

Whichever theme you choose, be flexible with the activity. Younger children, most likely, will not grasp the metaphorical references of this activity and therefore can opt to draw a picture of their family as they choose. Older youth, however, tend to enjoy this activity as it allows for creative thinking as well as artistic expression.

Materials:

- Paper.
- Markers or crayons.
- Pencils.

Directions:

Draw your family as if everyone in the family were an animal, tree, or body of water. Pick one theme and draw everyone you live with (or that is in your family) according to that theme.

Draw your family as animals

Many times a person's personality traits and characteristics will emulate one or more animals based on the same traits. With that in mind, think about the person's character and try to match them up to an animal with the same type of personality. Do this for each person in the picture. The following are examples only—feel free to reinterpret or create different metaphors based on your own knowledge base or experience.

- Nurturing and protective—a bear or elephant.
- Aloof, lazy, slow, or methodic—a sloth.
- Industrious and always on the go—an ant, bee, or hummingbird.
- Wise—an owl.
- Silly or playful—a monkey, puppy, dolphin, or otter.
- Quiet, relaxed and “Zen”—a praying mantis, panda bear, or whale.
- Aggressive or ready to attack—a crocodile or cobra.
- Sly—a fox or crow.

Draw your family as trees

You can replace the animal theme with trees and try out different characteristics with tree types. Draw a forest that represents your family.

- Strong and confident, family oriented—an oak tree.
- Flexible, patient—a willow tree.
- Finicky or difficult to nurture—a Japanese maple or bonsai tree.
- Friendly, bright, outgoing—a maple tree.
- Stands out from the crowd, likes to be noticed—a birch tree.
- Loyal, dependable—a pine tree.
- Perseveres, successful, looks over others—a redwood.
- Happy, content—a cypress tree.
- Life-giving, generous, nurturing, parental—a baobab (“the tree of life”).
- Generous—a Christmas tree.

Draw your family as bodies of water

You can also draw your family as bodies of water. Draw the Earth or a map and then draw the bodies of water where they would fit. Some bodies of water might be closer to each other, some might be further apart.

- Strong-willed or powerful—an ocean.
- Slow moving and depressed, going nowhere—a mud puddle.
- Adventurous or wild—a white water river.
- Calm and reflective—a reflecting pool.
- Someone you don’t trust—murky water, such as from a ditch or gutter.
- Playful and full of joy—a fountain or bubbling brook.

- Unpredictable, scary, and threatening—a water tornado, whirlpool, or tsunami.
- Healthy or nurturing person—hot springs or a natural spring.
- Cold, uncaring—ice or a glacier.
- Someone who respects you and loves you unconditionally—a water crystal.

Discussion and reflection:

1. What was it like to do this activity? Which parts were easy, and which parts were challenging?
2. How did you end up representing yourself?
3. How do you think other people in your family would have drawn you? Or each other?
4. What animal, tree, or body of water would you want to be, if you could choose?