

PICTURE THIS

FOR FAMILIES

“Boredom comes quickly to those who have had little practise at being entertained by the marvels of their own imagination”

There are no right or wrong answers in this imaginative activity that invites family members to get creative and spend time in each other’s company enjoying laughs, surprises and insights. Those playing will be drawing pictures and discovering the hidden stories within the pictures they have created.

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**TIP:** Read the whole activity before you start.  
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What are you trying to get out of this activity?

It helps to have an adult guide this activity. You want all the players to enjoy sharing, listening and just having a go without fear of being inadequate or being judged. Being interested in each other strengthens family bonds and helps everyone, irrespective of their age to feel valued and respected.

You may need to encourage people let go of the worst critic most us have and that is ourselves. Adult players can really lead the way here and just jump in and see the humour in whatever happens.

Drawing or creating pictures is something many of us never really get good at doing. Is it possible to enjoy something you don’t do well? I certainly think so and fear of embarrassment, ridicule, disappointment, comparison and a bucket full of other feelings, so often gets in the way of us enjoying so many different things, so many, many times.



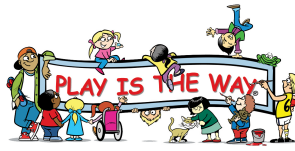
Of course, there will be those who have a skill for creating pictures and they can happily use all of that skill in this activity.

Once you get a bit of experience guiding this activity you can help players to explore more unusual situations and safely discover what they all might be thinking, feeling, saying and doing. This is a good way to help kids expand their imaginations while learning about themselves and others.

Being engaged, participating freely and enjoying your own personal creativity as well as that of others is the way to go. You will always know when this is happening.



<p>How many can play?</p>	<p>As few or as many as you like.</p>
<p>How often can it be played?</p>	<p>No limits.</p>
<p>What skills are needed?</p>	<p>Although people will be drawing pictures, no artistic skills are needed and if stick figures are your thing, then that's fine.</p>
<p>What equipment is needed?</p>	<p>You will need something for players to draw on. This can be paper, card, cardboard, the driveway, blackboard, wall, etc. You can use paints, pencils, crayons, chalk, textas or anything else that can make a picture such as bits of coloured paper, cloth, sticks and leaves, etc. Let your kids cut loose and make the pictures in whatever way excites them and is manageable for you.</p>
<p>Who does what?</p>	<p>All the players except the adult guiding the activity will be creating pictures.</p> <p>The person running the activity will be asking questions that the players have to answer so it's best if they are an adult or older member of the group or family.</p>
<p>How long does it take?</p>	<p>It is quick to set up and can last as long or as short as you want.</p>
<p>Where?</p>	<p>People can create their pictures wherever is convenient but it's best if they are all in the same place so they can show the pictures to each other and then answer questions.</p> <p>If you have lots of different types of pictures being made, then at question time, everyone will have to gather wherever it's possible to have everyone in the same place.</p> <p>In other words, if someone has drawn a chalk picture on a driveway, then gathering on the driveway is going to be the way to go.</p> <p>TIP: It's likely best to have everyone drawing on paper in the same place for the first few goes of the activity.</p>



LET'S GET STARTED

Ask all the players to draw a picture of themselves in a certain situation. They can add as much detail as they like to the picture. They will get better at doing this once they have tried this activity a couple of times.

Hopefully, if players are making pictures in the same area they are all chatting away as they create. To keep the activity moving along you might want to give everyone a certain amount of time to draw a picture. A little bit of pressure can be fun and you can count down the time as they go along. Just a few minutes is usually all they need.

You can choose from the examples below or think of your own.

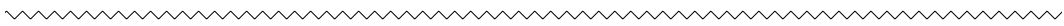
Draw a picture of yourself:

- Behind a bush.
- Up a ladder.
- In a cupboard.
- In an aeroplane.
- At a funeral.
- At a birthday party.
- With two dogs.
- Lying flat.
- Being chased.
- Chasing someone or something.
- Swimming.
- Eating.
- Dancing.
- Making something big.



Or more complex:

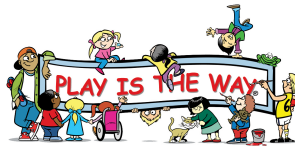
- Somewhere dangerous but not alone.
- In clothes that are unusual.
- With many people following you.
- Making contact with aliens.
- Being heroic.
- Doing something spectacular.
- Caught in a difficult situation.
- In a situation that makes you anxious.
- Scared of something that is about to happen.
- Amazed at something you have just done.
- Receiving an award.
- Volunteering.
- In a situation where you are running out of time.



TIP: The adult in charge needs to move the activity along when everyone has drawn enough to share with the others. This means that for a heap of different reasons (age, ability, personality) some pictures will have lots going on and some won't have much at all.

If little kids have finished drawing before the bigger kids have or vice versa, this is not a problem. They can just draw something else while they wait or go off and do something else and then come back when everyone is ready to answer questions or you could make suggestions of things they could add to their picture.





THE NEXT STEP

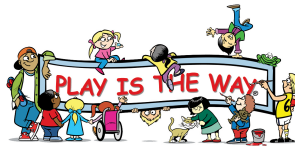
Ask everyone to have a good look at all the pictures for a few seconds. They have to try hard not to say too much about them because it makes it more interesting when you start asking questions about the pictures.

When you ask a question, everyone gets to answer that same question.

Let's pretend everyone has drawn a picture of themselves behind a bush. Some might have only drawn that, and others will have put in a whole lot more like a house and some animals or birds in the sky or a whole forest as well, etc. Here are some examples of questions you could ask about the picture.

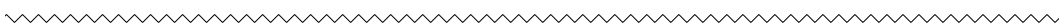
- Are you hiding behind the bush?
- If you're not, what are you doing behind the bush?
- If you are, what are you hiding from?
- Where is the bush?
- If there are other people in the picture, who are they?
- Why are they there?
- Have you been behind this bush before?
- How long have you been there?
- What are you thinking about?
- How are you feeling?
- What do you wish would happen?
- Is there someone or something you would like to have with you?
- What noises can you hear?

Players can take it in turns to answer the question or you can ask players by name. Trying different ways keeps things interesting. The trick is to encourage players to be interested in each other's answers. You being interested in the answers is the best way to achieve this.



Some questions will only need a one-word answer, so you can whip around the group quickly and get onto the next question. Others will take longer to answer. There can be lots of reasons for this. Sometimes it's because a player has got lots to say and sometimes it's because they can't think of what to say and other times it's because they want to hog the spotlight. Whatever the reason, it's up to you decide when to move on and let others have a go. The important thing is to keep the activity moving along while encouraging people to "share more" than one word answers whenever possible.

If one player's answer makes others want to ask that player questions or throw in a thought or a remark, just let them go for it. You want everyone to get involved and enjoy each other's stories about their pictures. You just have to remember to make sure everyone gets a go without slowing things down too much.

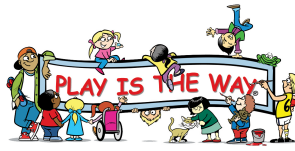


TIP: If you have a good look at everyone's pictures before you start asking questions, you'll be able to think of heaps more questions. Remember, you're just trying to get the players involved by firing up their imaginations. Finding a question here and there that takes the players by surprise will crank things up a bit and spark their creativity.

Quite often that will mean asking the players to think about something that is not in their pictures. When this happens, they just have to pretend it is and go with the flow.

Examples:

- Something is buried under the bush. What is it and who buried it and why?
- Beside the bush is an old gold ring covered with strange symbols. It makes you nervous and excited. Why and what is it you know about the ring?
- You are hiding behind the bush for a silly reason. What is it?



- The smell of the bush reminds you of a fun time you had on a farm. Tell everyone about that experience.
- You are behind the bush to hide from your new puppy. Share 5 things that make your puppy a great pet.
- While hiding behind the bush you see the most amazing, colourful caterpillar on a branch. Describe the caterpillar as clearly as you can so that everyone can draw the caterpillar on their picture.

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**TIP:** You can ask players to put things into their picture and then ask questions about those things. You might ask them to draw a box covered in jewels and then ask them to tell everyone what's in the box or a giraffe and ask them to share a believable reason for a giraffe being in their picture.

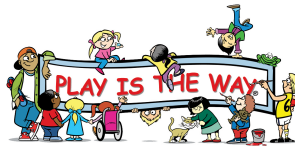
Some players will **block** your suggestions by saying “I don't know” or telling you that your suggestion is impossible in their picture. This is where you have to encourage them to be flexible and adaptable and go with an idea not fight it. You can do this by using the “*Magic If.*” This mental trick helps them to accept a situation and use their imagination to find new thoughts, ideas and experiences. The “*Magic If.*” is a mental concrete breaker and helps everyone to enjoy the power of their own imagination.

**Example:**

*John:* There can't be anything buried under my bush because I planted it and I dug a huge hole and there was nothing there!

*Adult:* (with a smile in their voice) Yea, that's right but I'm asking you to try letting go of what you know and get into your imagination. Here's an idea. Try using a thing called the “*Magic If.*” **If** there was something buried under the bush what do you think it might be? I'm just asking you to have a go at exploring what you don't know. I'm just asking

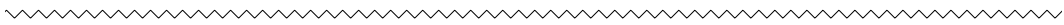




you to free your imagination and be surprised by where that can take you, that's all.

*John:* But there's nothing under my bush!

*Adult:* (staying calm and with a smile still in their voice) Of course there's nothing under your bush, I know that. You planted it. But **if** there was, what would it be? And **if** there was, who would have put it there? And **if** there was, why did they put it there? And **if** there was, how come you didn't see it when you dug the huge hole? Do you get it, John? The "Magic If" lets you use your imagination to tell us all what you have discovered, not just what you already know. Why don't you think about it for a bit while we find out what someone else thinks is buried under the bush.



## DIFFERENT WAYS

This is an activity you can do many times because there are so many pictures you can make and so many ways of making them. But here are some ideas to help keep things interesting.

- You could focus on one player at a time and ask them a whole load of questions while the others listen. It can be fun to be in the spotlight for a while. Of course, others can ask questions as well. This way usually works best if there are only a few players.
- After the players make a picture they pass it to someone else to answer the questions. Letting go of their own creation can be hard for some kids and they might want to disagree with the answers given by the player with their picture. If this happens, just remind them the picture is still theirs and always will be but now is the time to have fun seeing how their picture gives someone else the chance to be creative.



- Players are given a minute to work on a picture before they pass it onto to the next player. Once every player has worked on each picture for a minute and the picture is back to the player who started it, you can start the questions.
- You can save the pictures and come back to them a few days later to add more details and then ask the players to come up with different answers to the same questions. Or you could try a heap of new questions.
- You can give everyone the idea for the picture but ask them to include certain interesting things.

**Example idea:** You're sitting in a bathtub that's on the back of a truck being pulled by a camel. However, the picture must have a banana, a swan, a kite and a giant box of chocolates in it.

Once the pictures are done, each player takes it in turn to answer as many questions as possible in 2 to 3 minutes. To make things more interesting, ask players to think of questions that trip up the person answering. If a person takes more than 5 seconds to come up with an answer you can try a fun penalty like painting a dot on their face (face paint). You might need a big person in charge of the 5-second penalty. With a bit of luck, a few people will end up looking like they have measles.

**TIP:** It's always good to wrap up the activity just before everyone has had enough.

## WANT TO GO A BIT FURTHER?

Following are a bunch of questions that you can use to get people thinking and talking during or after the activity. Everyone can of course ask any questions they come up with. Getting everyone to share their opinions and ideas is a really good way for people to learn more about each other and enjoy their differences and similarities.

Getting kids especially, to think a little more deeply about their experiences and share their thoughts openly with the other players builds confidence and self-expression. Not all the



questions work for all ages but you will be able to tweak some to suit the kids that are playing. Have a read of the questions and choose a few that interest you and see how you go. See if you can get the players to share more than one-word answers.

- Why do we all have an imagination?
- How imaginative do you think you are? How do you know this?
- Can imagination be improved? If so, how?
- Do you think our imaginations make us better people? If so, how?
- Many adults believe that children are generally more imaginative than adults. Do you agree?
- If this is true, what causes the drop in the imagination of adults?
- If you are highly imaginative does this mean that you have lots of crazy, weird, strange and unusual ideas?
- Does it take imagination to be inventive? If a person invents a better bottle opener, are they imaginative?
- Do you think humans are the only species with an imagination?
- Do you need an imagination to enjoy fantasy books and films?
- If you don't enjoy fantasy, does this mean you are not imaginative?
- Are there various types of imagination? In other words, can a person have an imagination that is artistic (dance, theatre, art, music, fashion) mathematical, scientific, mechanical or some other form of imagination? Or are all types of imagination one and the same thing?
- If imagination has various types, what is yours?
- Do you ever use your imagination to escape from a problem, pressure or a situation?
- If you daydream a lot or lose focus does this mean you are imaginative?
- Do people who are imaginative find it hard to be realistic?
- If people are boring does it mean they lack imagination?
- Can an imaginative person get on well with someone who has little imagination?
- Do good friends usually have similar levels and types of imagination? Please share the reasons for your opinion.
- Can a person be very practical and still be imaginative? Is being practical a way of being imaginative?



- Would you say your dreams are mainly imaginative or realistic? Please share a dream that shows this.

You can of course, spread these questions out over several goes of this activity.

## FINALLY

Feel free to shift and change this activity in whatever way makes it work for the people in your house. The trick is to get people talking, listening, sharing and connecting.

Remember to enjoy using your own imagination and if you think of something that might add to the interest and fun, just go for it. And if doesn't go quite as you thought it would, then enjoy that as well.

Best of luck,

*Wilson McCaskill*