# PARABLE OF THE SOWER

**Mark 4:1-9**

## STORY TIME - MARK 4:1-9

*We have provided you with a paraphrase of the scripture passage to read below. After you read the scripture, you may want to have your kids tell the story back to you using the Illustrated Story Cards provided at the end of the devotion.*

Jesus was beside the lake when he began to teach. So many people surrounded him that he climbed into a boat there on the lake. He sat in the boat while the crowd stayed on the shore.

He spoke to them in parables. He said, "Listen to this! A farmer went out to scatter seed. Some seed fell on the path; and the birds came and ate it. Other seed fell on rocky ground where the soil was shallow. Those sprouted immediately. But when the sun came up, it scorched the plants; they dried up because they had no roots. Other seed fell among thorny plants. The thorny plants grew and choked the seeds, and they produced nothing, either. Other seed fell into good soil and bore fruit. As it grew, the seed produced a lot of fruit - each new place it grew, it produced more than the last!"

Jesus said, "Are you listening? Pay attention!"

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## IMAGINING TOGETHER

*This is not so much a time to make sure they received the information or facts of the story, but rather, an opportunity for your children to share what stood out to them and what they imagined when they listened to the story.*

- What do we eat that comes from good soil?
- How does this food from the good soil sustain us?
- How would you describe good soil in your life, e.g.: at your school, at home, sports, etc.?
- Like good soil, how has our family nurtured you and helped you grow?
- How can we care for our home, so it's a beautiful and nurturing place?
- What is one step you can take to make your heart better soil for Christ to grow and dwell?
- Are there those we know that don't have good soil in their lives? How can we love them and offer them some good soil?

## COLORING

*Feel free to continue the conversation you are having while coloring your coloring sheets. Or save this for an activity throughout the week, when you can revisit the story, and talk about the words, phrases and symbols you can find in the coloring sheet.*

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## CLOSING PRAYER

Wise Jesus,
Thank you for seeds that grow
and for the fruit they bring.
We want the goodness of
our lives to grow, too–
Teach us how to nurture it.
**Amen.**

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# ILLUSTRATED STORY CARDS

*On the following pages you will find the Illustrated Story Cards for Mark 4:1-9.*

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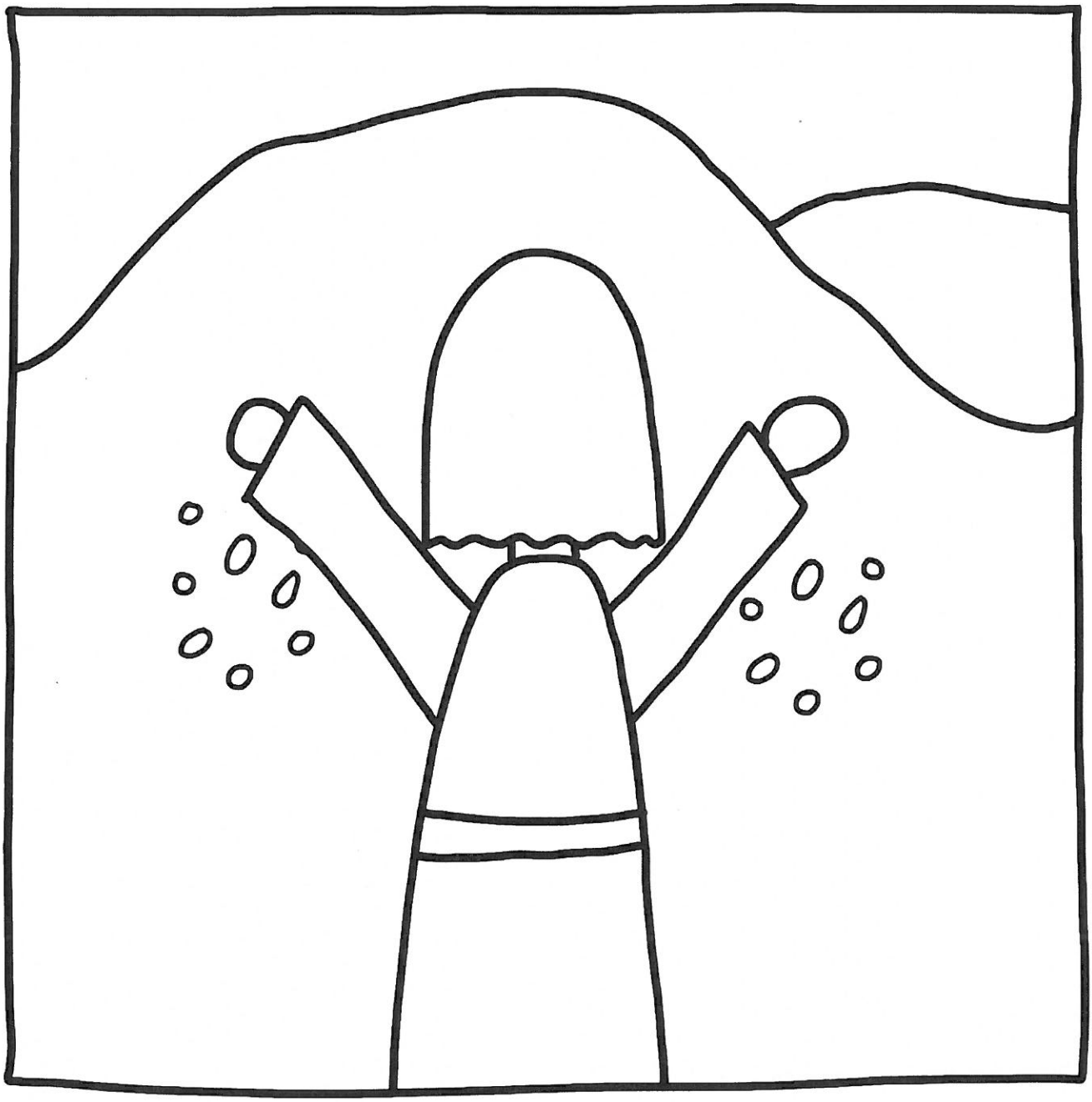

A FARMER WENT OUT TO SOW SEEDS IN DIFFERENT PLACES.

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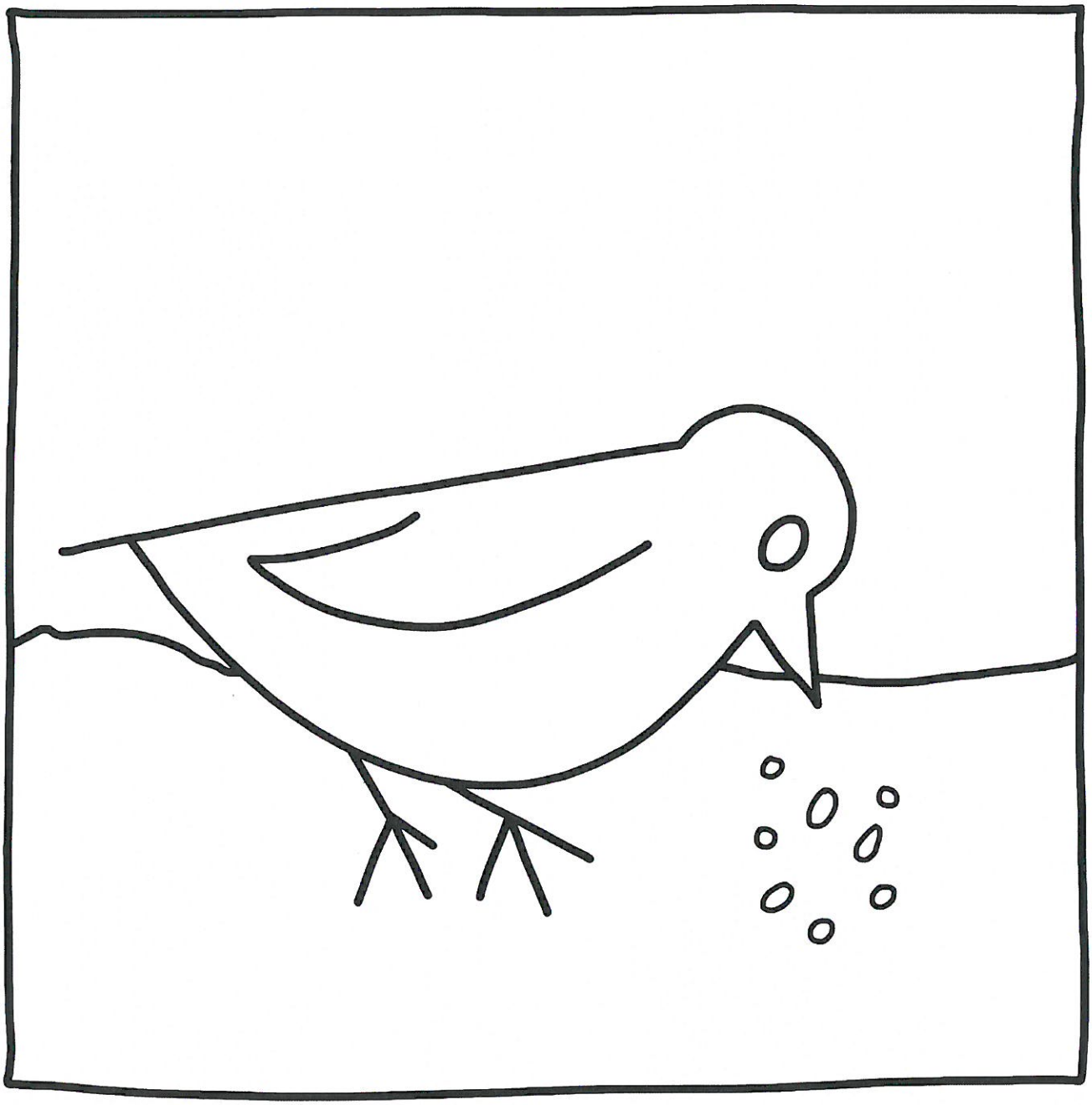

BIRDS ATE THE SEEDS DROPPED ON THE PATH.

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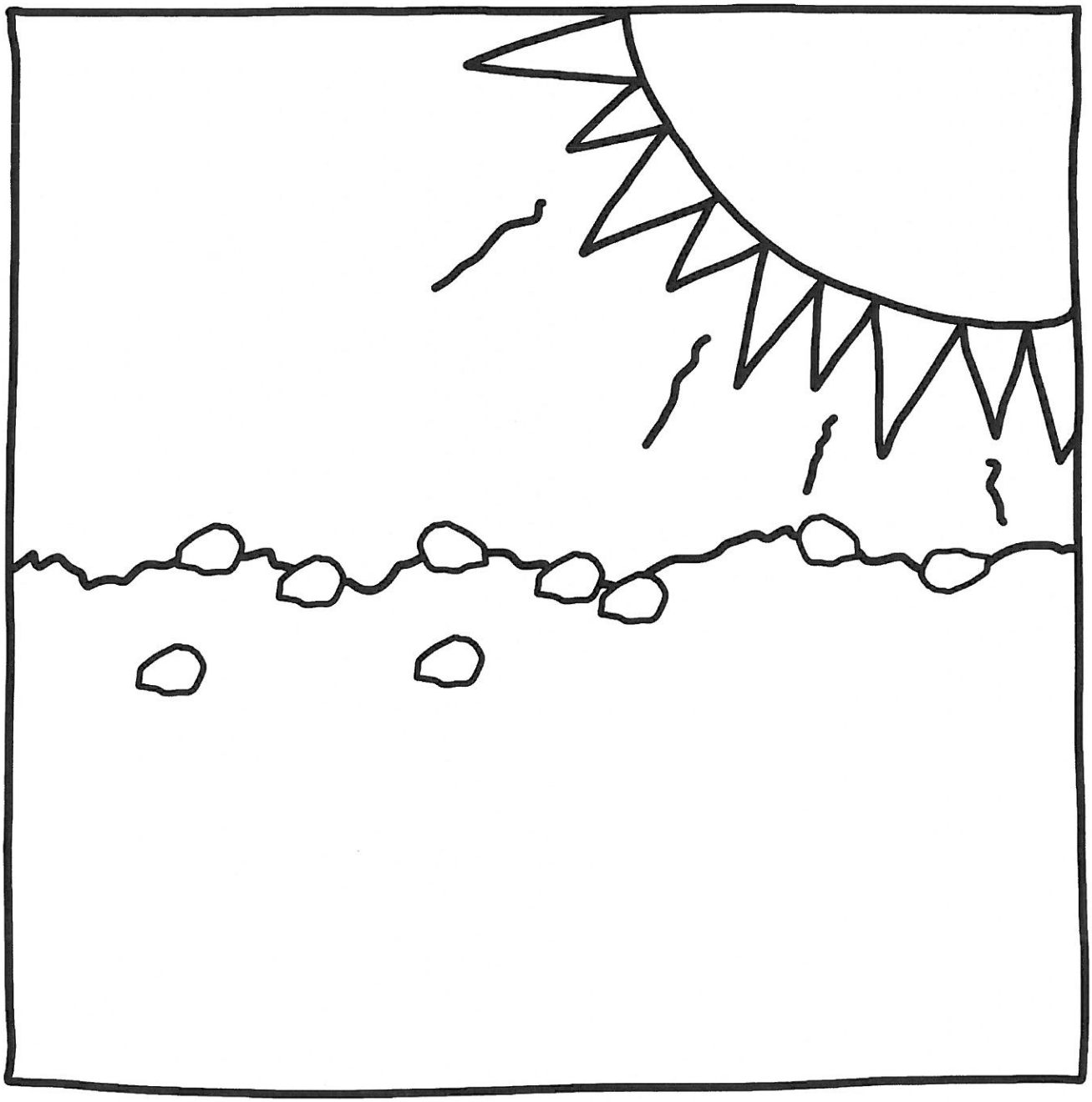

THE SUN SCORCHED THE SEEDS DROPPED IN ROCKY SOIL.

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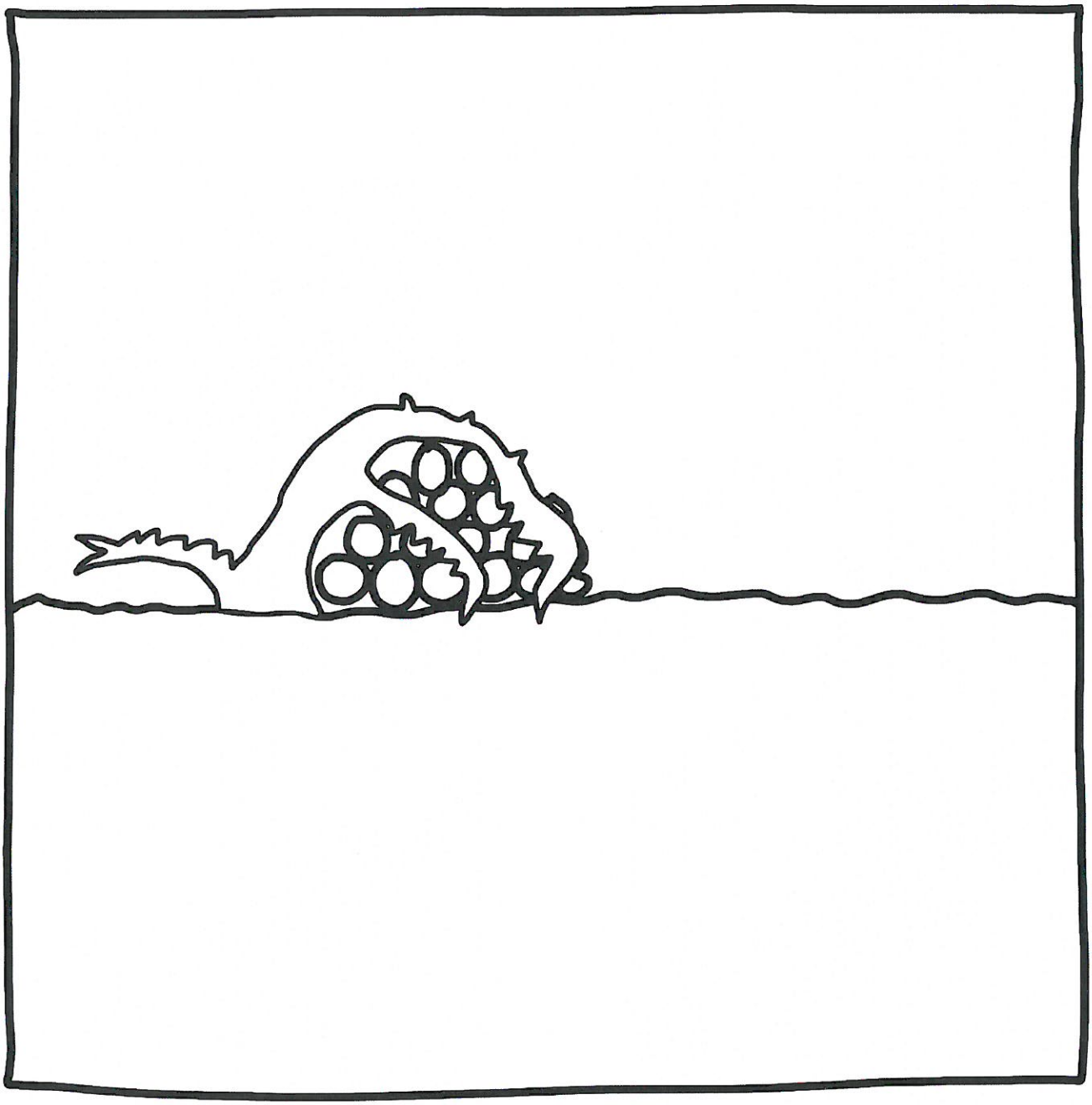

THORNY PLANTS CHOKED THE SEEDS DROPPED NEAR THEM.

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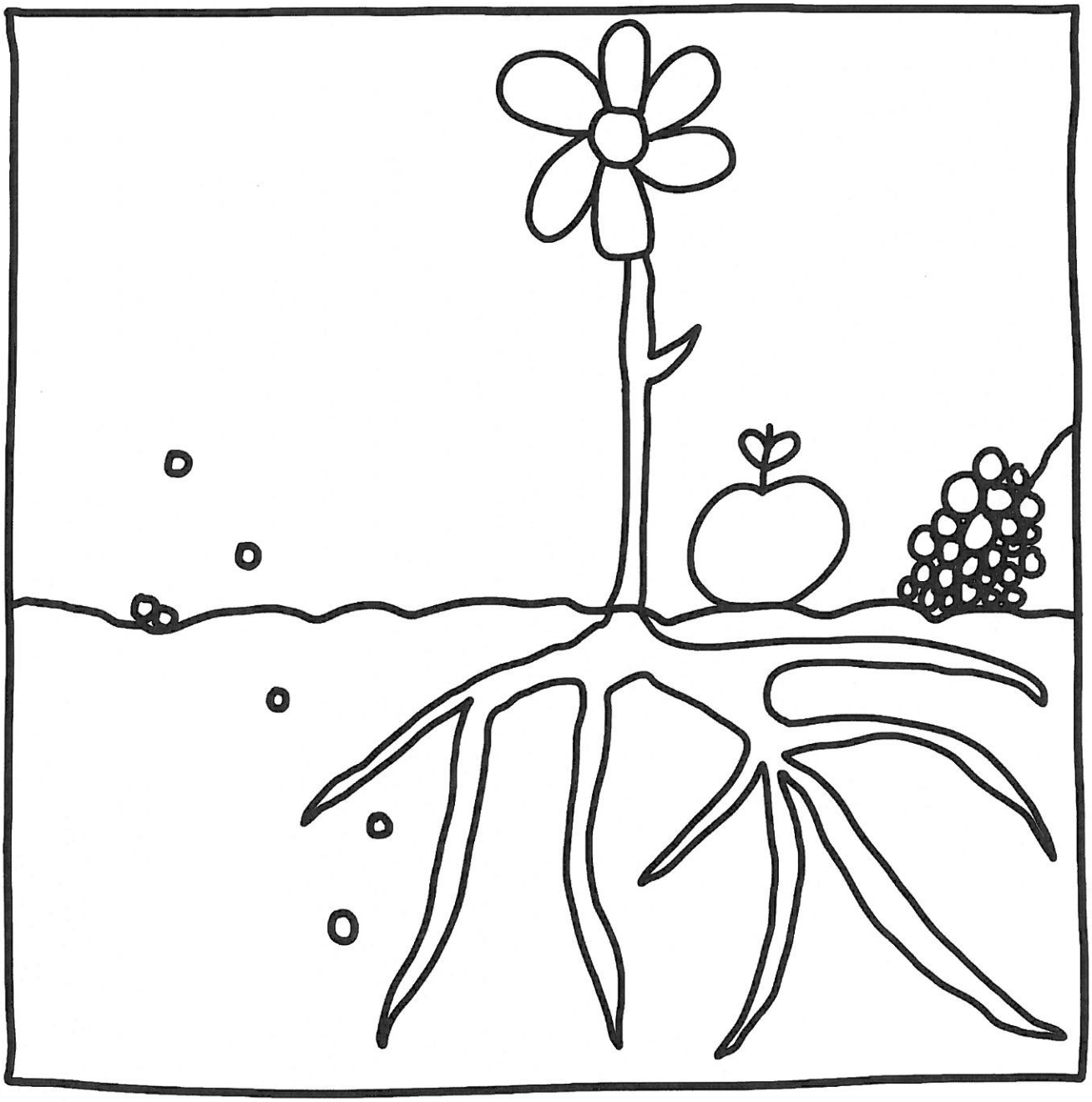

SEEDS DROPPED ON GOOD SOIL PRODUCED A LOT OF FRUIT.

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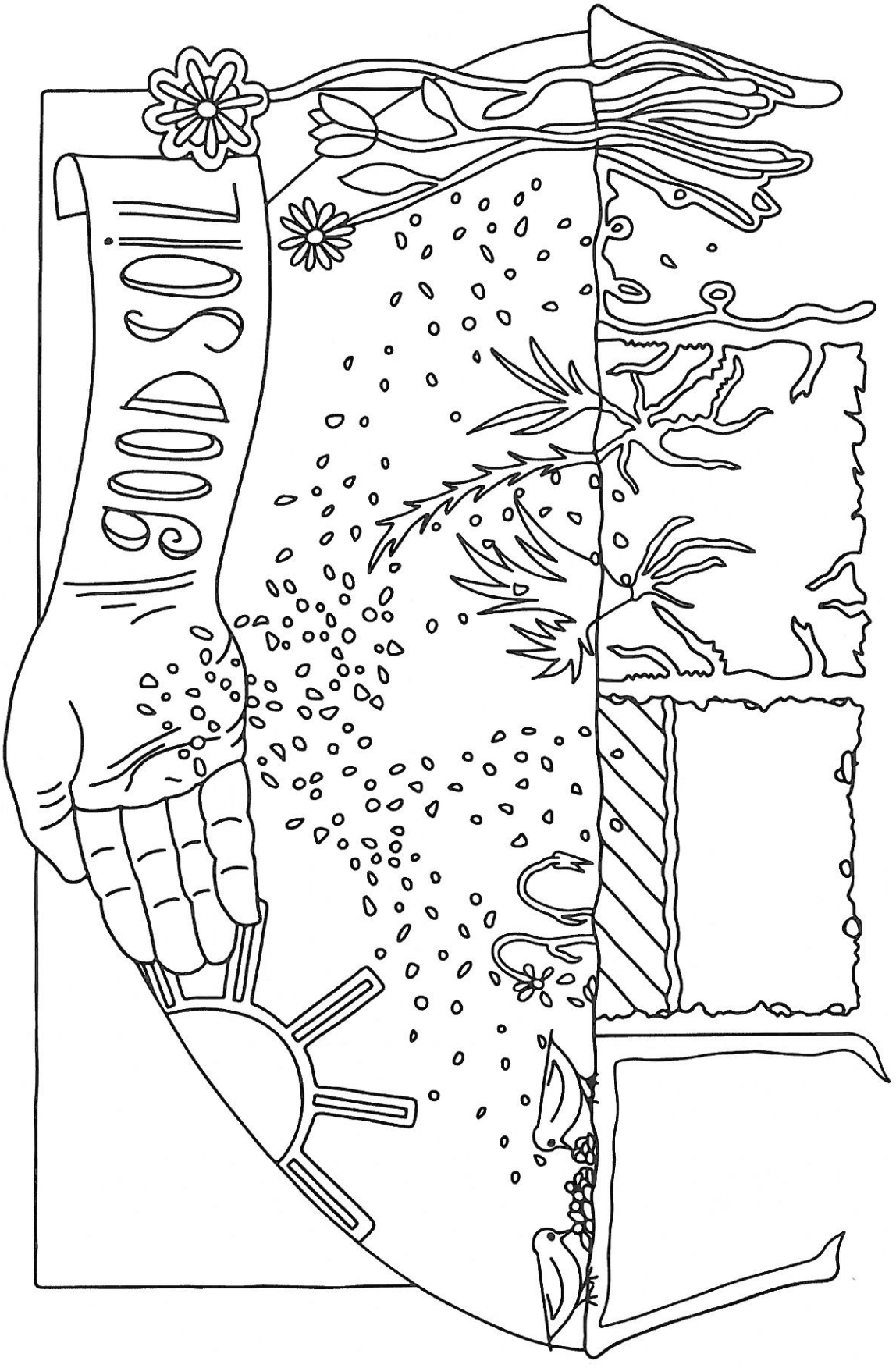


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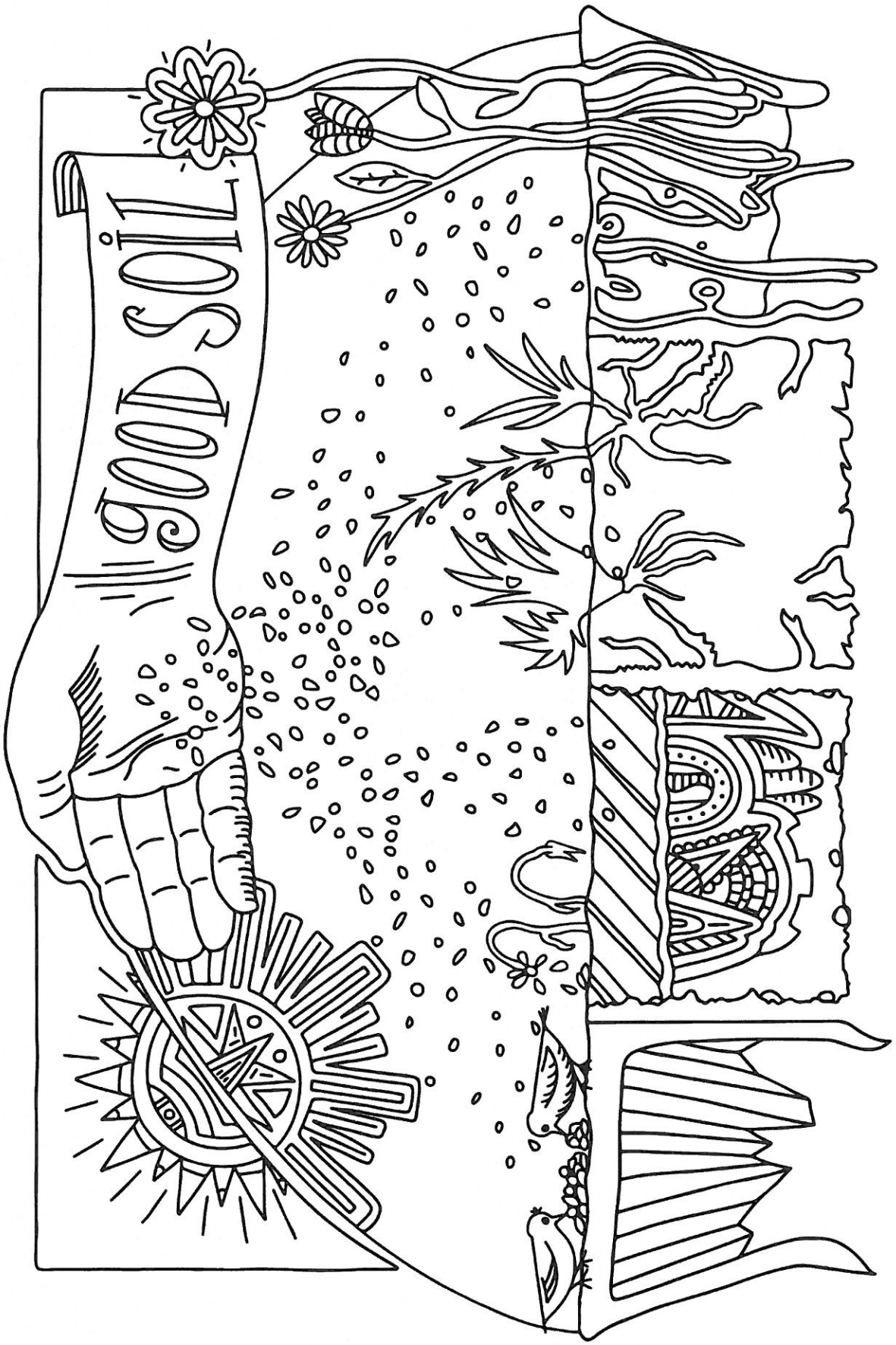


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# FAMILY ACTIVITIES

## INVITE

Let the sharing of food do the work of creating community by hosting an informal picnic. Make sandwiches. Gather fruits and veggies and chips and cookies. Pack a basket full of food, and take it to a nearby park, or relax in your own yard. Invite friends or neighbors or strangers to join you. Ask them to bring something to add to the feast, if they want to. Throw down some blankets. Enjoy a meal together. Marvel at how much goodness surrounds you. Linger.

## OBSERVE

Reflect on how land "works," and how it "rests," by observing different lands and their uses in your own area. Go for a walk, or a bike or bus ride, or a drive, past manicured lawns and well-tended gardens. Make sure your trip also takes you past uncultivated land, too: old farms or fields of tall native grasses or wildflowers. Take note of the differences you see in each sort of land, and talk about the different processes both go through. Let each person share what beauty they see in the different places you observe.

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## PLANT

Send out potential for growth, nutrition, and loveliness by making seed balls and casting them into places in your city or town that could use some beautifying. Seed balls are easy: you'll need clay (if you can't find natural clay from your area, Crayola air dry clay will work), compost or soil, and seeds for plants and flowers that are native to your area. You'll want a 5:1:1 ratio - 5 parts clay, 1 part compost/soil, 1 part seed. Roll the parts together with a few drops of water to bind them. The final products should be about the size of a golf balls. Let them dry in the sun. Then toss them around abandoned lots, empty spaces at parks, by roadsides, or other places that could use some color and love!

## IDENTIFY

Note and name the good things that fill your yard with handmade garden markers. Using outdoor paint and old bricks or large rocks, create colorful identifiers for each plant growing in your garden. Or, if you're not growing a garden, paint the markers with words that express the qualities you want all who come to your space to experience - "peace" or "love" or "hope." Or mix it up - some of your markers can identify tomatoes and carrots, others can invite people to experience gratitude and joy. A clear coat of outdoor paint over the finished product will help protect the markers through many seasons.

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