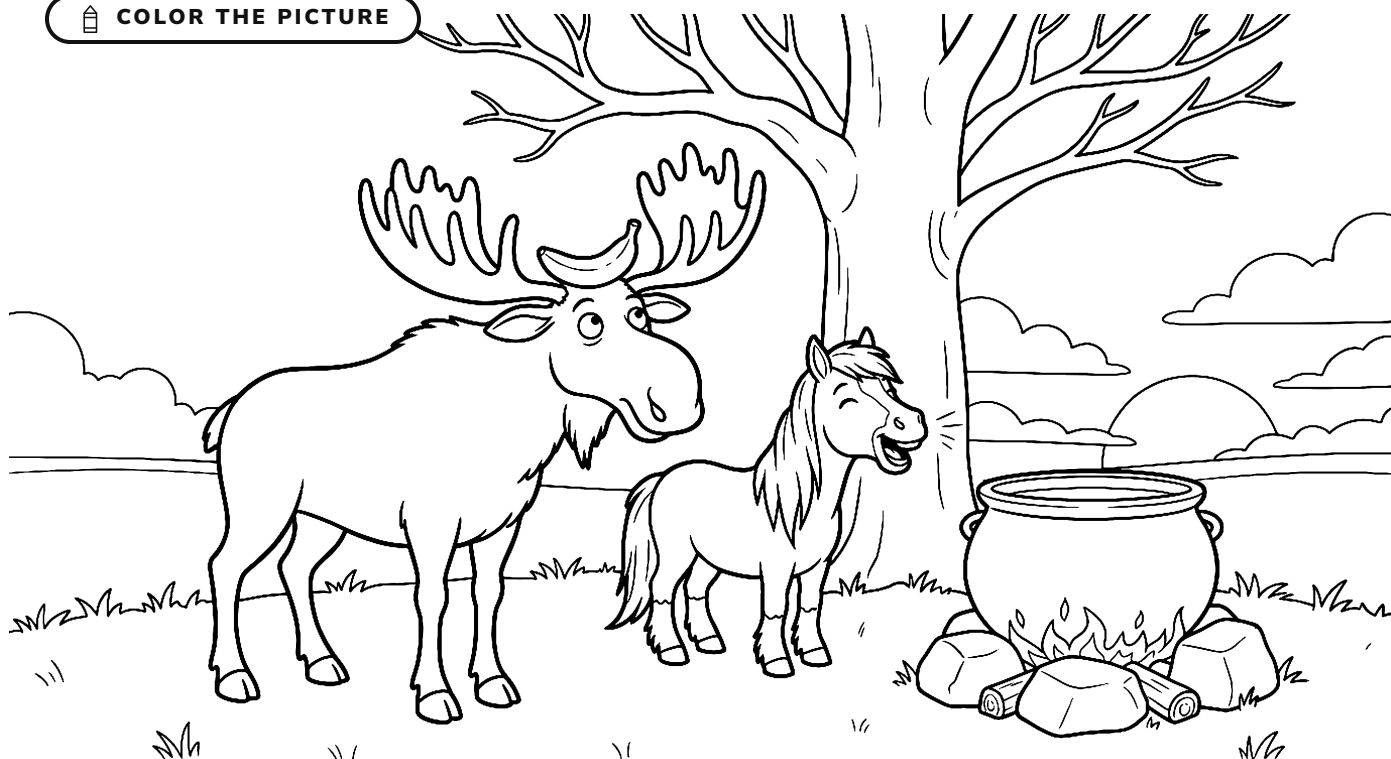


The Slow Supper

 COLOR THE PICTURE



The sky was going pink and gold behind the hills, and a little fire was crackling in Sunny Square. Next to it, on three big rocks, sat the biggest pot anybody had ever seen. It was so big that Bruno could have taken a bath in it.

Mama Moose stood beside it with a long wooden spoon. “Last Thursday we ate dessert first,” she said. “Tonight we’re going slow. All week we’ve been noticing who spent time on us. So tonight, we spend some time on each other. It’s a Slow Supper.”

“What’s a Slow Supper?” asked Mr. Monkey.

“We make a stew together,” said Mama Moose. “Everybody brings one thing to put in. Then everybody takes a turn stirring. And it cooks slow, slow, slow, until it’s ready.”

“How slow?” asked Sammy.

Mama Moose smiled. “Very.”

Sammy’s tail twitched.

So everybody brought one thing. Daddy Moose brought potatoes. Mama Monkey brought carrots. Hazel brought sweet clover. Ricky brought mushrooms, every one exactly pinecone-size. Bruno brought a whole armful of acorns, and then, because nobody was looking, one more armful. Mr. Monkey brought a banana.

“In a stew?” said Mr. Moose.

“It’s my one thing,” said Mr. Monkey.

Plop, went the banana.

Then it was time to stir. Mama Moose stirred first, slow and steady, around and around. Then Daddy Moose. Then Shiloh, who stirred so gently the spoon hardly moved.

Then it was Sammy’s turn.

Sammy grabbed the spoon. “SLOW,” she said. “I can do slow. Watch me do slow.” She stirred around once, slowly. Then twice, a little faster. Then three times, faster. Then she was stirring so fast the spoon was a blur, *whirra-whirra-whirra-whirra*, and the stew went around in a whirlpool, and the whirlpool went faster, and then the banana flew straight up out of the pot like a little yellow fish.

It sailed through the air, spinning, and landed, *SPLAP*, right on top of Daddy Moose’s head, sitting between his antlers like a crown.

Everybody looked at Daddy Moose. Daddy Moose looked up, cross-eyed, at the banana.

“Is that my one thing?” said Mr. Monkey.

“Hee hee hee... *SNORT!*” went Hazel.

“Ha-ha-ha-ha!” laughed Sammy. “That was my **FAST** slow!”

Daddy Moose very carefully lifted the banana off his head and dropped it back in the pot. “Plop,” he said, in a very serious voice.

“Hee hee hee!” went Mr. Monkey. “My banana got to be a crown!”

Then they stirred. And stirred. And waited. And waited. The stew bubbled, *bloop... bloop... bloop*. It smelled so good that Bruno lay down right next to the pot with his nose as close as he could get it.

Mr. Moose took a turn. He stirred the way he did everything, very slowly and very carefully, so slowly that a

little moth landed on the spoon and rode around the pot three whole times without falling off.

"Mr. Moose," said Mr. Monkey, "you're slower than Tessie."

Tessie looked up from her spot by the fire. "Nobody..." she said, "...is slower... than me."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Mr. Moose, and the moth flew away.

Hazel couldn't stand still. She trotted around the fire, around the Wishing Tree, around the fire again.

"Is it ready?" asked Hazel.

"Not yet," said Mama Moose.

"Is it ready NOW?"

"Not yet."

Ricky came over with his list. "Rule thirty-seven," he said. "Stew should be fast."

"There's no rule about stew," said Mama Moose kindly.

Ricky thought about it. Then he told a joke. "Why did the stew go to the doctor? It wasn't feeling... souper."

Nobody laughed. The stew went *bloop*. Ricky looked very pleased.

While the stew bubbled, Mama Monkey gathered everybody around the Wishing Tree, close to the fire, where they could see the painted leaves tied to the trunk, faces out.

"All week," she said, "we've been noticing what people gave up for us. Not just what they did. What it cost them. So tonight, each of us says one thing out loud."

She showed them how. "You say, 'Thank you, somebody, for making me feel important.' Then you say what they did, and what they gave up to do it. And everybody else says..."

"I REMEMBER THAT!" shouted Mr. Monkey, who remembered.

"Hee hee," went Benji.

Mr. Moose went first. He stood up very tall, and his voice was soft. "Thank you, Daddy, for making me feel important. You stood in the cold brook twenty-two times. You could have been warm, but you were cold for me."

"I remember that," said everybody.

Daddy Moose looked at the fire for a long time. He didn't say anything. He just put his big head down next to Mr. Moose's small one.

Mr. Monkey went next. "Thank you, Daddy, for making me feel important. You spent a whole day building me a new swing, and you missed your nap, and you missed your lunch, and you hit your thumb."

"I remember that," said everybody.

Daddy Monkey held up his thumb. It still had a little bump on it. "Worth it," he said.

Tessie went, very slowly. "Thank you... Ricky... for making me feel important. You said sorry. And you made a rule... about how far a present came."

Ricky's ears went pink. "I remember that," said everybody.

One by one, all around the fire, the friends went. Shiloh thanked Bruno for carrying him across the river in the spring flood. Dottie thanked Daddy Monkey for fixing her den roof in the rain. Benji thanked Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey for the honey-bunny leaf, and he didn't even need to whisper it.

Then Mr. Monkey noticed something. Ricky had stopped listening. He was sitting at the edge of the firelight with a pile of leaves and vines in his lap, wrapping something. Then wrapping something else. His paws were going fast.

"Ricky," whispered Mr. Monkey. "What are you doing?"

"Swap presents," said Ricky, not looking up. "Rule thirty-five. All presents have to be wrapped. And rule four, nobody gets left out. What if somebody forgets to bring one? Then they won't get one. So I'm making extras."

"How many extras?"

Ricky looked at the pile. "All of them," he said.

Mr. Monkey looked at the pile. Then at Ricky. Ricky looked tired. His whiskers were droopy. He was missing all the thank-yous.

Mr. Monkey felt it in his chest, the same tight feeling he got when he saw the bare maple. Ricky was giving away his whole night. And nobody was even noticing.

"Mr. Moose," he whispered. "Ricky's missing it."

Mr. Moose thought it through. Ricky wouldn't stop wrapping, because he was worried somebody would be left out. So what if nobody needed to be left out of anything? What if somebody wrapped with him, so he could listen at the same time?

"We wrap with him," said Mr. Moose. "Right here. While we listen."

Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey sat down on either side of Ricky, and Mr. Moose held the leaves flat, and Mr. Monkey tied the vines, and Ricky's paws slowed down. And for the first time all night, Ricky looked up and listened.

Then Shiloh, who was sitting right across the fire, said softly, "Thank you, Ricky, for making me feel important. You made rule four. Nobody gets left out."

"I remember that," said everybody.

Ricky put down the present he was holding. He didn't pick up another one.

And at last, Mama Moose dipped the spoon into the pot, tasted it, and smiled. "It's ready."

It was the best stew anybody had ever eaten. Even the banana.

"What a day!" said Mr. Monkey, with stew on his chin.

"Everybody put one thing in the pot. Sammy stirred so fast the banana flew out and landed on Daddy Moose like a crown. We said thank you for what everybody gave up. And we wrapped presents with Ricky, so he could listen."

Mr. Monkey whistled, and Mr. Moose hummed, and together they sang:

*We are better together,
Moose and Monkey forever.*

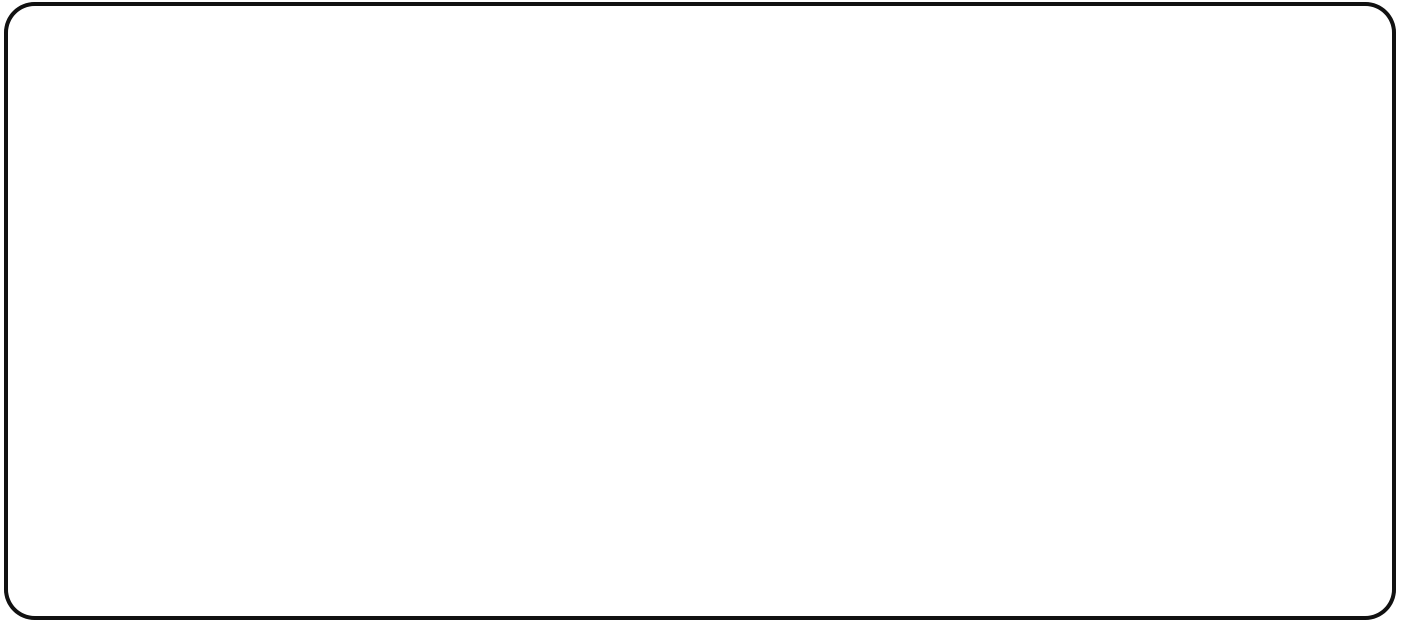
And the big pot sat warm and empty by the coals in Sunny Square, while the stars came out slowly, one at a time.

Let's Talk

- 1 Ricky was so busy wrapping that he missed everybody's thank-yous. How did Mr. Moose and Mr. Monkey help?
- 2 Tonight your family follows a favorite food back to where it came from. Where do you think it starts?

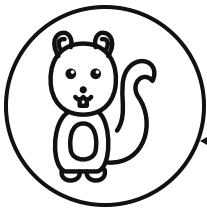
Your Turn

Draw someone who gave up something so they could help you.



Thank you, _____ !

SAMMY'S JOKE



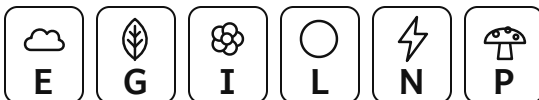
Why did the banana go to the doctor?

Crack Sammy's code! Find each picture in the key and write its letter on the line.

It wasn't _____ well!



KEY

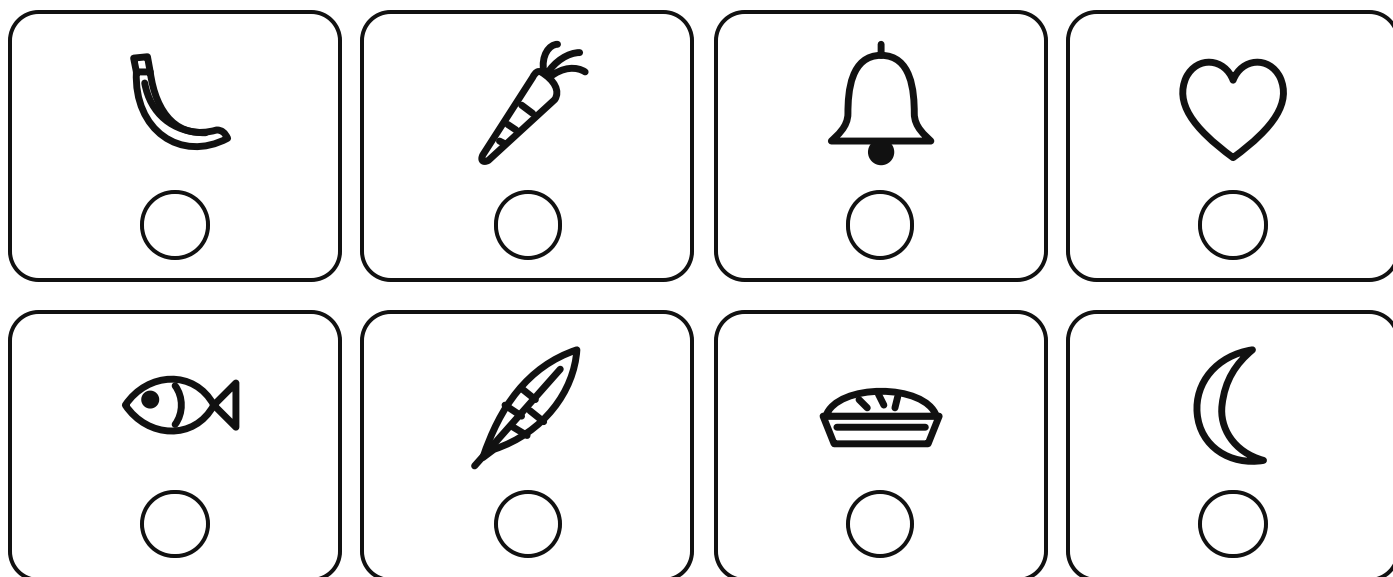


👁 Hidden Pictures

Find each hidden thing in the picture. Color it, then color its circle!



CAN YOU FIND THESE?



Read With Me

DRAW THE STORY

A Nut Pot

A big pot! A big, big pot!

 set in a nut.

Mom did not see.

 set in a nut, and a nut, and a nut!

Mom did see.

“It is a nut pot!” said Mom.

PICTURE WORDS  Bruno

For grown-ups: New words to learn by heart: see.



Color a star each time you read it.

♥ My Thank-You

Trace the dotted words. Write their name on the line, or draw a tiny face. Read it to them!

Thank you
for making me feel valued.

♥ Tonight's Big Words

Remember last week's big words? Your family says them together again tonight.

Grace comes in, gratitude sees it, and graciousness passes it on.



Grace

a gift you didn't earn



Gratitude

noticing the gift



Graciousness

passing it on

DRAW SOMEONE PASSING A GIFT ON TO SOMEONE ELSE.

★ Thankful Thursday

Tonight is a party night for your family. It has three parts:

1 Remember: The Cost Count

2 Rejoice: The Dish Chain

3 Ready: Cut the Leaves

Remember: The Cost Count

A guessing game! People do things for your family again and again, and every one of them costs that person time and work. How many times did each thing happen this year? Write your guess. Then a grown-up helps you figure it out. Last, draw a face or write a name for who did most of it, and thank them!

WHAT THEY DID	MY GUESS	OUR COUNT	WHO DID MOST OF IT?
 Dinners cooked			
 Rides in the car			
 Loads of laundry			
 Bedtime stories			
 My idea: _____			

Some gifts are too big to count, like someone staying up with you when you were sick. Draw one.

TOO BIG TO COUNT

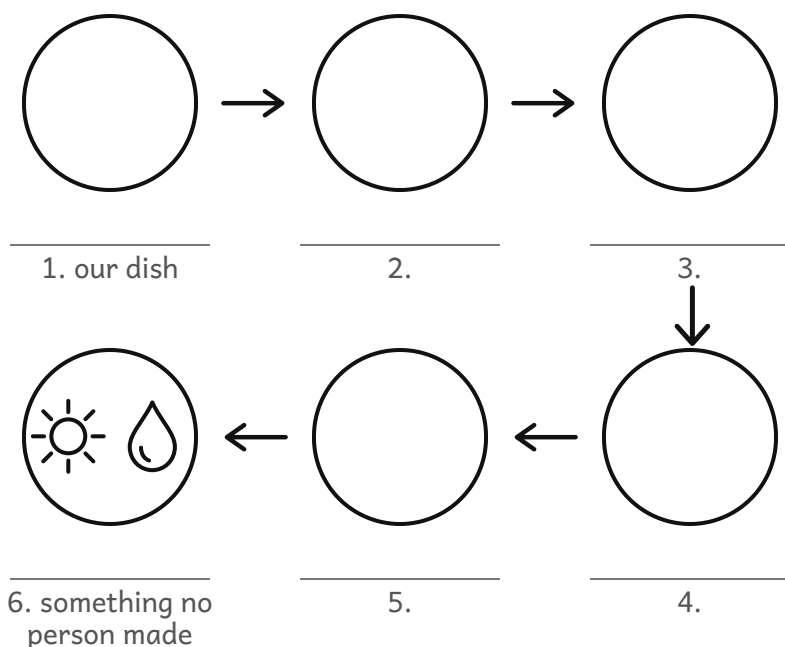
🎯 Rejoice: The Dish Chain

Tonight your family eats a favorite dish. Before anyone takes a bite, follow it back to where it came from. The youngest person asks this question, again and again, and everyone helps answer:

“And where did that come from?”

Keep asking until you get to something no person made. Draw or write each link in the chain.

Example: pie, then the baker, then the store, then the truck, then the farmer, then the sun and rain.



Count every circle with something in it, even the sun and rain. How many links?

✂️ Ready: Cut the Leaves

Help cut out more leaves for this weekend's thank-you notes. Draw leaf shapes on colored paper and cut along the lines with kid scissors, with a grown-up close by.

Color one leaf here for each leaf you cut!

