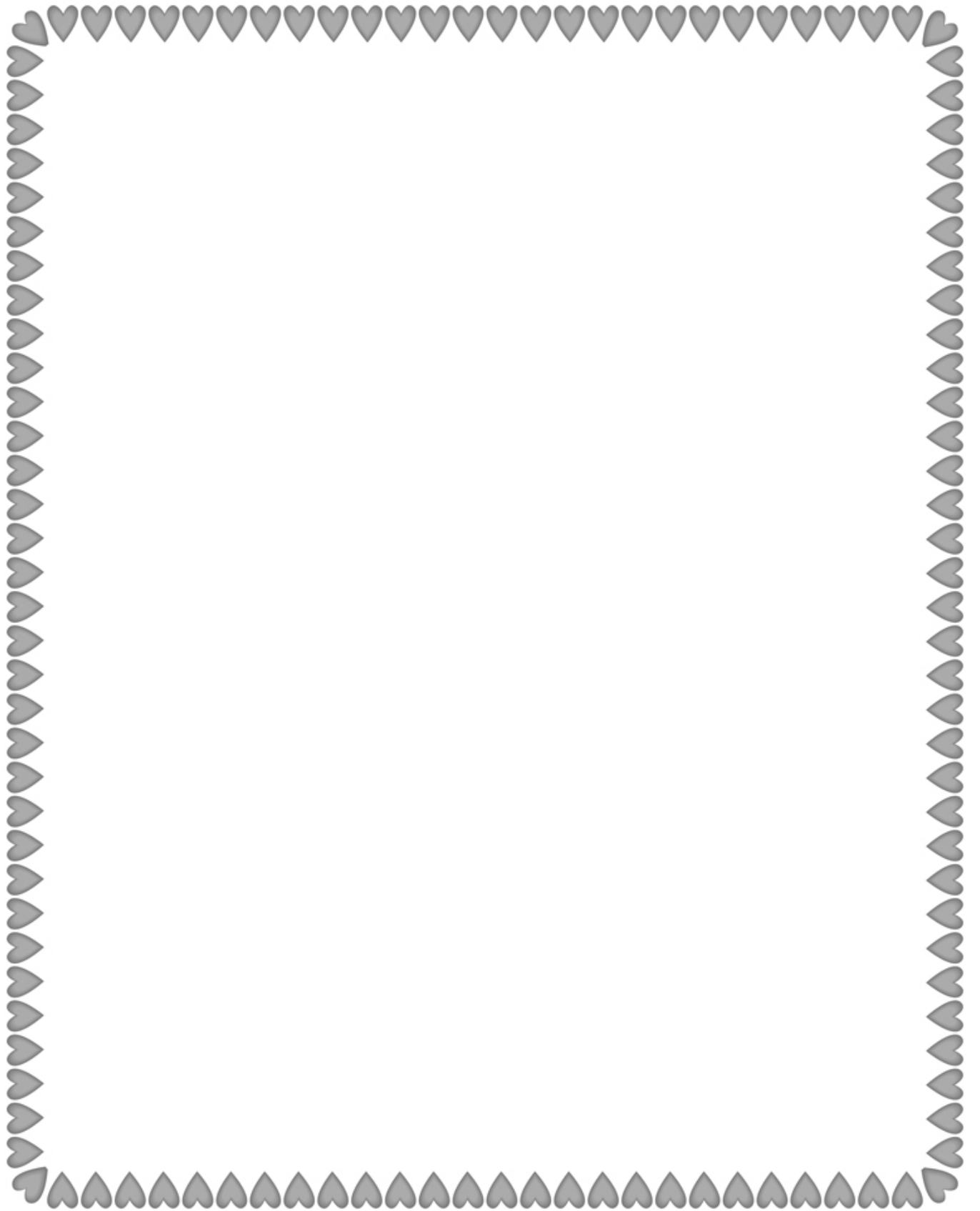
What are the things you love about your family?

Exercises:

Pair up with someone and take turns telling each other (one thing at a time) what you love about your families until you both run out of things to say.

Write a note to members of your family and tell them the things that you love and appreciate about them.





Chapter 10: Hopes and Dreams

“My hopes and dreams are that someday my parents will be nicer to each other and to grow up and have a good life even though my parents were divorced.” Sammy

Discussion Questions:

Mac hopes to be a professional soccer player. Sophia hopes to become a successful veterinarian. What are your hopes and dreams for a future career?

Mac hopes to never get divorced and to be happy with his wife. Sophia hopes to be a successful mother.

What are your hopes and dreams for a future family?

Do you want to get married someday? Why?

Do you want to have children? Why?

Sammy hopes to remember how hard it was for him as a kid to go through a divorce. He will try not to go through one himself so his kids don't have to suffer in the way that he has. What are your thoughts about this?

What are some more of your hopes and dreams?

Exercise:

Write a letter to yourself as if all of your hopes and dreams have already come true. For example:

Dear Me,

I'm so happy that I am a successful mother with three beautiful children (1 boy and 2 girls). My husband is one of the nicest people I've ever known. He understands me and loves me. I love my job as a veterinarian because I can work with animals all day long. My home is very cozy and the kids have lots of room to play outside. I am a very happy person.

Love,
Me

Dear Me,

Love,
Me



Chapter 11: Advice to Kids

“Don’t worry, it’s not your fault, be strong, talk to anyone you can about it that you feel safe talking to. Let your emotions pour out and don’t be afraid.” Sammy

Discussion Questions:

What advice would you give kids about:

Dealing with worries they have about their parents getting a divorce.

Dealing with all of the changes since the divorce.

Getting out of the middle of their parents’ problems.

Making going back and forth less stressful.

What to do when one parent tells them to keep a secret from the other parent.

Dealing with a new stepparent.

Dealing with new stepbrothers and/or stepsisters.

Silvie said that when parents fight, you should go do something like talk to a sibling or go outside. Her advice was to distract yourself instead of listening to parents fight.

What advice would you give kids?

Macy said that it’s okay to be hurt and sometimes good to cry so you get out all of your feelings. She said you should never hold in your feelings or all of your emotions.

Do you ever feel hurt and cry? How do you feel after?

Do you ever hold in all of your emotions? How do you feel when you do?

What advice would you give to kids about showing their emotions?

Exercise:

You are the expert of a kid’s advice column. Kids are writing to you for advice on the following scenarios:

#1: Dear Kid Expert,

My parents just told me they are getting a divorce and I am freaking out. I had no idea this was coming and I don't know how to cope with my anger and sadness. Help!

From,
Angry

Dear Angry,

From,
The Kid Expert

#2: Dear Kid Expert,

My mother just told me she is getting married to a man I hardly know. Plus, he has a son and a daughter. I am really scared about getting a stepparent, a new stepbrother and stepsister. I'm worried my mom isn't going to have time for me anymore. I have a lot of questions and feel like I have no one to talk to. I need your advice on how to deal with this!

From,
Scared

Dear Scared,

From,
The Kid Expert



#3: Dear Kid Expert,

My parents were recently divorced and I live with each parent for two days at a time. All of this back and forth is making me crazy! I keep forgetting things to pack that I need at each house. Plus, it's hard to adjust to the changing schedule and different house rules every two days. I'm scared to tell my parents how I feel. I could really use some advice about how to deal with this.

From,
Back and Forth

Dear Back and Forth,

From,
The Kid Expert

#4: Dear Kid Expert,

My parents' divorced last year and my dad moved to another state. I'm used to seeing my dad every week, but now I only see him a few times a year. I'm really mad about this. It isn't fair. Can you help?

From,
Mad

Dear Mad,

From,
The Kid Expert



#5: Dear Kid Expert,

My parents got a divorce a few months ago. I'm feeling really guilty because I'm happier now that they are divorced. I don't have to listen to them yell and fight anymore. Is it normal to feel this way or should I want them to get back together?

From,
Guilty

Dear Guilty,

From,
The Kid Expert

#6

Dear Kid Expert,

When I'm at my dad's house I really want to call my mom, but I don't want him to get mad. When I'm at my mom's house I really want to call my dad, but I don't want her to get mad either. It's hard because I love being with both of my parents, but I'm always missing the parent I'm not with. Can you give me some advice?

From,
Missing You

Dear Missing You,

From,
The Kid Expert



#7: Dear Kid Expert,
I'm working on a plan to get my parents back together. I told a friend and she didn't think it was a good idea. What do you think?

From,
Planning

Dear Planning,

From,
The Kid Expert

#8: Dear Kid Expert,
Sometimes I feel closer to my stepmother than my real mother. I feel like there is something wrong with feeling this way. What do you think?

From,
Confused

Dear Confused,

From,
The Kid Expert



#9: Dear Kid Expert,

What do you think are the top 5 things to do to help a kid deal with their parents getting a divorce?

From,

Top 5

Dear Top 5,

From,
The Kid Expert

#10

Dear Kid Expert,

Sometimes I feel like my parents don't love me as much as they did before they were divorced. My parents don't know that I feel this way. Should I tell them or keep it to myself so they don't get mad?

From,

Needing Love

Dear Needing Love,

From,
The Kid Expert



Chapter 12: Advice to Parents

“I would say to try to just keep your mouth shut or just go in another room or do it when the kids aren’t around. You don’t want your kids to grow up being mean to other kids or adults.” Macy

Discussion Questions:

Macy thinks the parent that’s not living with their kids should try and spend more time with their kids and make more of an effort.

What advice would you give parents who don’t see their kids very often?

Silvie’s advice to parents is that if one is mad at something, try not to show they are mad because often the other parent will react to that. Mac’s advice to parents is to try not to fight in front of the kids or talk meanly to the other parent on the phone. He feels that doing that is setting a bad example.

What should parents do when they are angry with one another on the phone?

What advice would you give parents about fighting in front of kids?

Sophia would tell parents not to move out of their family home. She feels that one of her parents should have stayed in their home because it was the place of all her childhood memories.

Did you have to move out of your family home? If so, how was that for you?

Would you advise one parent to stay living in the family home after the divorce? Why?

Macy thinks that her parent who lives far away should drive to pick her up sometimes so her other parent isn’t always having to drive back and forth.

What advice would you give parents about pick-ups and drop-offs?

Brynn’s advice to parents is to just forgive and forget.

What advice would you give to parents?

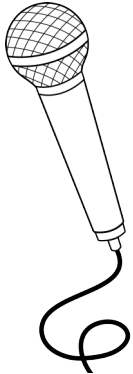
Exercise:

You are the child expert of a TV show giving advice to parents on how to deal with divorce issues.

Get a microphone (using your hand, marker, etc) and respond to the following parent questions with your advice. You may also write in your response:

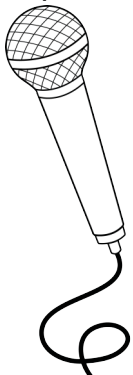
Parent #1: What do you think would be the best way for me to tell my children that we're getting a divorce?

Expert advice:



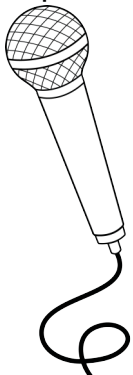
Parent #2: I have a son who is very quiet and holds in his feelings. I'm afraid he isn't telling me how he feels about our divorce and how it's affecting him. Can you think of some ways I can get him to talk about how he's doing?

Expert advice:



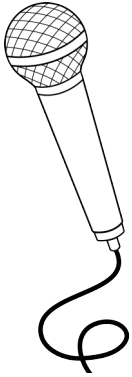
Parent #3: I keep telling my kids it isn't their fault their mother and I got a divorce. Not only do they keep blaming themselves, but they also blame each other. Can you help me come up with some things I could do or say to help them stop this blaming?

Expert advice:



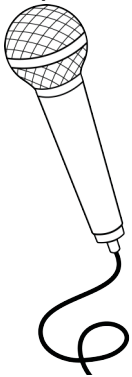
Parent #4: I have been feeling bad about the times my ex-husband and I fought in front of the kids when we were married. It still happens from time to time when we're on the phone or during pick-ups and drop-offs. Can you give me advice on how to talk to my kids about this?

Expert advice:



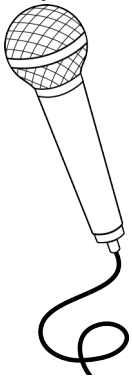
Parent #5: My ex-wife and I have been divorced for two months. Do you think it's o.k. for me to start dating again? If not, how long do you think I should wait? When do you think it's a good time to introduce someone I'm dating to my kids?

Expert advice:



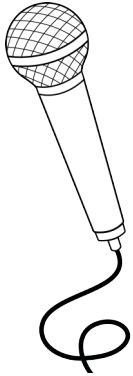
Parent #6: I've been trying to get my children to go to counseling but they refuse to go. What can I say to help them understand that counseling will help support them?

Expert advice:



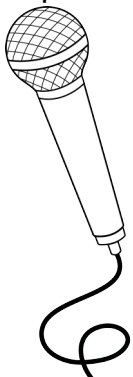
Parent #7: My daughter has been feeling jealous about the amount of time I spend with her stepbrother. Can you advise me what to say to her so she understands that I also have a relationship with him?

Expert advice:



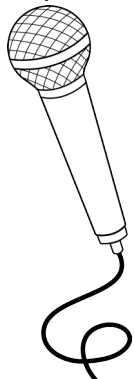
Parent #8: My son says that he doesn't like his stepfather because he isn't nice to him and as a result, he doesn't want to go to his mother's house anymore. How should I help my son deal with these feelings? How can I help my son if he doesn't want to go to his mother's house?

Expert advice:



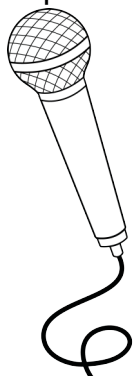
Parent #9: My kids have been through so much since I separated from my husband. I worry that my kids have been too involved in adult problems. I want them to focus more on just being kids. How can I help them with this?

Expert advice:



Parent #10: What do you think are the best ways to show children that they are loved during a divorce?

Expert advice:



Chapter 13: I Am

"I am me." Sophia

Discussion Questions:

What are some of your strengths?

What do you love?

What brings the most joy to your life?

What are some words that describe who you are?

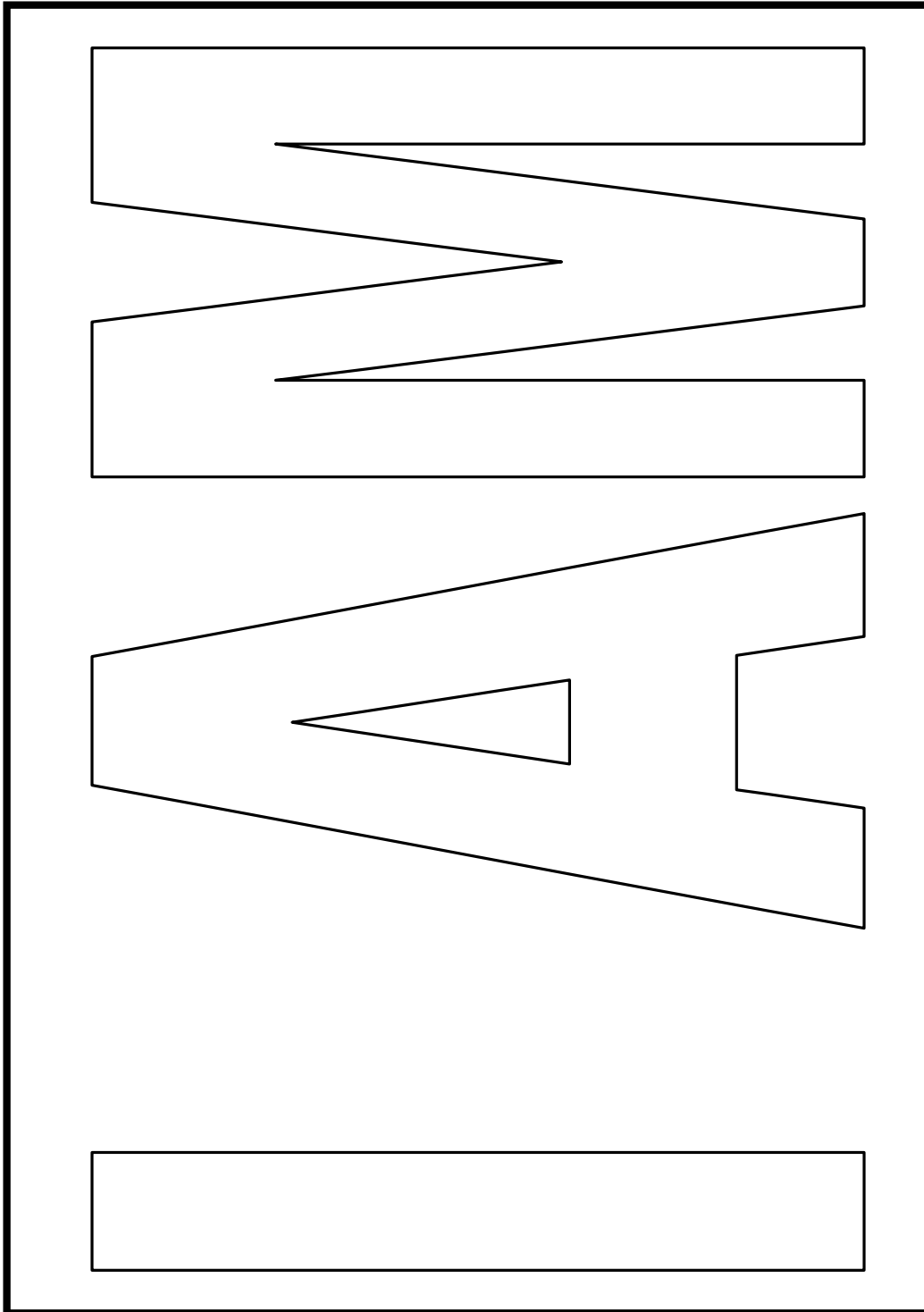
Exercises:

Directions: Inside of your "I Am," use pictures and words to describe who you are.



You are unique.

Be proud of who you are!



There is no one just like you.

You are loved.



All rights reserved
© 2012



copyright 2012