Goodbyes are Hard

A Booklet about Military Separations for Six Through Eight Year Olds

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This edition of MY GOODBYE BOOK has been edited and altered for use in New Zealand following the feedback provided by New Zealand Military families who trialled the booklets. Thank you to those who provided us with your valuable comments and ideas.

MY GOODBYE BOOK is one of a series of four booklets about military separations for children and young people. These booklets were written as a part of Operation R.E.A.D.Y., under an agreement between the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the United States Army Community and Family Support Centre, Department of Army.

All four booklets were developed with the help of active Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve families and Family Support Personnel. We sincerely thank all those who helped produce these publications.

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February 1993.

Published by:
Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand
2 Seddul Bahr Road
UPPER HUTT

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A Message To Parents,

This booklet is written to help your children understand and cope with military separations. Unfortunately no one booklet will fit all families so please feel free to pick and choose those ideas and activities that are helpful to you and your specific situation.

Guide your child through it:

- Read it with your child
- Choose activities to do together
- Use it as a starting point for separation discussions and activities.

We hope this booklet will help in some way, and wish you a smooth separation and happy reunion.

Hi Kids!!

My name is Josh. I'm almost 8. I have a little brother, Danny and a rabbit named Buck. My Mother is in the Airforce and my Father is in the Army. My Mother and Father have to go away a lot to do their jobs. I am proud of them because their jobs are important.

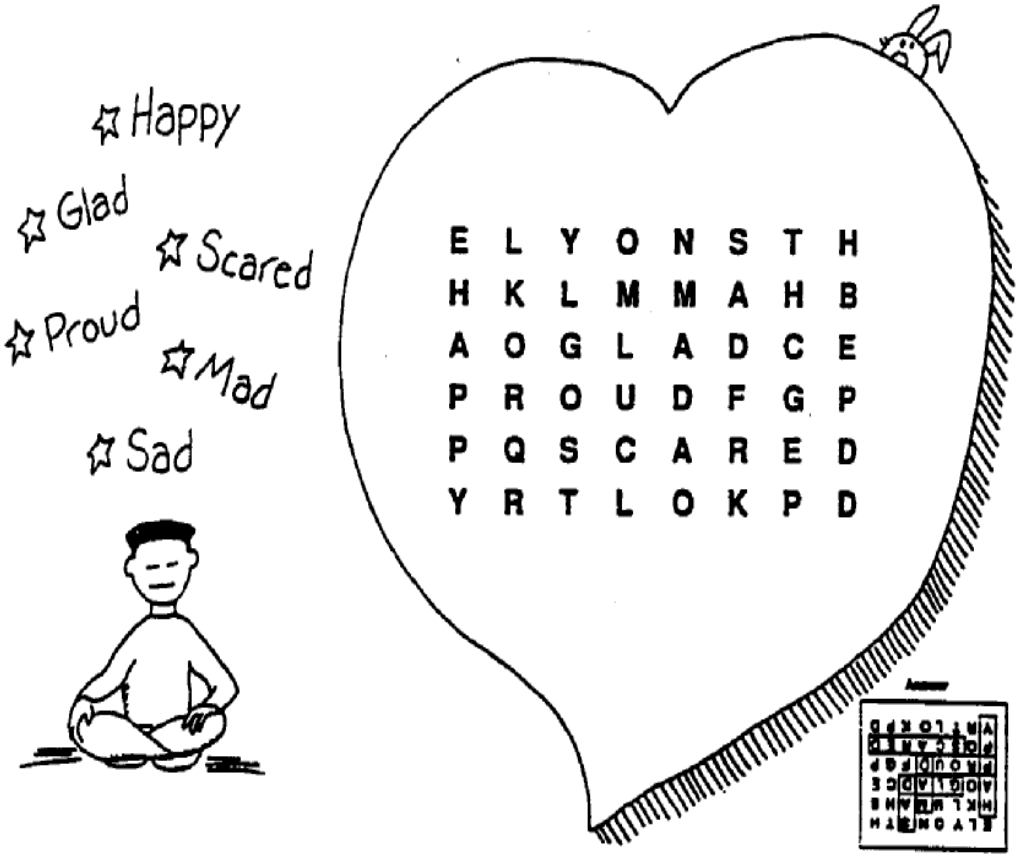
I wrote this book to tell you about some of the neat things we do in our family when my parents have to go away to work. There are some puzzles and things to make in this book too.

Feelings

When one of my parents goes away I have all kinds of feelings. Everyone has sad feelings, even some happy feelings. Everyone has feelings about separations, even grown-ups.

When we know we will be separated, my parents and I talk about our feelings. This feels good.

Here are some of the feelings kids have when one of their parents is going to go away.



Look down and across to find and circle these feeling words.

Colour in those circled feelings you have and then talk about them with your parents or someone else you trust.

GETTING THE FACTS

Before separations, I ask a lot of "W" questions.

Sometimes my parents don't know all the answers to these questions but I feel lots better knowing as much as I can.

On the next page is a trip sheet you can fill in when your parent goes away. There is a space on the page after that where you can draw (or trace from an Atlas), the country that your Mum or Dad is going to. You could also mark it on the world map that has been drawn.

WHEN will my parent leave?

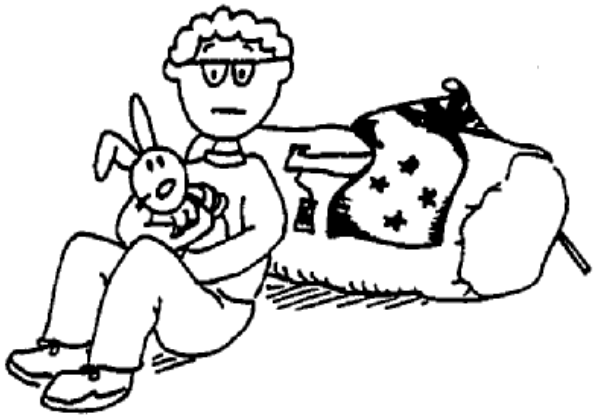
WHY is my parent going away?

WHERE is my parent going and what will it be like there?

WHAT will my parent do there?

WHO else will be going?

WILL my parent be safe?



TRIP SHEET

Who is going? _____

When and for how long? _____

Where? (Show this on the map on the back of this page)

_____

Why? _____

_____

_____

Who else is going? _____

_____

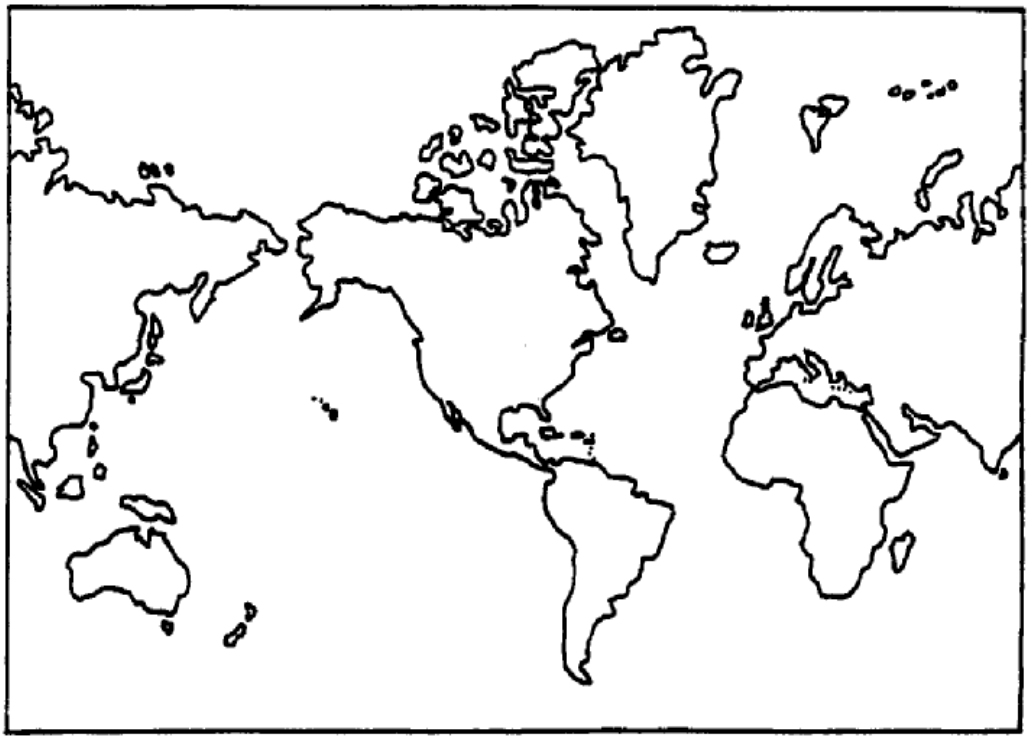
_____

Other stuff about the trip _____

_____

_____

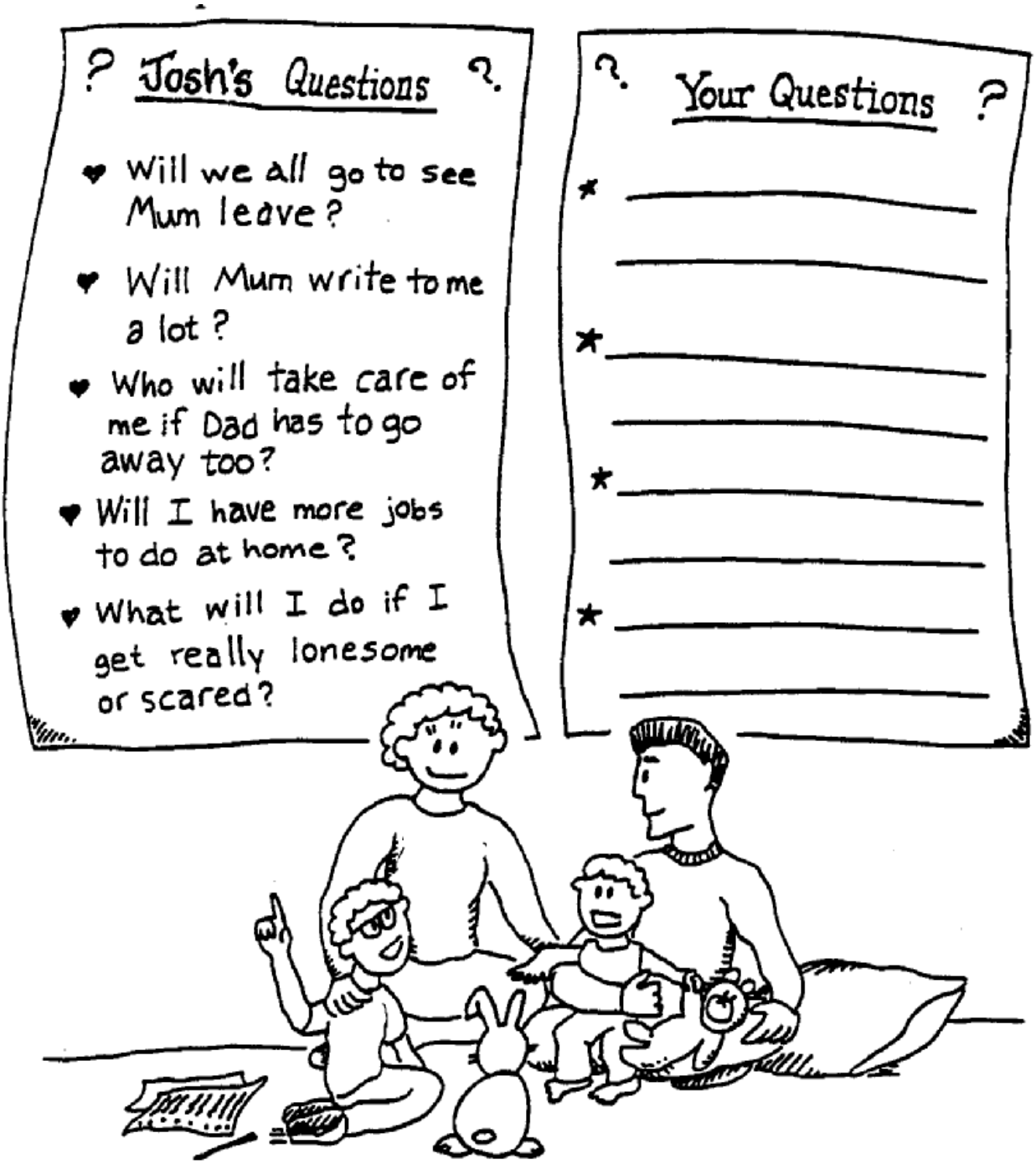
WHERE?



PLANNING

Before Mum or Dad go away we have a trip planning talk. I like these talks. Here are some of the things I asked about once before Mum left.

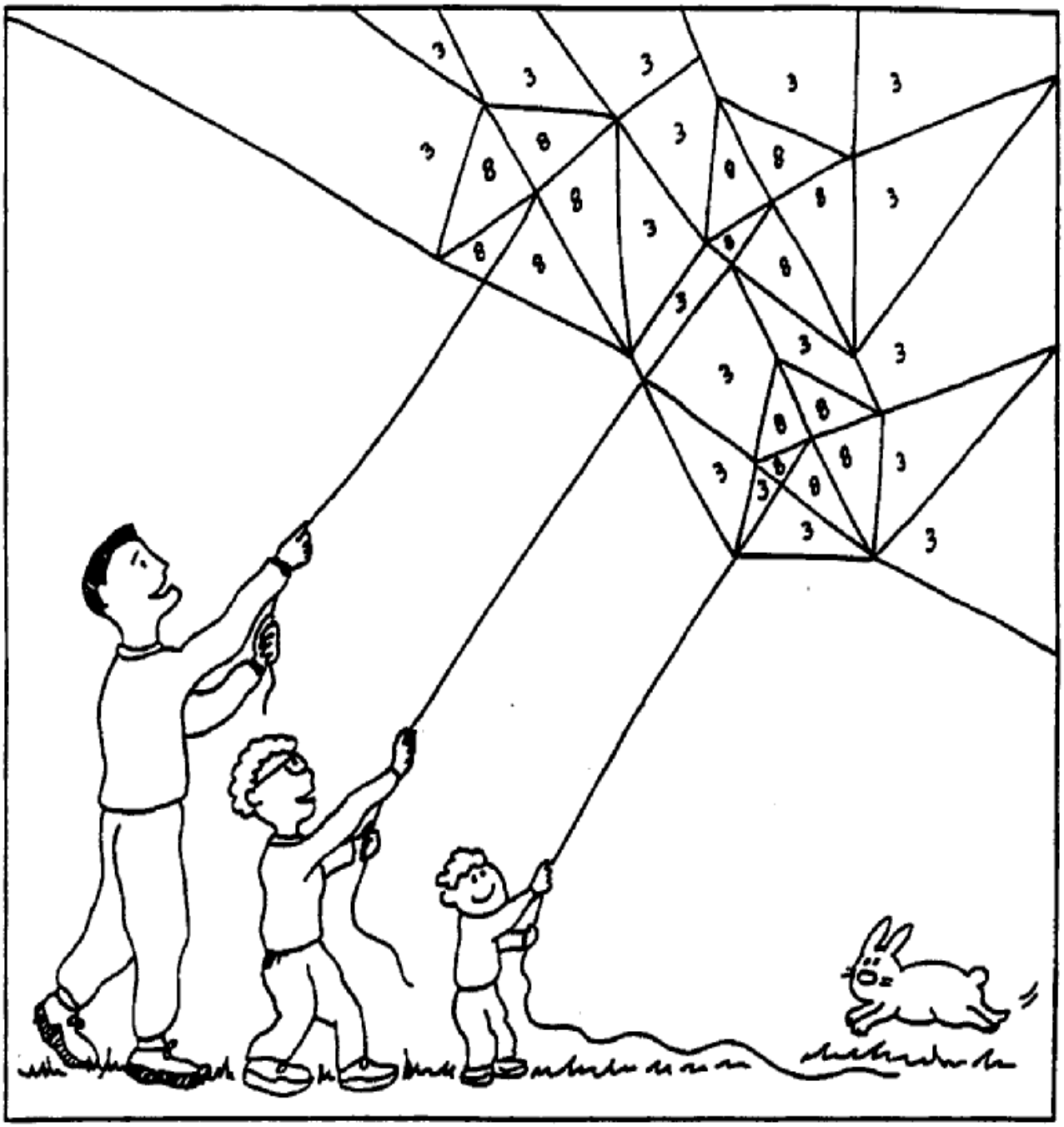
What are the things that you would like to talk to your parents about before their trips?



FAMILY TIME

Just before going away, my parent who is leaving spends time alone with me and with Danny. These are good times. We also do something special as a family, like go to the zoo or have a party or barbecue.

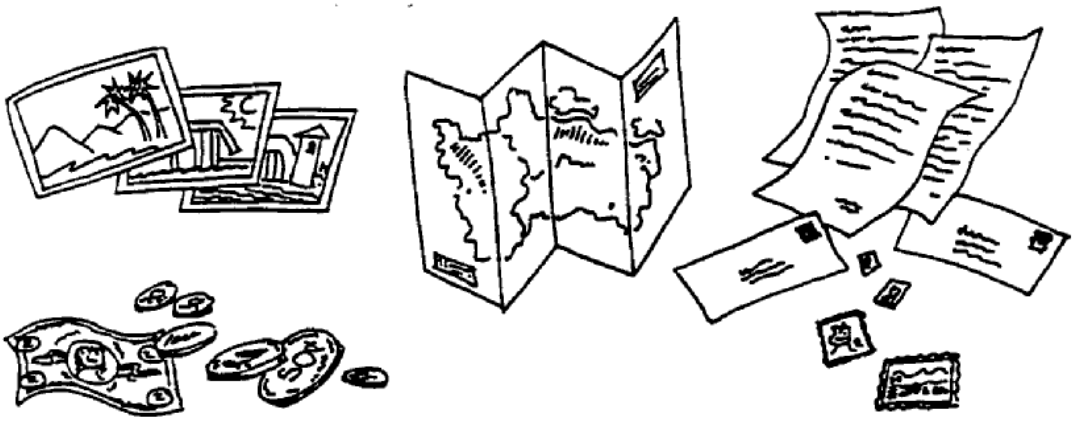
To find out what we did just before Dad went away once, colour the shapes that have a number 8 inside them.



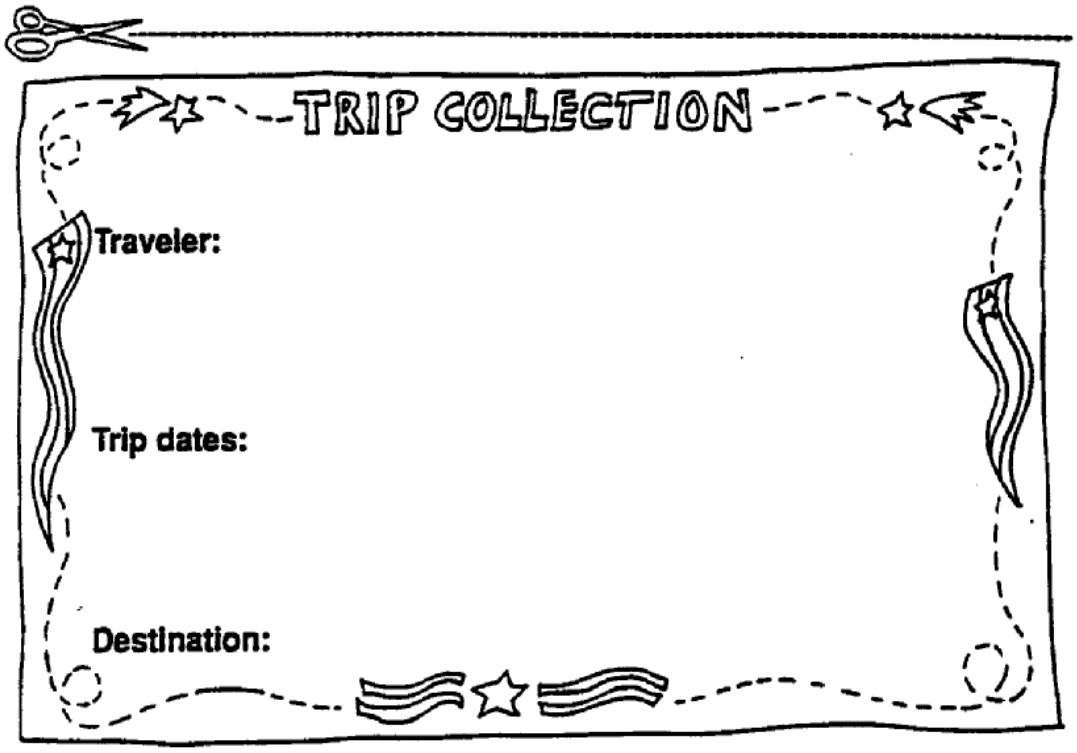
TRIP COLLECTIONS

When one of my parents goes away I make a collection of trip things. I put them on my wall, or in a box, or in a scrapbook.

Dad and Mum like sending me things for my trip collections. I'm going to keep my trip collections forever.



Here is a label that you can cut out and colour for a trip collection.



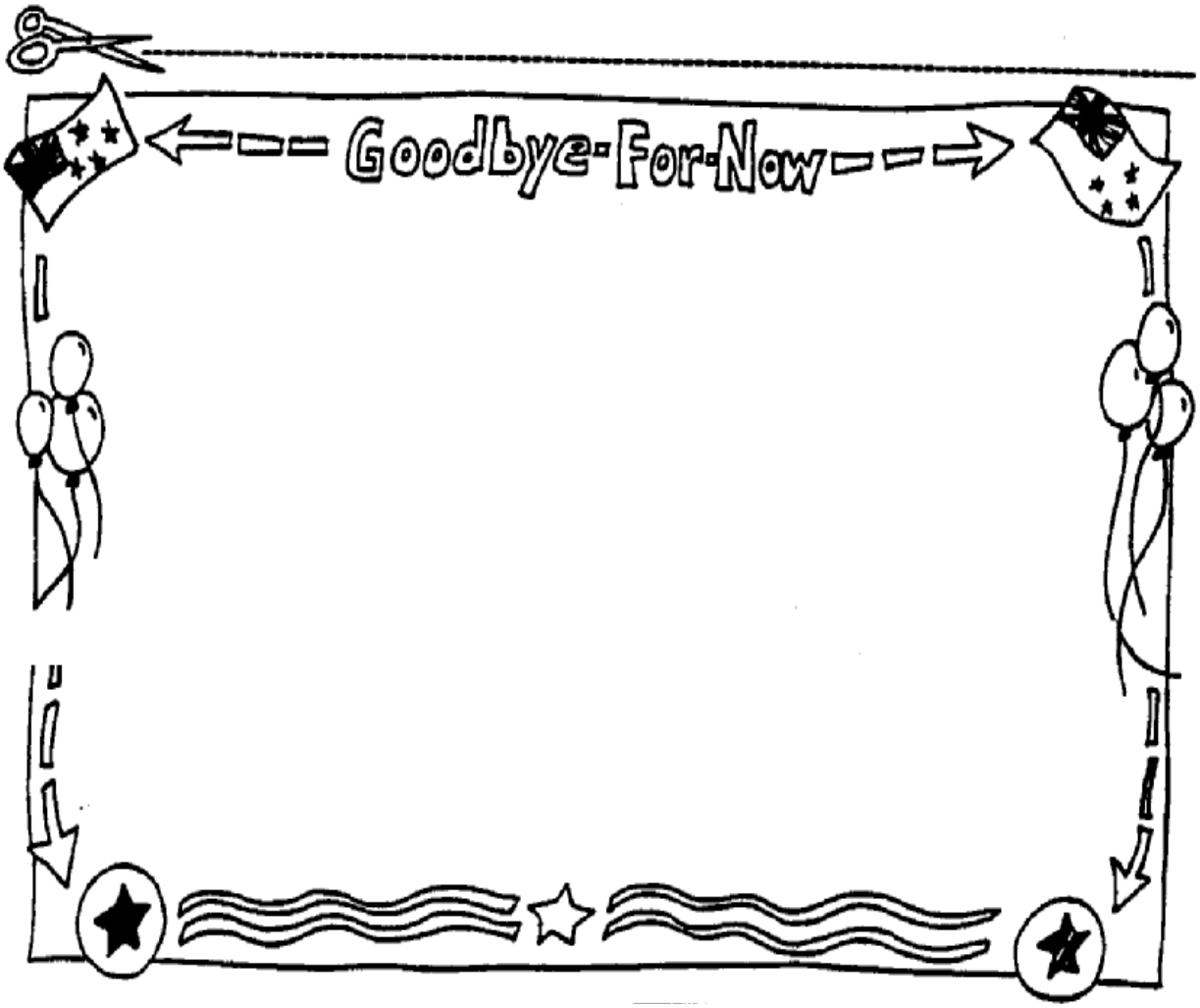
TRIP SCRAPBOOK

GOODBYE SURPRISES

Before Mum or Dad leaves, if we have time, we make goodbye surprises for each other. Once Mum made us a tape of stories to listen to while she was away. She even sang a song for us on the tape. Once Dad left me a little book of photographs of our family. I liked looking at that book while he was gone. That was great!

I like to draw my parents surprise Goodbye-For-Now pictures. Sometimes I write letters to them on the back. My Mum and Dad have saved all my Goodbye-For-Now pictures and letters, even the really silly ones I did when I was little.

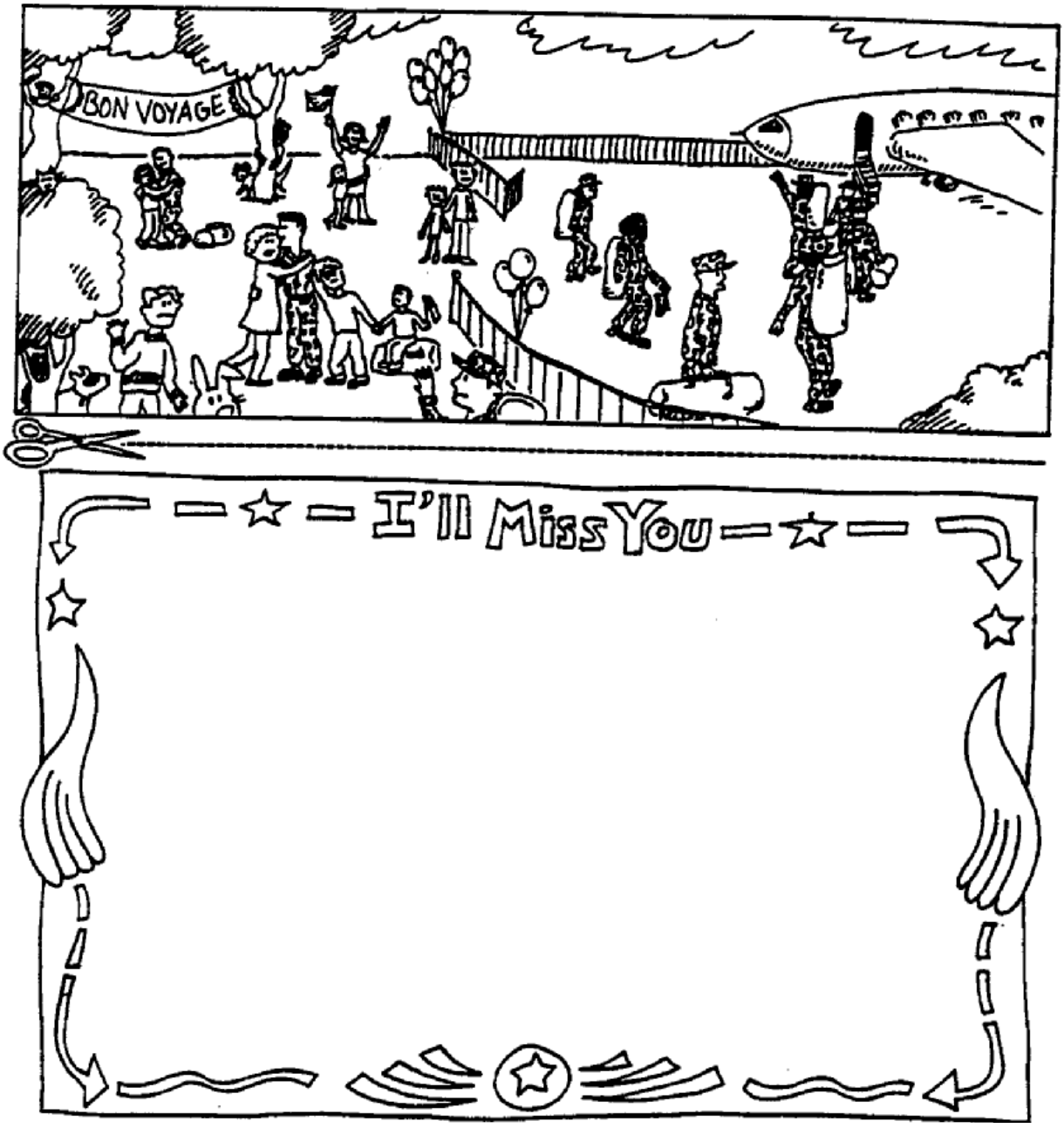
You can make a Goodbye-For-Now picture here for your parent who is leaving. You can use the back for a goodbye note.



WE SAY GOODBYE

We all go together to say goodbye. We are excited and sad at the same time. Sometimes we cry a little and sometimes we cry a lot. Some times we cry on the way back home.

This is a picture of families saying goodbye. Can you find our family? Can you find Buck Bunny and me?



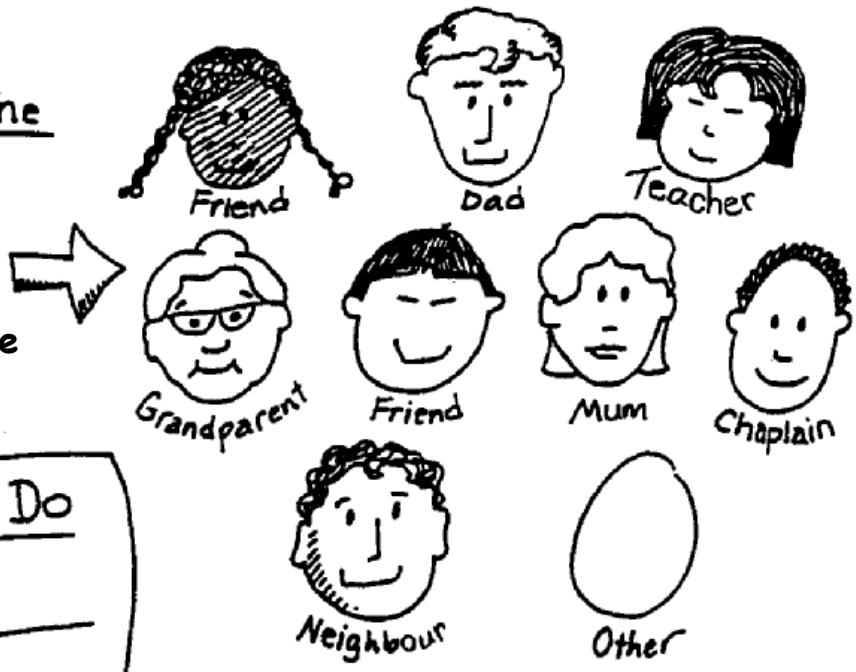
WHAT I DO WHEN I FEEL YUCKY

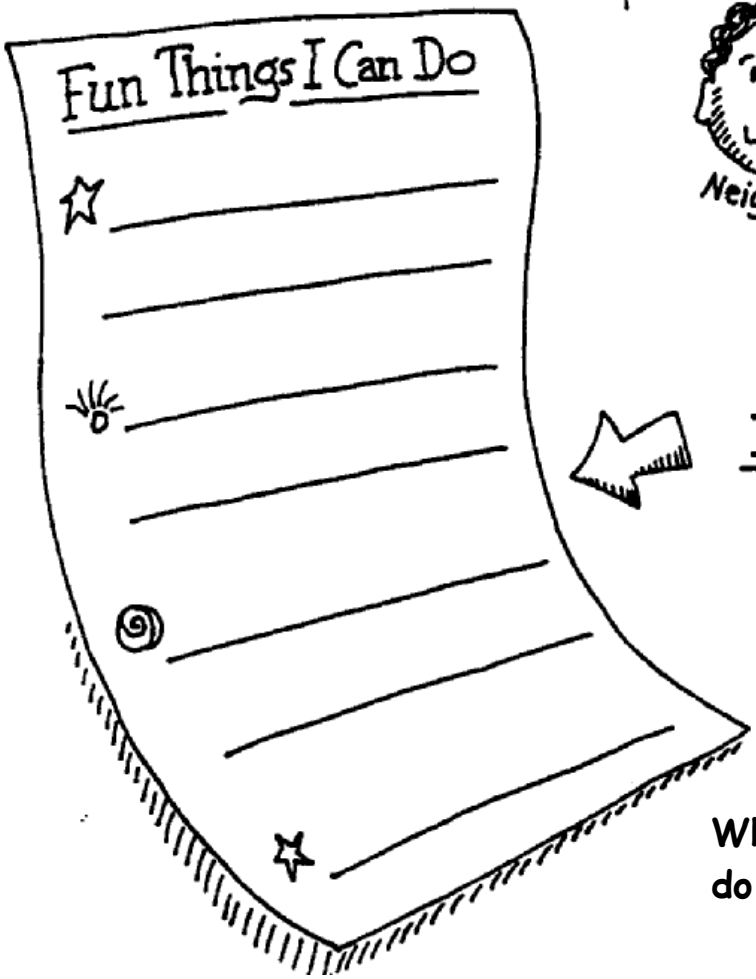
Sometimes when my parents are gone, I feel yucky. I get scared that they will get hurt or I feel mad because they have to go away. Here are some things that help me when I feel yucky.

I Talk to Someone

Here are some people I talk to.

Colour in those people you can talk to.





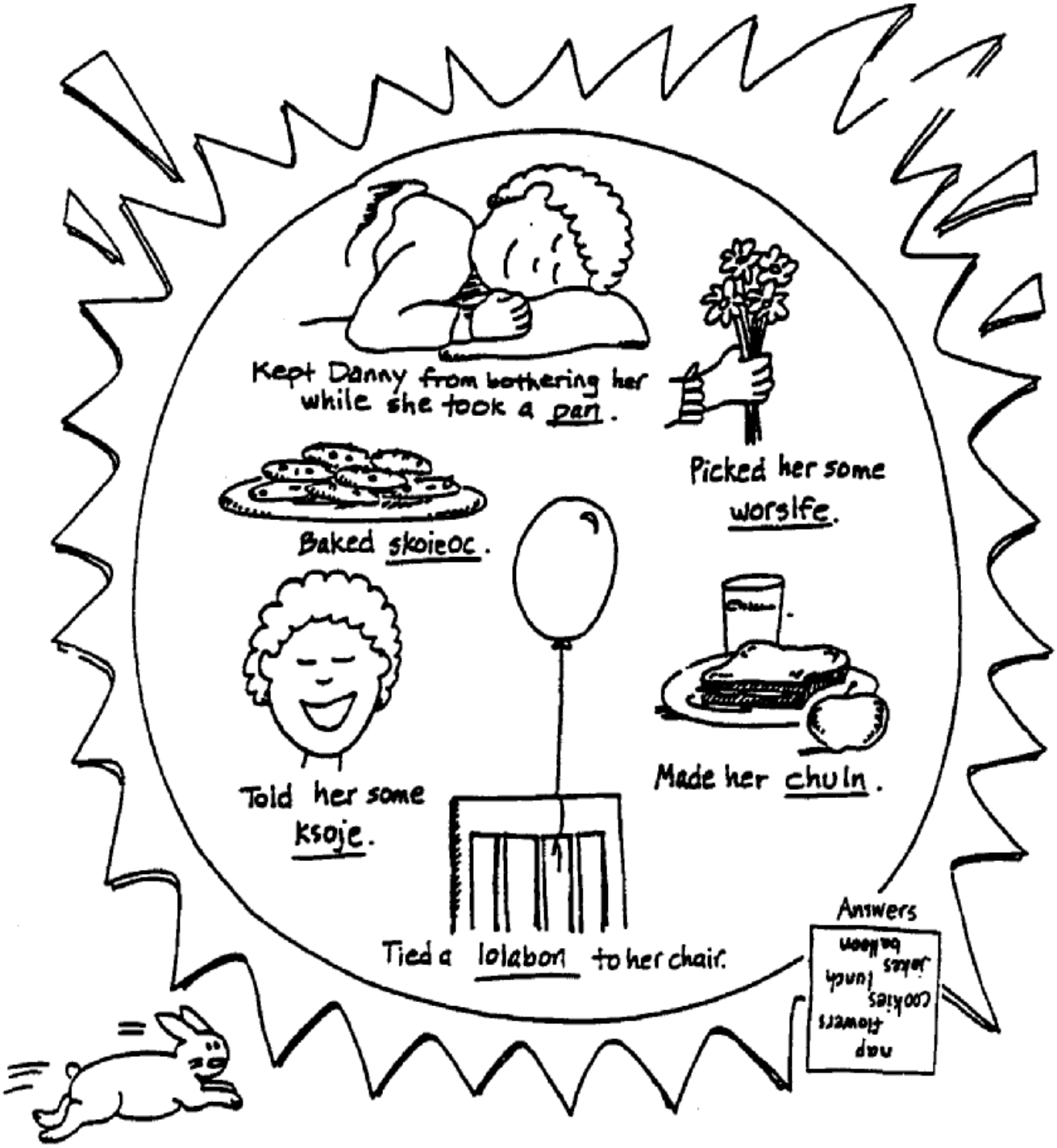
I Do Something Fun

When I feel bad I make myself do something fun like play with Bucky or draw a picture. That always seems to help.

What are fun things you can do when you feel yucky?

I CHEER UP MY AT-HOME PARENT

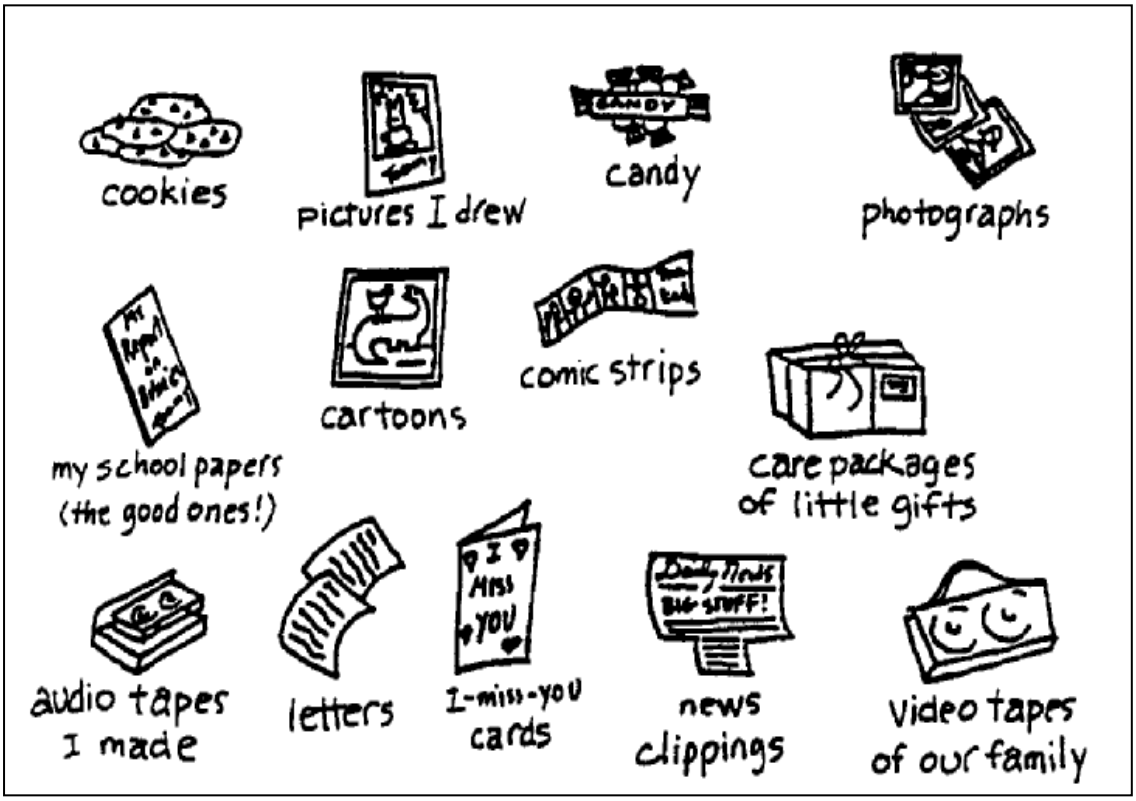
I feel better when I try to cheer up my at-home parent. Here are some of the things that I did to cheer Mum up last time Dad went away. You can find out what they were by the pictures and by unscrambling the letters.

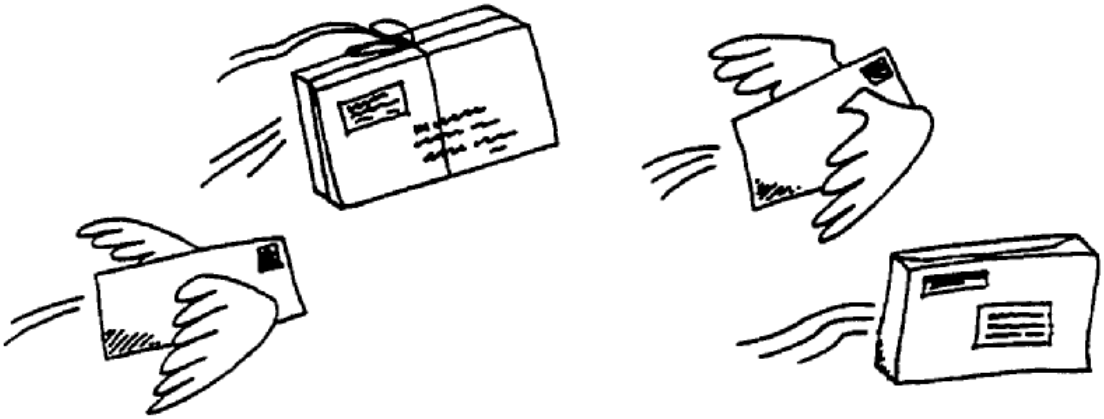


THINGS WE SEND

We like to send things to each other when we are apart. Here are some things I have sent my parents when they were away.

Can you find these things hidden in the picture on the next page?

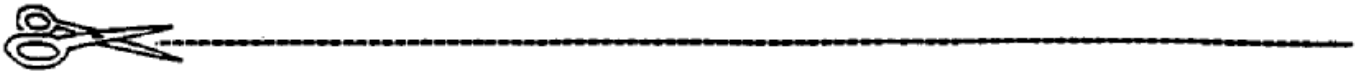


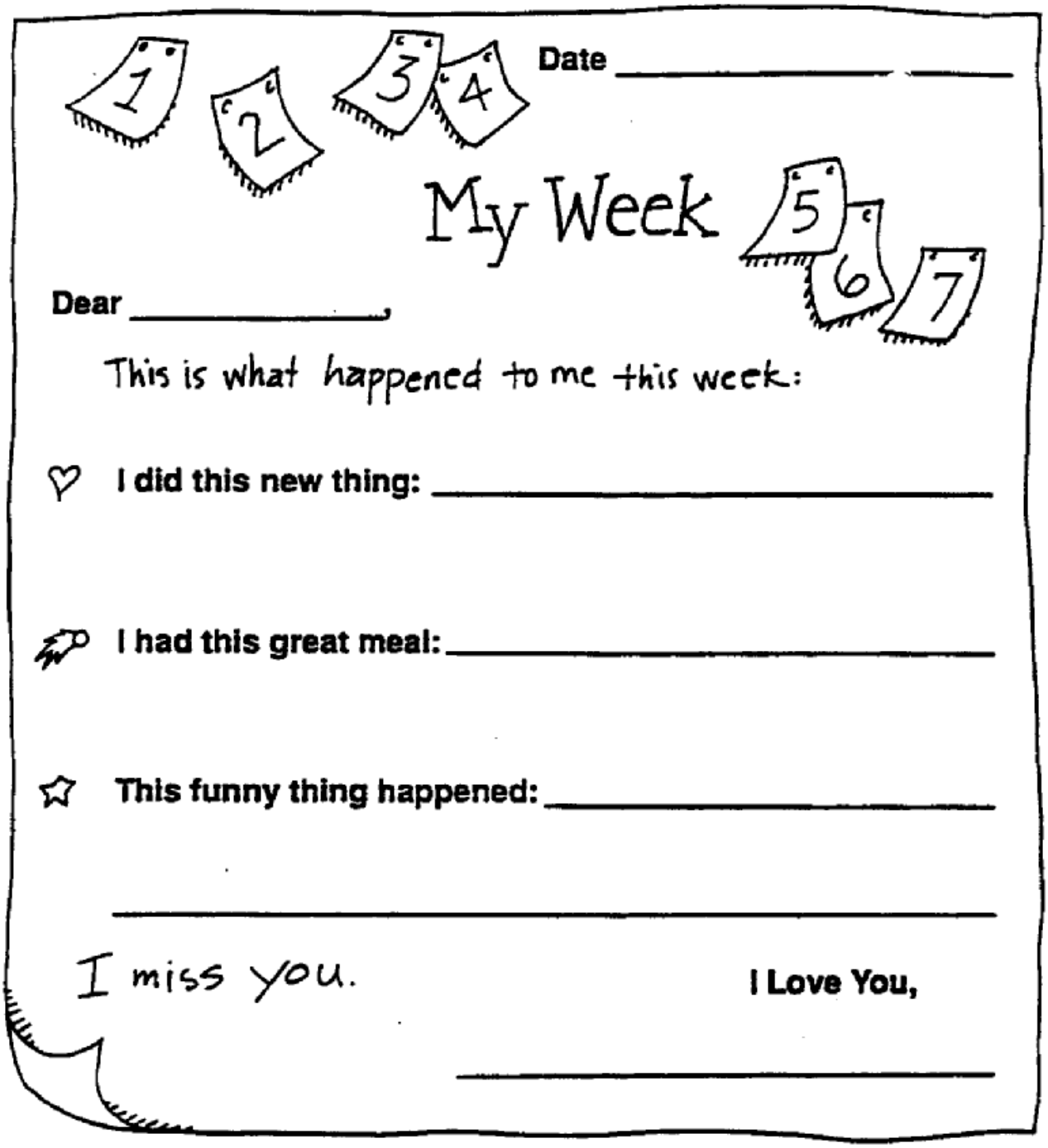


THINGS WE SEND

A QUICK LETTER

Here is a quick letter you can send to your parent. On the back you can paste pictures form the newspaper or a magazine to tell about your week.





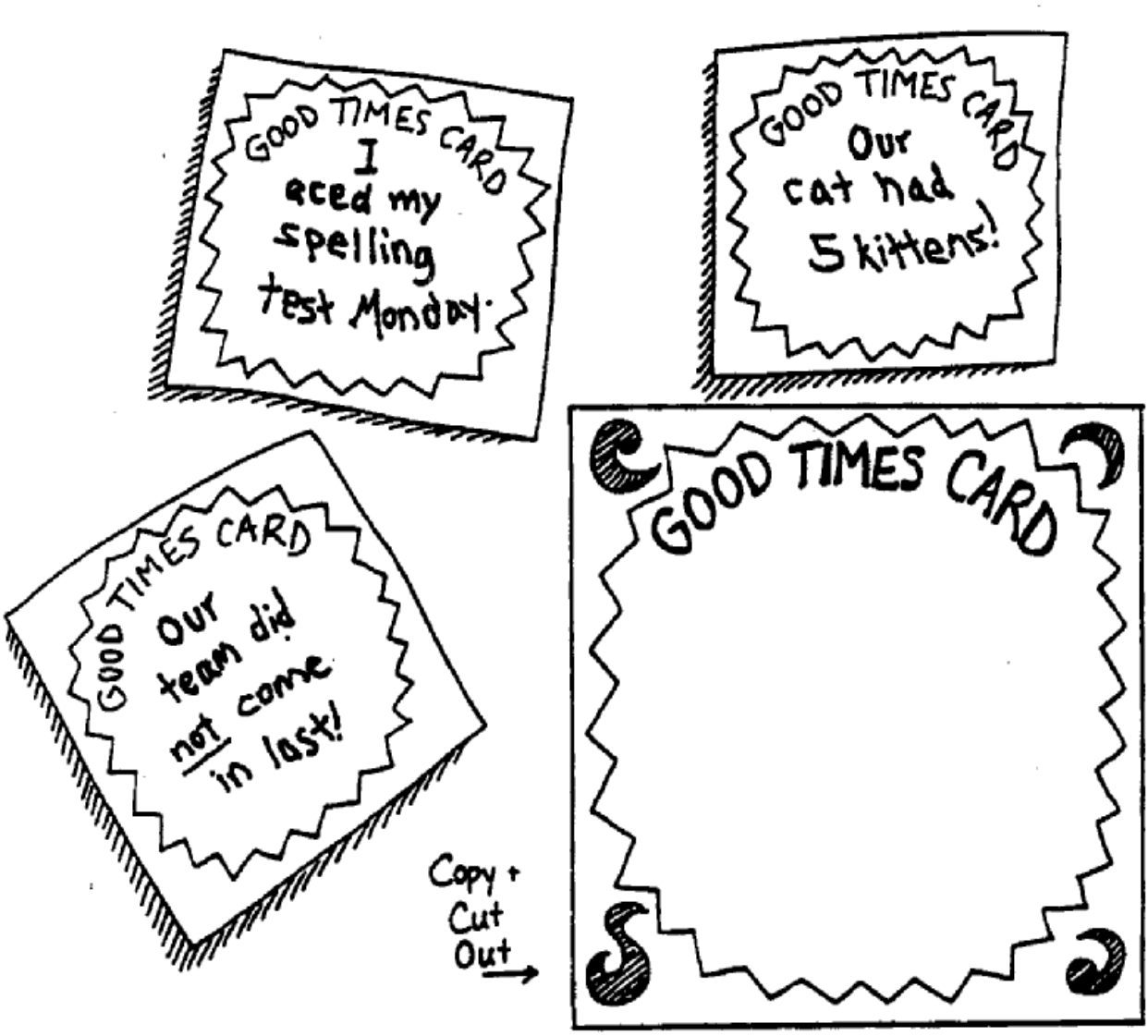
My Week

GOOD TIMES CARDS

When we are apart, my parents and I trade good time cards. Here are the good times cards that my Dad and I sent to each other once when he was away. The three cards on this page are the ones that I sent him. The three cards on the next page are the ones he sent to me.

You can make your own good times cards. Make up your own card or use the pattern on the bottom of this page. Keep 10 or 12 cards for yourself and send your parent 10 to 12 cards. Then both of you fill them out and send them to each other about once a week.

I put the good times cards my Dad sent me in my trip scrapbook. Mum an Dad have kept all the good times cards I sent them.



These are my cards from Dad↓

GOOD TIMES CARD
I got the cookies you sent me— none were broken!

GOOD TIMES CARD
It stopped raining for a day!

GOOD TIMES CARD!

GOOD TIMES CARD
I got the weekend off!

WHEN PARENTS COME HOME

Homecomings are fun and exciting. It's good to see our parents again. Homecomings can be hard too.

Here are some worries I have had when Mum or Dad are coming home:

- Will they like being at home?
- Could they have changed too much?
- Will they still want to do fun things with me?
- What if they get mad because I wasn't good all the time?
- Can we still get along together?
- Will they like the way I've changed?
- Will they make tougher family rules?

Lots of kids have these worries. Mum and Dad worry about coming home, too. When we get together we talk about our worries and that helps us work things out.

SOME THING KIDS CAN DO TO MAKE HOMECOMINGS BETTER

Welcome Home!
I MADE IT!
NZ
We're proud of you!
me too!