

# Story hour activity kit



## **Dear Teachers, Librarians, Parents, and Booksellers,**

I know the children you work and play with are angels. Until, well, they're not. We all have our bad moods, and children especially can have their share of bumpy, crunchy days!

In *Maple & Willow Together*, a companion book to the beloved picture book *Maple*, I explore the ups and downs of sibling and friend relationships.

This story hour kit will help you examine relationships and the emotions that accompany them. Over-the-moon attachment, frustration, and anger are all important emotions your children will feel when navigating relationships. Talking about moods is an important way to help kids understand what they are feeling. You'll find discussion questions, games, craft ideas, and more to help you and the children in your life explore relationships and all that goes with them.

And, because Maple and Willow are both outdoors-y gals, you'll find plenty of activities to help your children explore the outside world.

I hope you enjoy this activity kit!

Lori Nichols



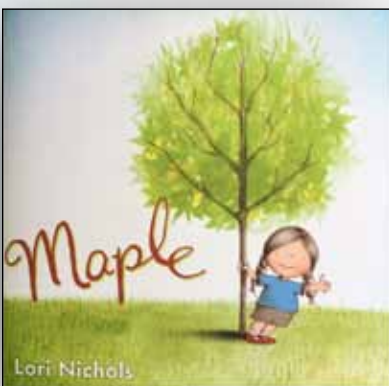
**Maple and Willow Together**

by Lori Nichols  
Publisher: Nancy Paulsen Books  
Age Range: 3 - 5 years  
Grade Level: Preschool - K  
Hardcover: 32 pages  
ISBN-13: 978-0399162831

## about the book(s)

Celebrating imagination and inventive play, Lori Nichols' follow-up to *Maple* perfectly captures the dynamics of siblings and their ability to figure things out on their own and find a way to meet halfway. Maple and Willow do everything together. They love playing outside throughout the whole year, welcoming the sun, rain, leaves, and snow. But it's not always sunshine and rainbows, because sometimes big sisters can be bossy—and sometimes little sisters can be frustrating—and even the best of friends need a break from each other . . . at least until they can no longer bear to be apart.

If you like *Maple & Willow Together*, you'll love *Maple!*



**Maple**

by Lori Nichols  
Publisher: Nancy Paulsen Books  
Age Range: 3 - 5 years  
Grade Level: Preschool - K  
Hardcover: 32 pages  
ISBN-13: 978-0399160851

Lori Nichols' enchanting debut features a free-spirited, nature-loving little girl who greets the changing seasons and a new sibling with arms wide open.

★ **STARRED REVIEW** for

*Maple & Willow Together*

"Children will feel all that the girls do: love, anger and the happiness that comes with making up."

—Ilene Cooper, *Booklist*

★ **STARRED REVIEW** for *Maple*

"Readers will fall in love with Maple. This is a fresh addition to the standard new sibling fare, and young naturalists will identify with Maple's adventurous and tender spirit."

(*School Library Journal*)

★ **STARRED REVIEW** for *Maple*

"Sweet debut... Maple could easily sit next to any young reader at preschool or day care... An arboreal homage perfect for children reveling in alone time or reeling with a new sibling's arrival."

(*Kirkus Reviews*)



## about the author:

**Lori Nichols** grew up in northwestern Pennsylvania surrounded by maple trees. Her love of nature started at a very young age when her companions were not only her sister, but also worms, grasshoppers, frogs, and ladybugs. As a mother, Lori enjoys watching her daughters discover and embrace their own love for nature. Often times recruited as a referee, Lori has learned to get out of the way. Her daughters usually figure things out by themselves. **Maple & Willow Together** is Lori's companion book to the beloved **Maple**.



*Top right:  
Lori spent hours under her  
maple tree growing up.  
This is the Lori's sister, Nikki,  
in their front yard. Lori's  
maple tree is on the right  
Middle right:  
Lori and her sister  
were "always together"  
Bottom right:  
Lori's daughters inspire her  
with their love of nature and  
imaginative play.*

# Story time

## questions for discussion

- ♥ How would you describe your best friend? Is she funny? Is he silly? Do you ever find yourselves in a fight?
- ♥ What kinds of things do you and your best friend like to do together? (Play outside, jump like grasshoppers, read books, dance, blow dandelions, find worms.)
- ♥ How do Maple and Willow get along? Are they friends all the time? Do they ever get angry with one another?
- ♥ Have you ever gotten angry at your brother, sister, friend, parents, or teacher? (Reassure the children that everyone gets mad at times, even at the people they love.)
- ♥ Do you think alone time, by yourself, is sometimes a good thing? Do you have quiet time in your house?
- ♥ What things do you like to do by yourself?



# Story time

## group activities

♥ Maple and Willow talk to one another in Pig Latin. Teach your audience Pig Latin and go around the room in a circle and say everyone's name in Pig Latin. Pig Latin: Drop the first letter of the child's name and add it to the end along with AY. Example: Maple = Aplemay, Willow = Illowway.

♥ Point out how Willow gets very angry at Maple and yells AADMAY! AADMAY! AADMAY! See if the children know what this word is that Willow is saying. Have the children stand up and on the count of 3 yell AADMAY! and stop their feet. You may think, um, that's the LAST thing I want my children to do. I hear you. But talking about feelings with children is an important thing you can do to help your child understand his/her own feelings. Plus, there will be plenty of time to discuss how stepping on a beloved comfort toy of a friend is not a good idea.



♥ Ask the children if they have a special animal or comfort toy that they love. What is Maple's comfort toy? What does Willow do to Maple's special toy? How would it make you feel if someone stomped on your favorite toy? Do you think Maple was right to push Willow down for stepping on her toy? How do you think Willow felt when she was pushed down?

♥ Maple and Willow like to jump like grasshoppers. Show the children how to play leap frog, but call it leap grasshopper. This is a good outside activity but can also work if you have ample space inside such as a gym or big open activity or play room.



# Story time

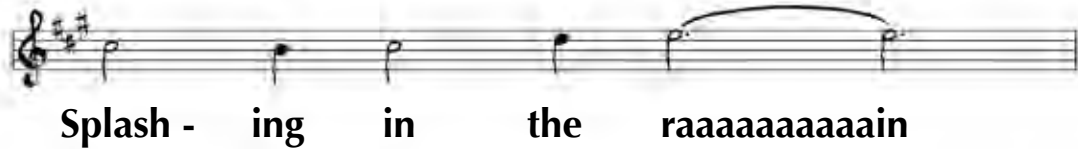
## group activities /sing along



Willow likes to jump in the puddles when it rains. Pretend like it's raining outside. Have half the audience pretend to hold up an umbrella like Maple. Ask the other half of the audience to pretend to jump in puddles. Do this for 20-30 seconds and then switch roles.

Here is a song you can sing to the tune of *Row, Row, Row, Your Boat*:

**Stomp, stomp, stomp your feet,  
Splashing in the rain,  
Splishing and splashing and stomping and tromping now,  
Let's do that again.**



# Outside time



## heart hunt

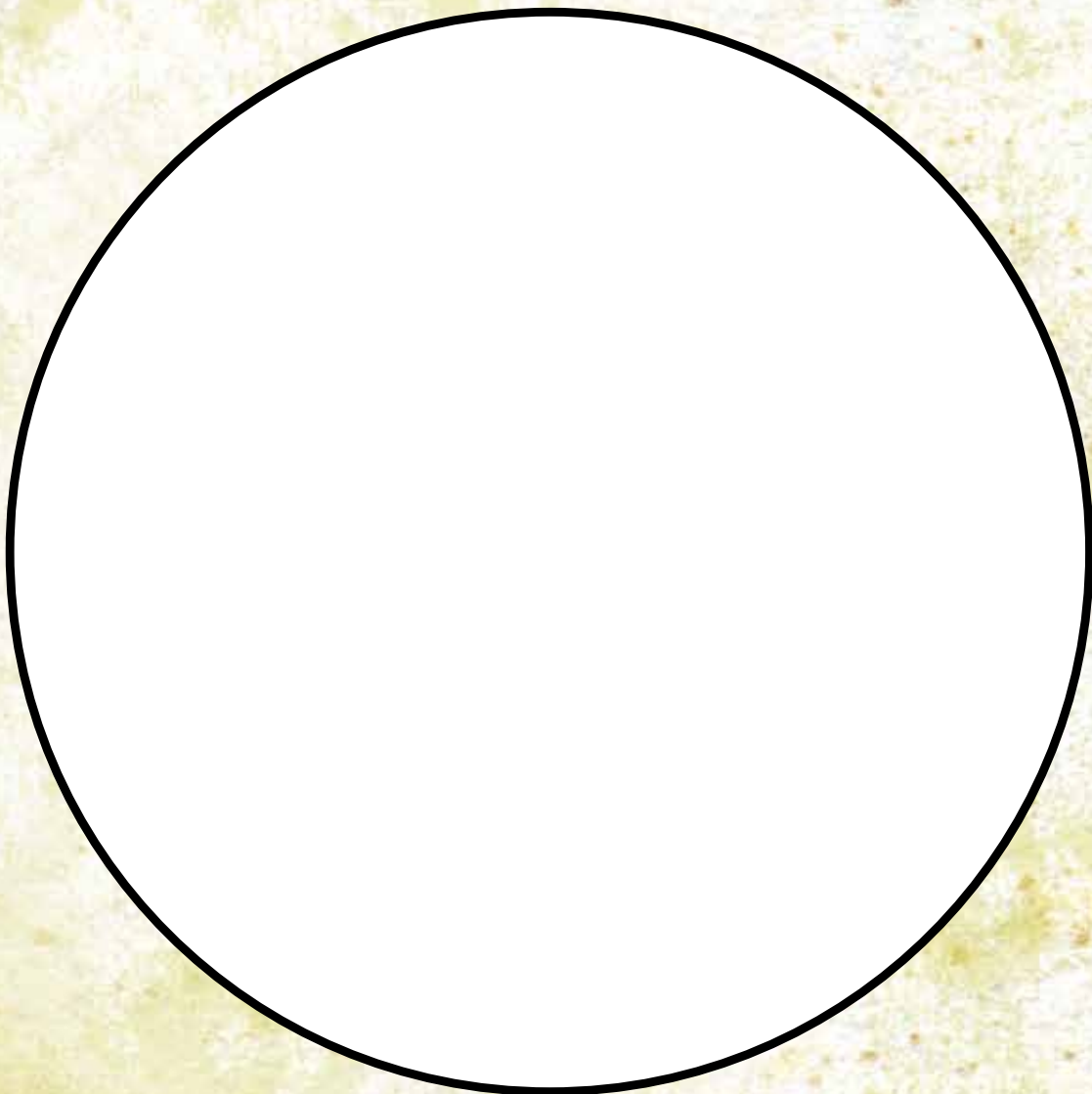
It's easy to find heart rocks if you keep your eyes open. They are everywhere. Encourage your little friends to go outside and look for heart rocks. They can keep them for a bumpy, crunchy time when they are not getting along with a friend. Giving away a heart rock can be a way for a child to say "I'm sorry" and can teach children how to work things out for themselves. If you have a classroom with the same children every day, consider keeping a bowl of found heart rocks nearby. Encourage the children to *work things out* themselves by giving heart rocks when they've hurt someone's feelings.



# Outside time

## Build a face ages 4-8

Take the children outside and have them gather their favorite objects from nature. Acorns, sticks, leaves. Have the children make happy and mad faces out of the found objects. Ask the children how they are feeling today. Show them how by just moving objects around in the circle, they can change the mood of their artwork from happy to sad.





# Craft time

## Build a fairy house

ages 9-11

Maple and Willow love to build fairy houses from natural objects found outside. Here are some ideas for you to create your very own fairy house.

### supply list:

- branch (shape shown right)
- yarn,
- flowers
- leaves

### instructions:

- 1 Find a branch in the shape of a teepee with a main branch coming from top (I used an azalea branch) and gather some yarn.
- 2 Attach the yarn where the branches meet.
- 3 Begin winding the yarn around the branches moving upward toward the wider end. You'll start to see the fairy house take shape.
- 4 Cut the \*leg\* branches to be equal length so the house will stand.
- 5 Flip the wrapped branches upside down on to branch legs.
- 6 Decorate with flowers and leaves as desired.



# Craft time

## Build a fairy ages 9-11

Maple and Willow love fairies. They would like to share a fun fairy-building project you can do with your child using Ginkgo leaves. Acorns, a stapler, and thin nib marker are also required.



### supply list:

- Ginkgo leaves
- Acorns with caps
- Stapler
- Thin nib marker

### instructions:

- 1 Gather Ginkgo leaves.
- 2-6 Layer and twist tightly together so sides meet.
- 7 Staple the leaves. \*
- 8 Staple another leaf on as wings.
- 9 Cut the pointy top off the cone shape.
- 10 Place an acorn on top as a head and draw a face with a thin nib marker!

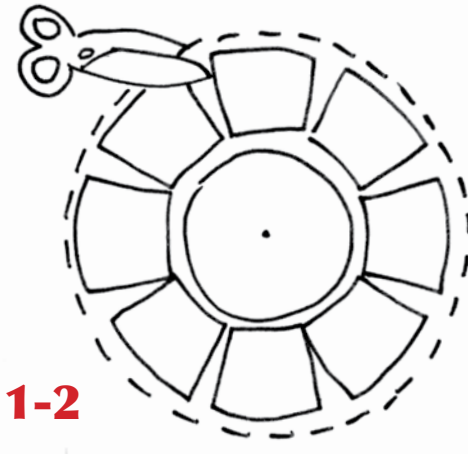
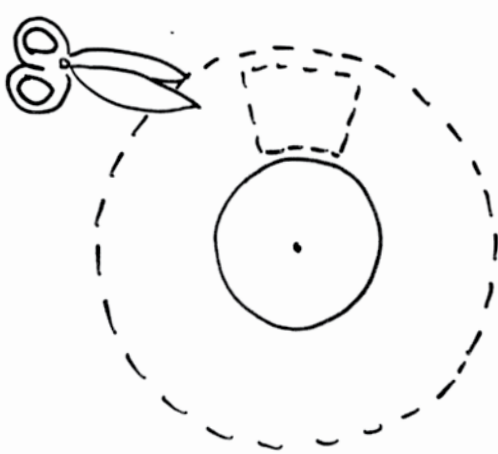


\*Adult supervision needed when using a stapler.

# Craft time Feelings Spin-Wheel

## Instructions

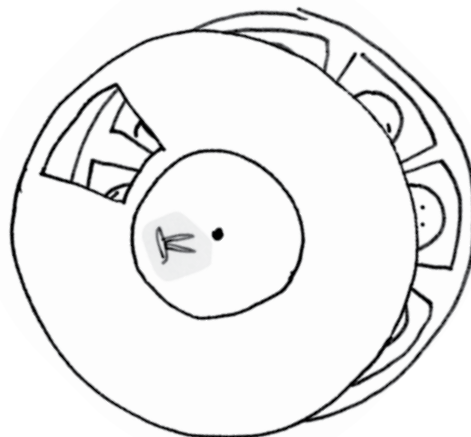
You and your child can make this fun spin-wheel to talk about feelings. Larger patterns follow on next pages. For groups with younger children I suggest the adult cut and assemble and allow the children to focus on drawing their feeling faces.



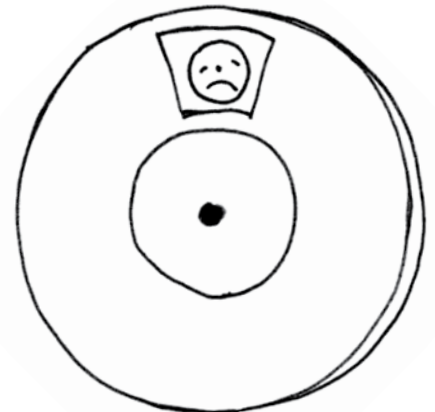
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4-5



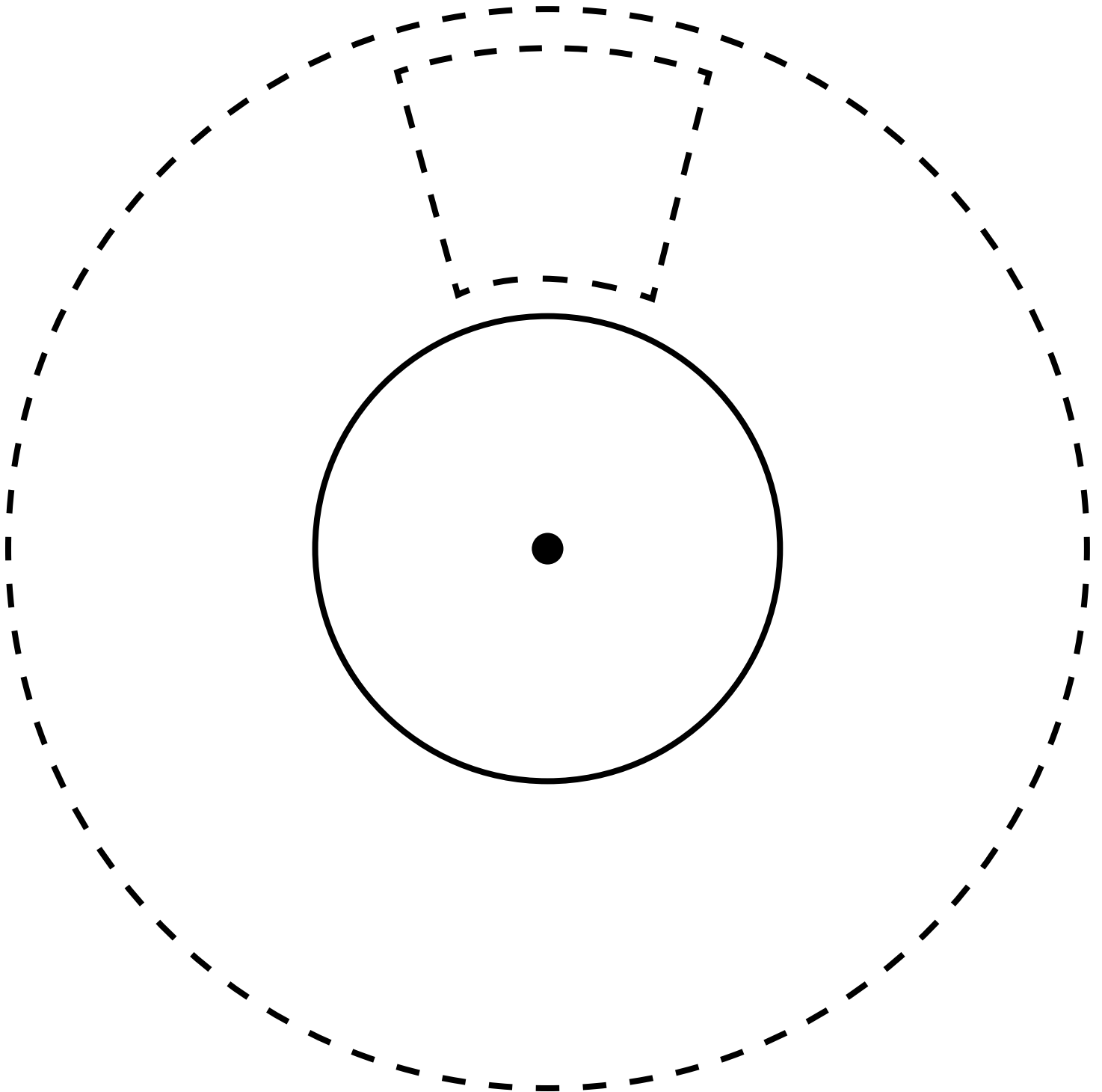
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## instructions:

- 1 Print out both Feeling Spin Wheel pattern pages.
- 2 Cut along the dotted lines of both patterns A & B.
- 3 Have child/children draw eight different feeling faces in each of the spaces provided on pattern B.
- 4 Place pattern A cutout circle on top of pattern B drawing circle.
- 5 Attach both at center with a brass fastener.
- 6 There you have it. Your very own Feelings Spin Wheel!

# Feelings Spin-Wheel pattern A

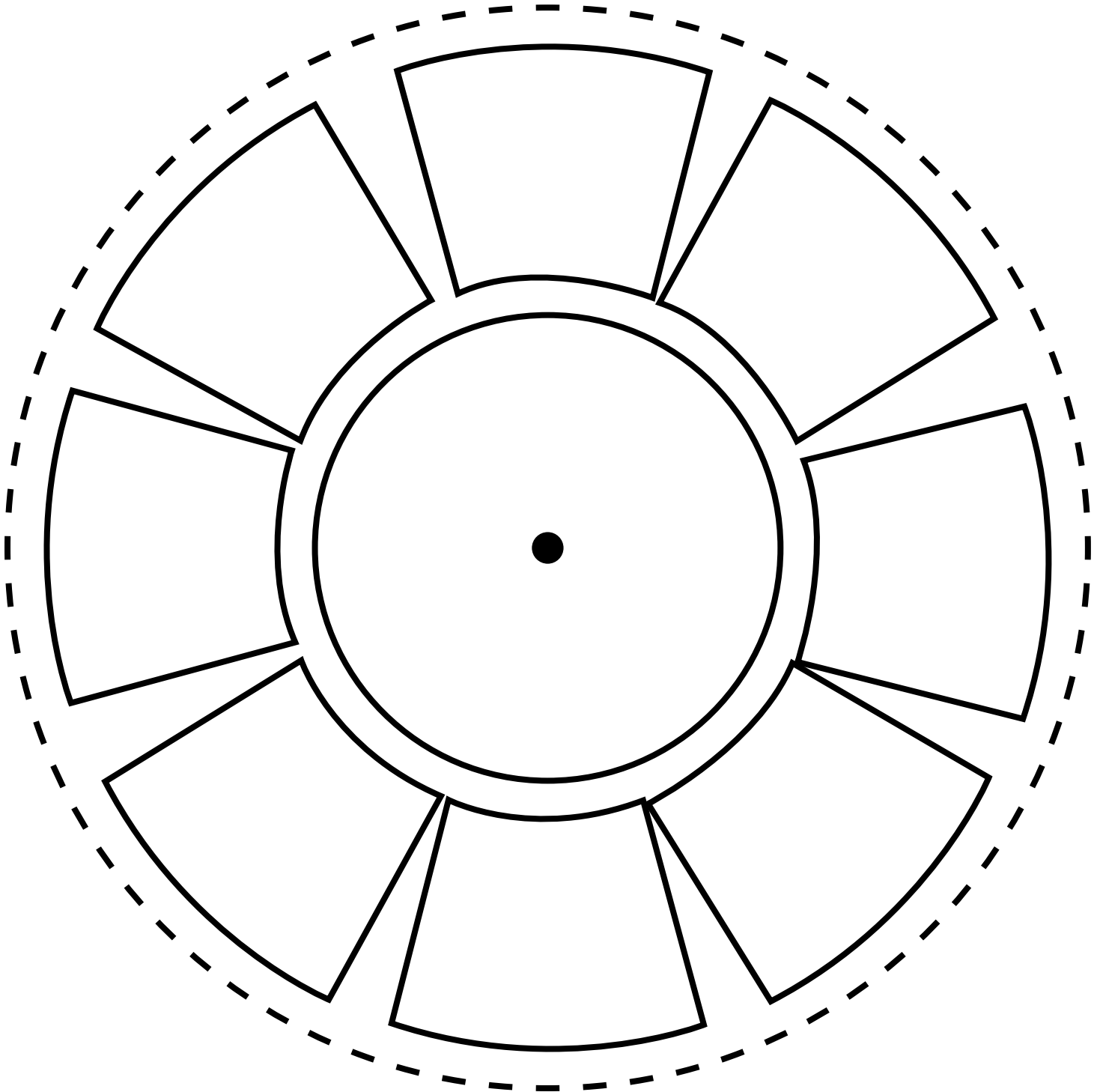
TOP: This pattern will be the top of your spin wheel. Cut out the large circle on the dotted line. Next, cut along the dotted line of the box shape. This will give you a window to see the drawings which will be placed below this circle.



# Feelings Spin-Wheel pattern B

BOTTOM: Cut out the large circle on the dotted line. Pass circles out to children and have them draw mood faces (happy, mad, sad, funny) in each box.

Take the top circle (A) and place on top of this circle. Attach at the center with a brass fastener. Have the child rotate the top piece of paper to reveal the mood below.



# Craft time

## Leaf Painting

ages 9-11

Turn ordinary, everyday leaves into works of art. Go on a nature walk and pick up leaves. See if you and your children can make fun things out of the leaves by painting them. Here are a few examples of faces I painted on leaves. You'll be surprised at what amazing things kids come up with. I used acrylic paint, but gouache works just as well.

