

# Drawing Mandalas

## Guided Art Therapy

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### To Learn More

- Art Therapy  
206-987-2678
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



### Introduction to Mandalas

#### Creative Art Therapy

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#### What is a mandala?

A mandala is simply a circle. You can see mandala designs by looking at flowers, the rings of a tree, or a spiderweb. Mandalas can sometimes symbolize being whole or centered. They can help you think about yourself and how you are connected with others.

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#### Why should I draw a mandala?

Creating mandalas is therapeutic and it can help in several ways:

- To calm and center you through art
- To help you be mindful or “in the moment”
- To help you get rid of stress
- You can discover ways to become calm and focused
- To learn more about yourself or a situation

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#### Which mandala do I draw?

You can decide which mandala to draw based on how you are feeling. Use the template we provided, or use a pen or pencil to trace any round object.

Each mandala has step-by-step directions to help you complete the drawing.

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#### What should I think about after drawing the mandala?

Once it is complete, you should reflect on your drawing to help focus your feelings and thoughts.

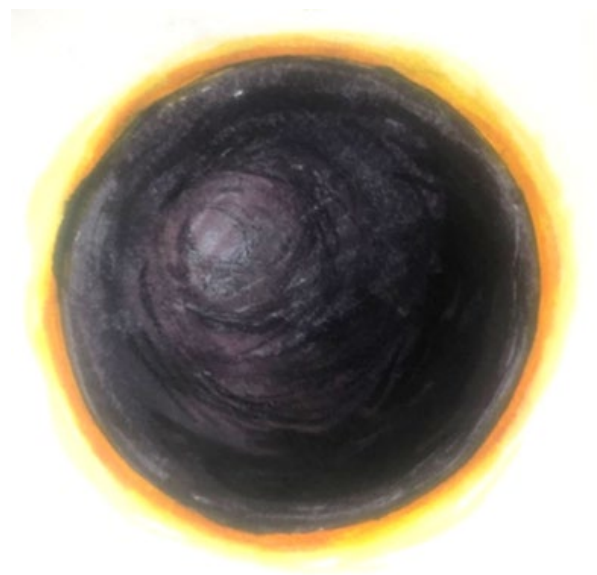
- Take time to look at your mandala drawing. Take a few deep breaths. What do you notice?
- Trace the outline of the mandala with a finger. What does it feel like?
- Place the mandala image across the room. Does it look different from far away versus up-close?
- If you had to title this image, what would you call it? Add a title and a date.
- If you like, you can journal or write about the experience.



### Mandala: Resting in the Darkness

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**Purpose** Draw this when you want to think about your experiences and place in the universe.



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**Materials needed** Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chinks, paints, inks) in black, grey, dark blue, and several bright warm colors (orange, pink, yellow)

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**Instructions**

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Notice how you feel.

Step 2: Use the template or trace your own mandala.

Step 3: Color your mandala using shades of dark blue, black, and grey.

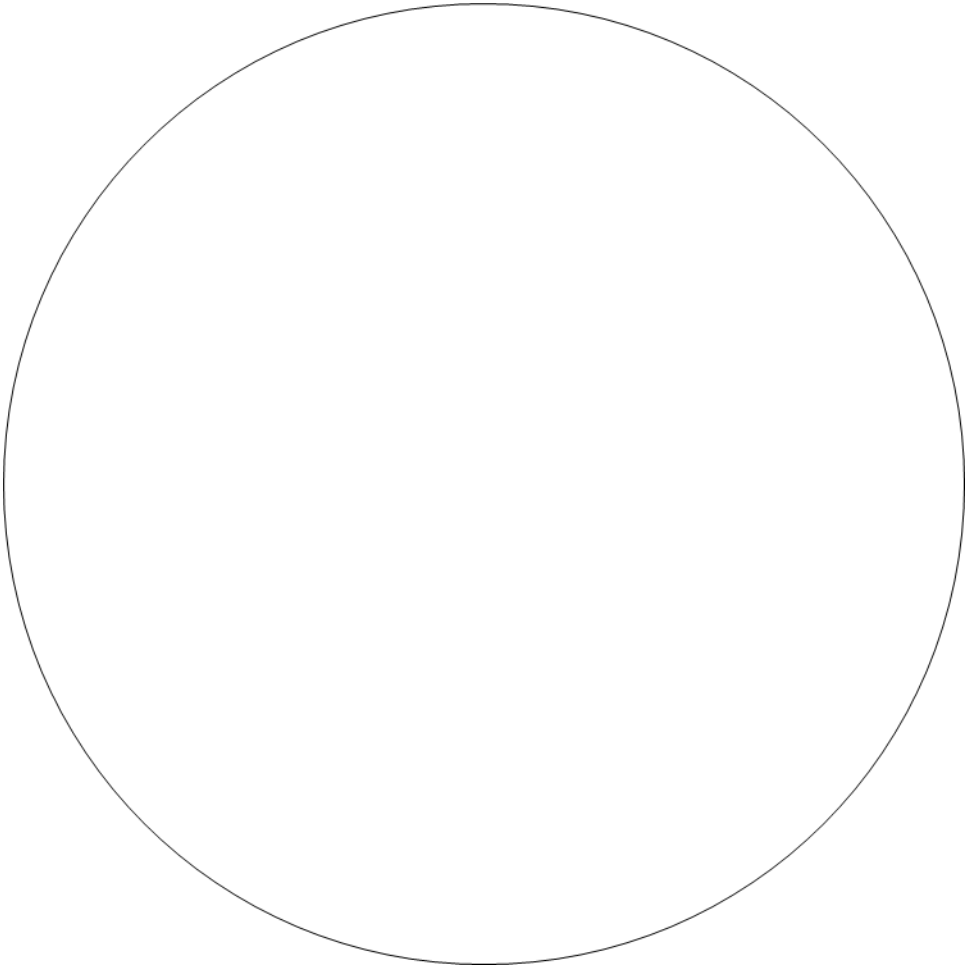
Step 4: Use the art materials, your fingertips, or a paper towel to blend the colors. Blend colors and soften any lines and edges.

Step 5: Outline your mandala with warmer tones (oranges, yellows, reds or pinks).

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**Reflection/  
When mandala is complete** Reflect on what it felt like to use a blank mandala and then fill it in with darker colors. Read the introduction page for reflection questions.





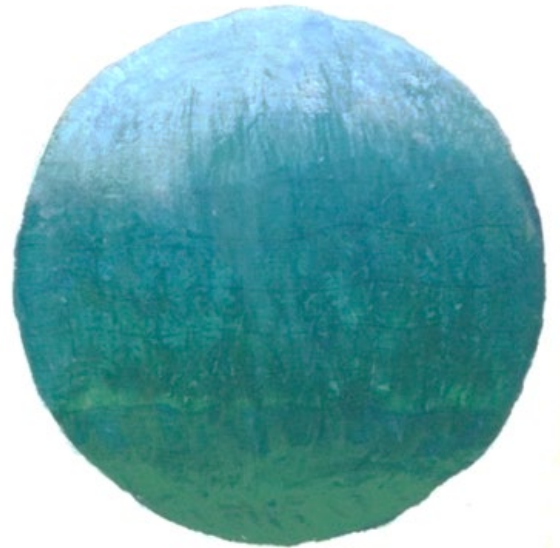




### Soothing Mandala

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**Purpose** Draw this if you are feeling stressed and think about how the colors and shapes change your mood.



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**Materials needed** Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks) in soothing or soft colors

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**Instructions**

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Notice how you feel.

Step 2: Use a template or trace your own mandala.

Step 3: Choose several colors that you like. Try to find soft or soothing colors.

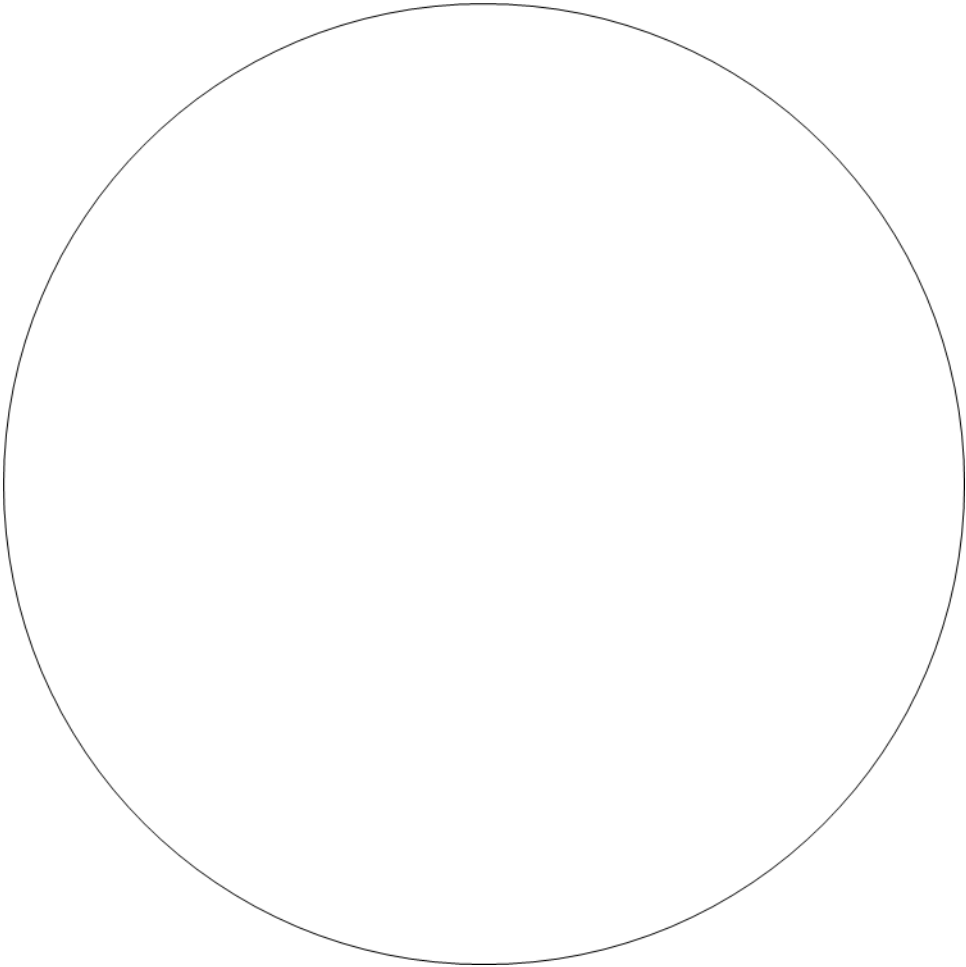
Step 4: Use one color to trace the outside of the mandala. Now use the same color, or a combination of colors to shade the inside of the mandala. Don't overthink it!

Step 5: Use the art materials, your fingertips, or a paper towel to blend the colors. Soften sharp lines and hard edges.

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**Reflection/when mandala is complete** Reflect on what it felt like to use a blank mandala and then fill it in with soothing colors. Read the introduction page for reflection questions. Do you feel calm?







### Discovery Mandala

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**Purpose** Draw this to explore what you are thinking about, but you are unable to say out loud.



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**Materials needed** Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)

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**Instructions**

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Notice how you feel.

Step 2: Use a template or trace your own mandala.

Step 3: Take a pen or pencil, place the tip near the center of your circle. Close your eyes and without lifting your pencil begin to move your hand across the paper, scribbling at random.

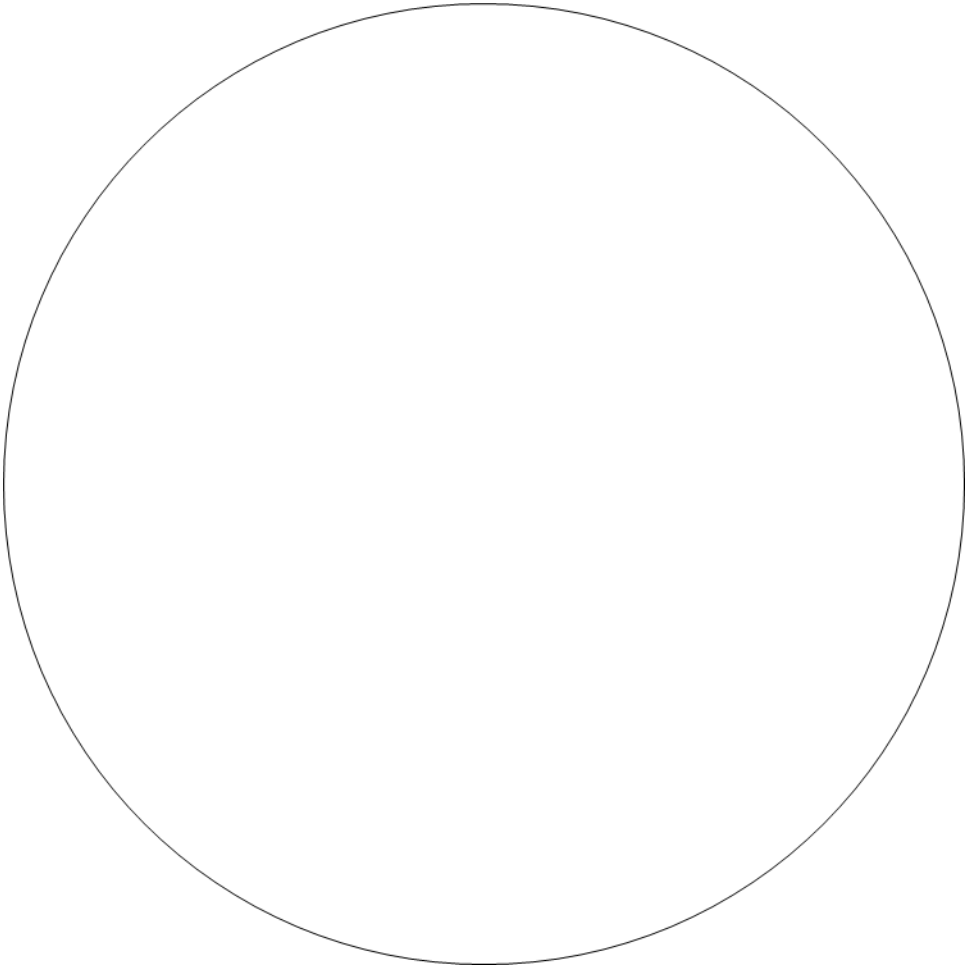
Step 4: Open your eyes. Do you see any shapes or images in the scribble?

Step 5: Add additional lines, colors, and shapes. If you see any images appear (a flower? an animal?) add details and help them emerge.

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**Reflection/when mandala is complete** Take some time to focus on your mandala. What do you notice? What shapes and images emerge? Read the introduction page for reflection questions.









### Labyrinth Mandala

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**Purpose** Draw this if you are experiencing a lot of changes in life. This will help you create a path for your journey.



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**Materials needed** Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)

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**Instructions**

Step 1: If you have the space, slowly move around in circles. Have a seat and take several deep breaths.

Step 2: Use a template or trace your own mandala.

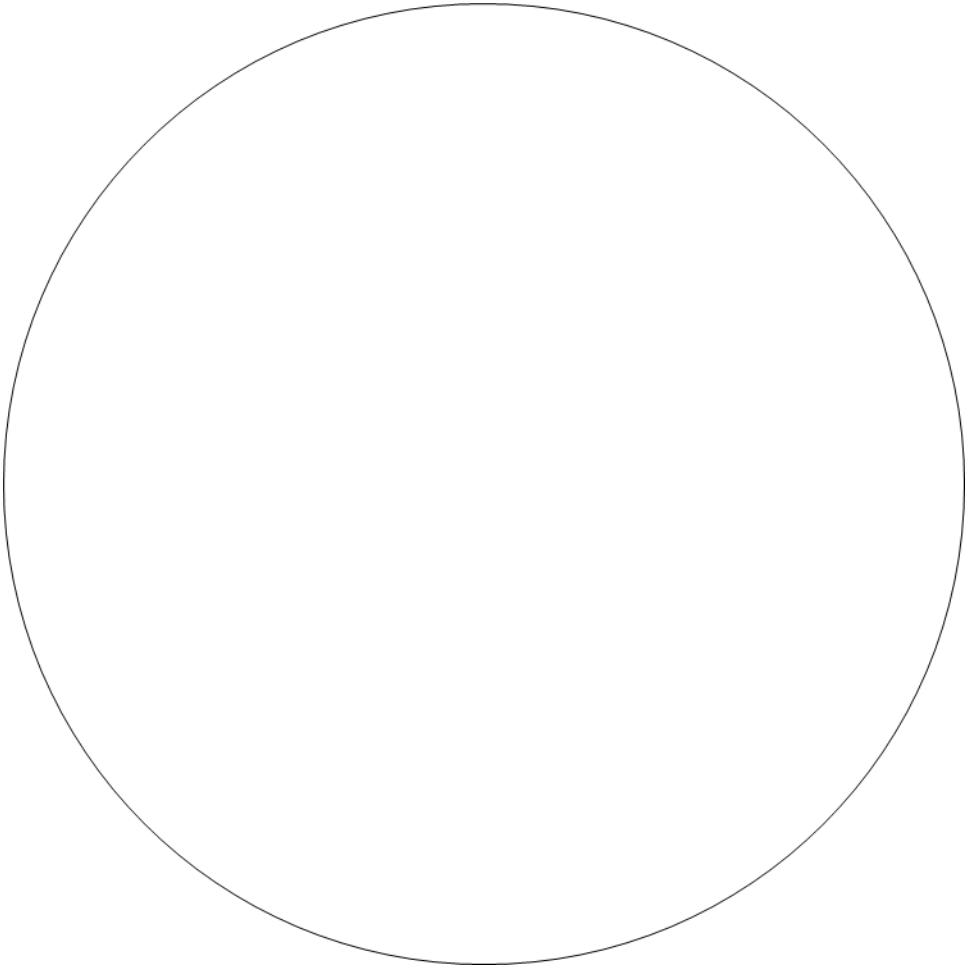
Step 3: Draw a spiral. You can start in the center of the circle and move outward. Or, you can start at the perimeter of the circle and move inward. What feels right to you?

Step 4: If you like, add additional colors to your spiral and the space that surrounds it. You can also add other images and words to reflect your personal journey.

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**Reflection/when mandala is complete** Trace the path of your spiral. Is it moving inward or outward? What is it like to be on this path? Read the introduction page for reflection questions.







### Flower Mandala

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**Purpose** Draw this to feel relaxed, nurtured and inspired. This flower is a reminder of the nice things we can do for ourselves.



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### Materials needed

- Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)
- You can make a collage with torn paper, words from printed materials, and glue

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### Instructions

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Notice how you feel.

Step 2: Use a template or trace your own mandala.

Step 3: Draw a small circle in the center of this larger one. This smaller circle will be the center of your flower. If you like, you can draw an image or a symbol inside this circle.

Step 4: Now add petals in the space between the center circle and the outer edge of the mandala. You can create these petals with drawing materials or with collage paper and tissue scraps.

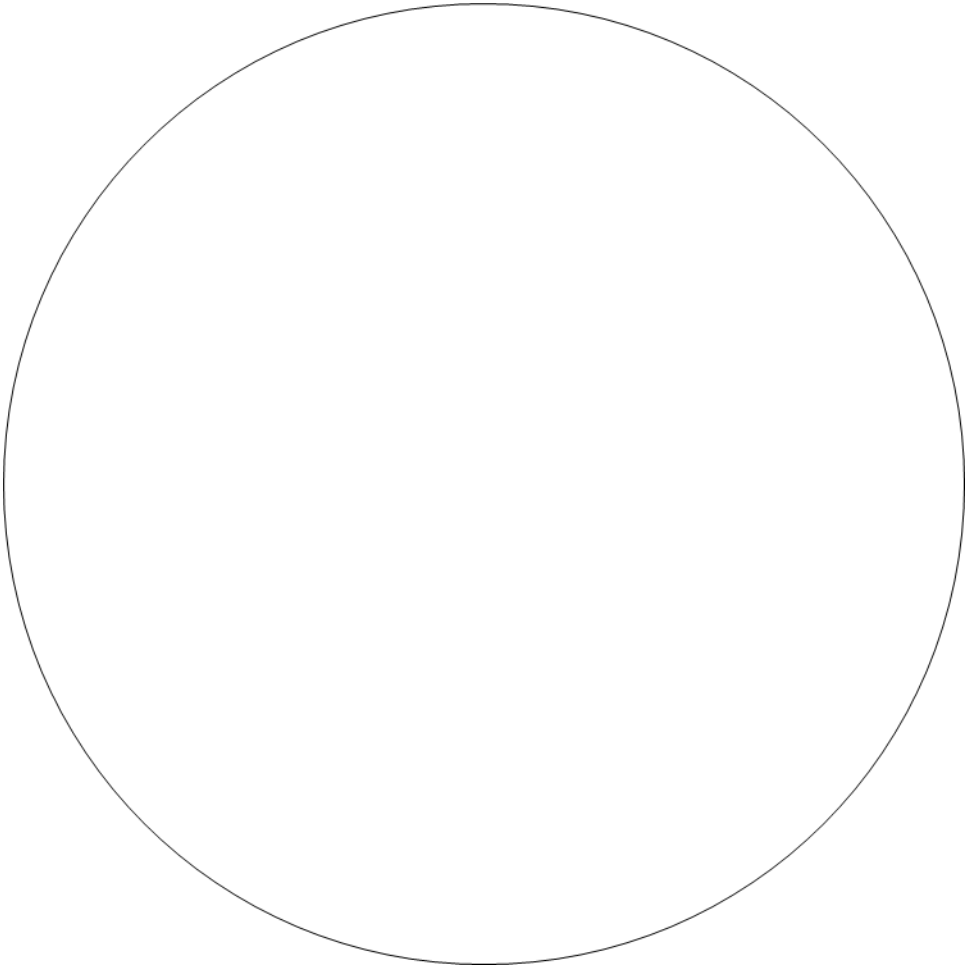
Step 5: If you like, write a positive wish on each flower petal.

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### Reflection/ when mandala is complete

Read the introduction page for reflection questions. If you wrote wishes, read them aloud.









### Target Mandala

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**Purpose** Draw this if you feel confused or defensive. The target will help you balance and focus your emotions.



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#### Materials needed

- Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)
- Optional: a compass or smaller circles to trace

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#### Instructions

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Notice how you feel.

Step 2: Use a template or trace your own mandala.

Step 3: If you drew your own mandala: create more circles that all have the same center point. You can use a compass or draw/trace circles freehand (the circles can be organic like ripples in the water).

Step 4: Select colors for each ring of the mandala. You can use many colors or different shades of the same color.

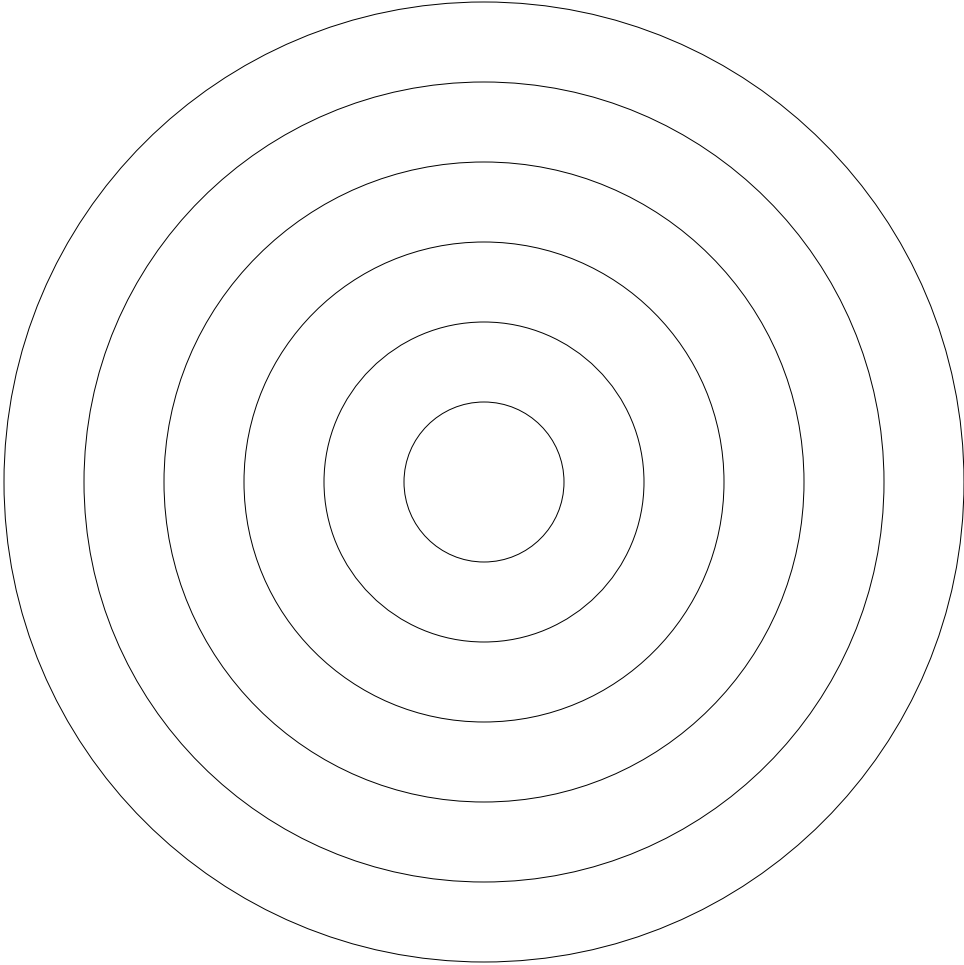
Step 5: As you work, reflect on times when you felt on target: in the right place at the right time!

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#### Reflection/ when mandala is complete

Use your finger to trace the different rings in your mandala. Read the introduction page for reflection questions.







### Dualities: A Mandala for Exploring a Dilemma

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**Purpose** Draw this if you are experiencing a conflict and want guidance or help understanding your problem.



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#### Materials needed

- Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)
- Optional: a ruler or something straight to trace

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#### Instructions

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Think of a problem or conflict that you are experiencing.

Step 2: Use a template or trace your own mandala. Use a ruler or something straight to divide the circle in half and let each half represent one side of the problem.

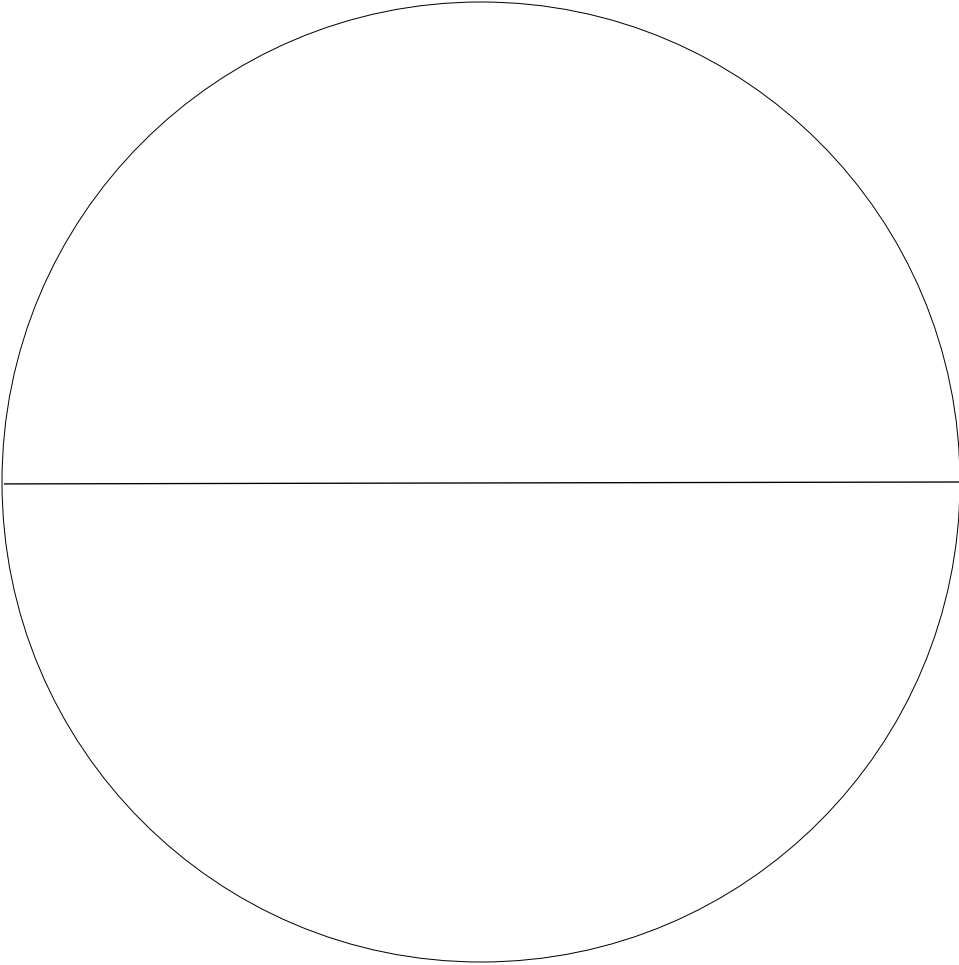
Step 3: Using different art media and/or collage materials explore each side of this conflict. Chose colors and images that represent this problem.

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#### Reflection/ when mandala is complete

Read the introduction page for reflection questions. Do not try to force a solution to your conflict. Try to be open and to notice colors and images. Touch the surface and notice the textures.









### Squaring the Circle

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**Purpose** This drawing represents something that is whole or unbroken. It is either a square outside of a circle, or a square inside of a circle.



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#### Materials needed

- Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)
- Optional: A compass and ruler or something straight

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#### Instructions

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Notice how you feel.

Step 2: If you are using a compass: start by choosing a center point for your mandala. Use the compass to draw a circle on the paper (or trace one using a round object). Then use the ruler to draw lines for your square. The square can exist inside of the circle or it can act as a frame, with the circle nested inside (as pictured).

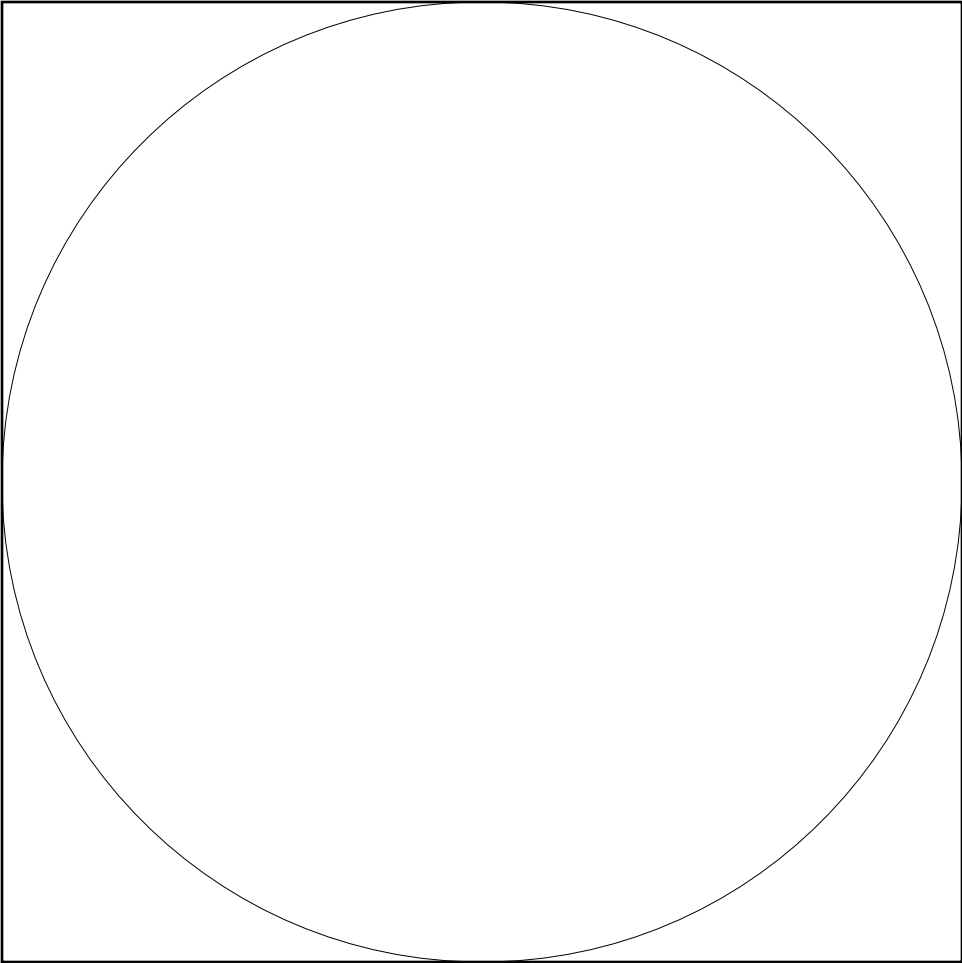
Step 3: Add colors and images to your mandala.

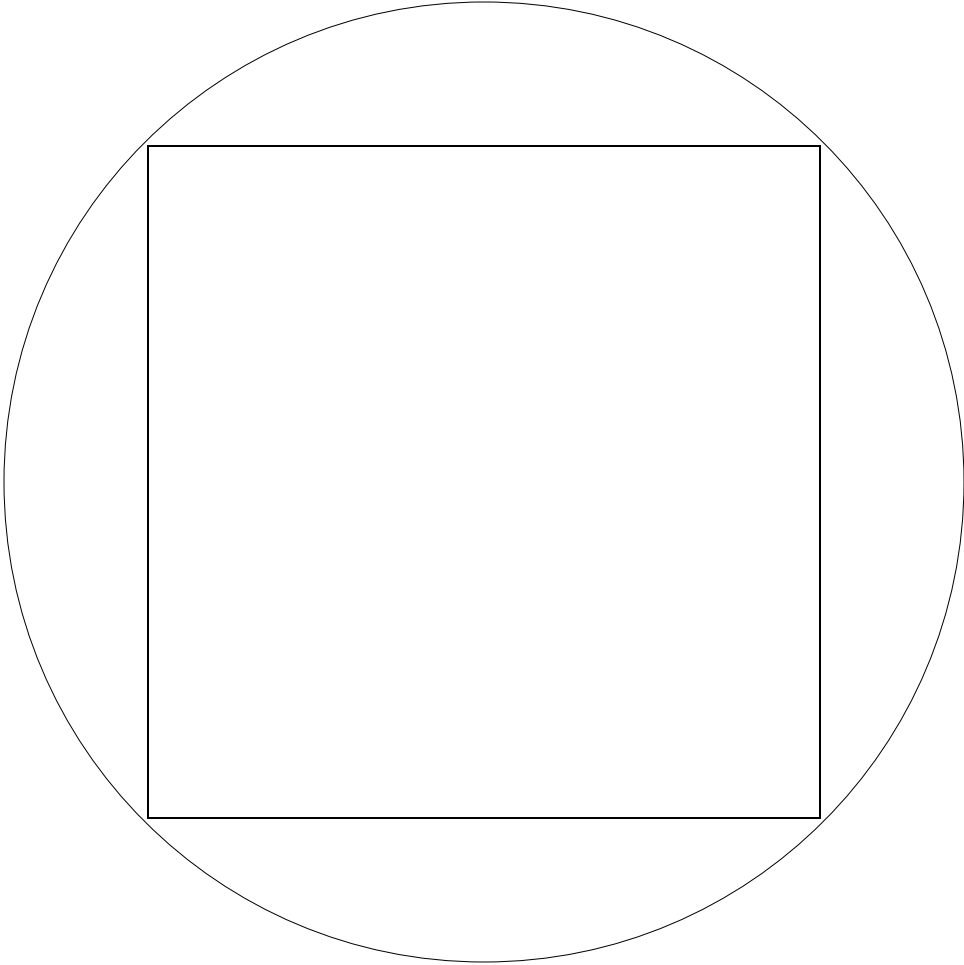
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#### Reflection/ when mandala is complete

Take some time to focus on your mandala drawing and notice how these two shapes act together. Read the introduction page for reflection questions.







### The Personal Shield Mandala

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**Purpose** Draw this when you want to show what things mean the most to you.



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#### Materials needed

- Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)
- You could also make a collage with torn paper, images, and words from printed materials and glue

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#### Instructions

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Reflect: What matters most?

Step 2: Use a template or trace your own mandala. Divide it into 4 sections.

Step 3: Use art materials to show one of your values in each of the four sections. You could use symbols when you create this drawing. For example, you could draw a rose to show “beauty” or a bird to show “freedom”.

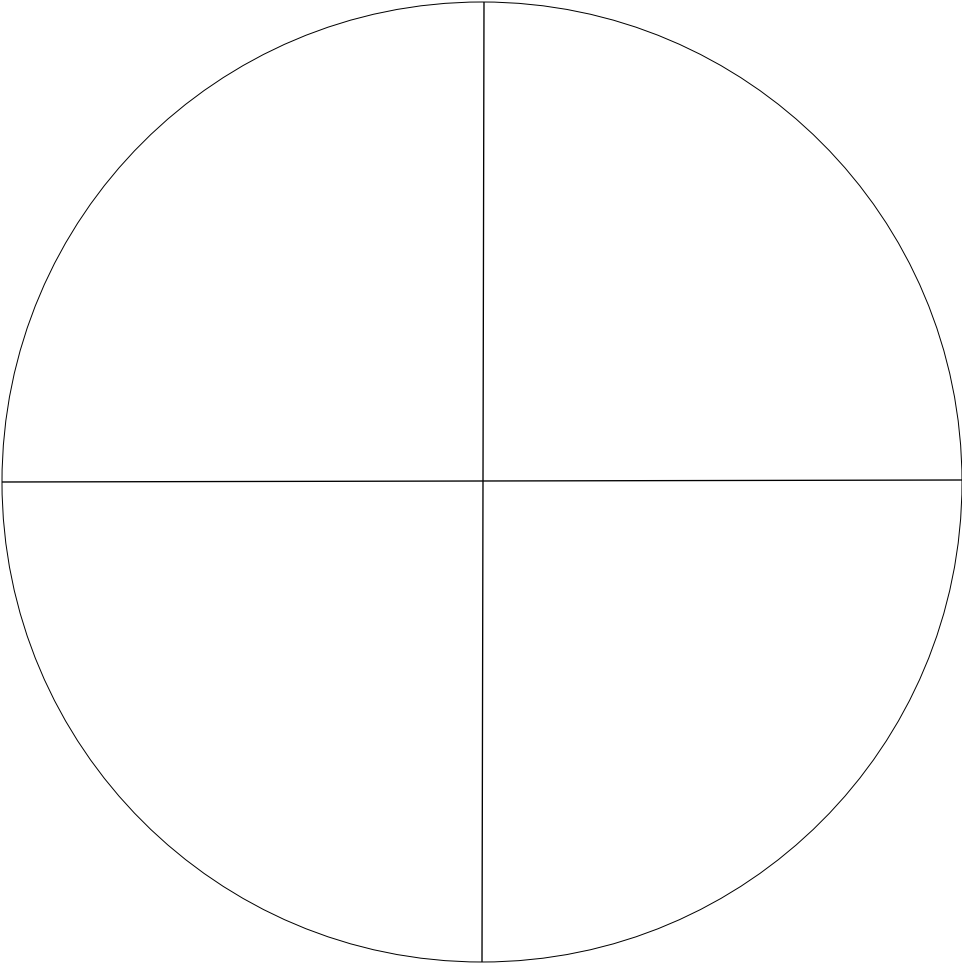
Step 4: If you like, add colors and designs to the outer circle and the cross shape that divides your mandala.

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#### Reflection/ when mandala is complete

Look at each of the four sections and think about what they mean. Read the introduction page for reflection questions.









### Tree Mandala

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**Purpose** Draw this when you want to show yourself and your individuality as a tree.



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#### Materials needed

- Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)
- You could also make a collage with torn paper, images and words from printed materials, and glue

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#### Instructions

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Notice how you feel.

Step 2: Use a template or trace your own mandala.

Step 3: Decide what kind of tree you will create. Will you draw the tree as though it is standing in front of you? Are you looking up at it? Or perhaps you will draw the tree from above.

Step 4:

- If you are drawing a side view: Begin by sketching lines up and down for the trunk of your tree. Add additional lines to create branches.
- If you are looking up from the ground or down from the sky: begin by drawing a small circle in the center of the mandala for the trunk of the tree. Then begin to add branches out toward the sides of your mandala.

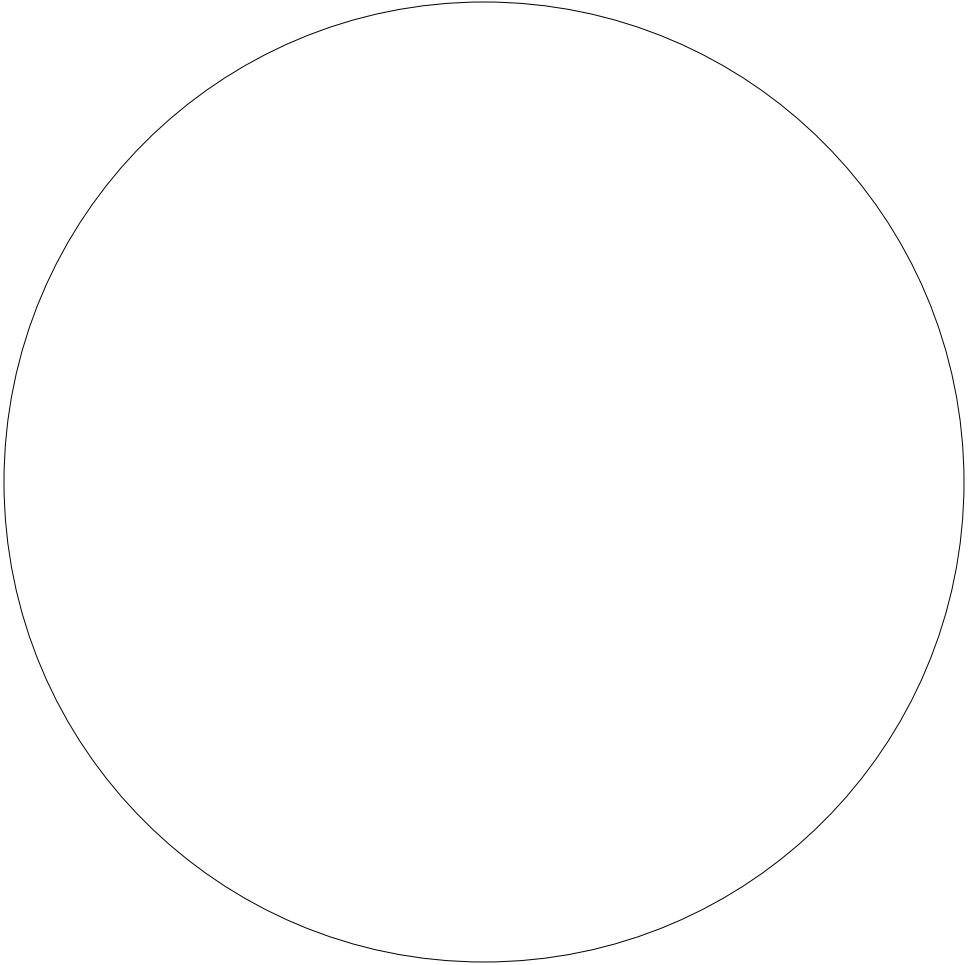
Step 5: Once you have the outline of your tree, you can add details. These can be smaller branches, leaves, flowers, fruits, and animals. Add colors and details to the background.

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#### Reflection/ when mandala is complete

- Does your tree look healthy? Does it have what it needs to grow and thrive? What, is anything, is missing? You can add these things to your drawing if you would like.
- Continue to reflect on your tree, its strengths, and the things it might need. What might your tree tell you about yourself?







### Mandala to Invoke Your Creative Energy

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**Purpose** Draw this to show the energy that is inside your body.



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#### Materials needed

- A circle or mandala template big enough to cover your hand
- Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)

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#### Instructions

Step 1: Sit quietly and close your eyes. Do you feel active? Quiet? Where in your body do you feel this energy? See if you can locate your creative energy.

Step 2: Find a mandala template or an object that you can trace. Make sure your handprint can fit within this circle.

Step 3: Place your hand inside your mandala frame and trace it with a pencil.

Step 4: Fill the outline of your hand with colors, images and shapes represent your creative energy.

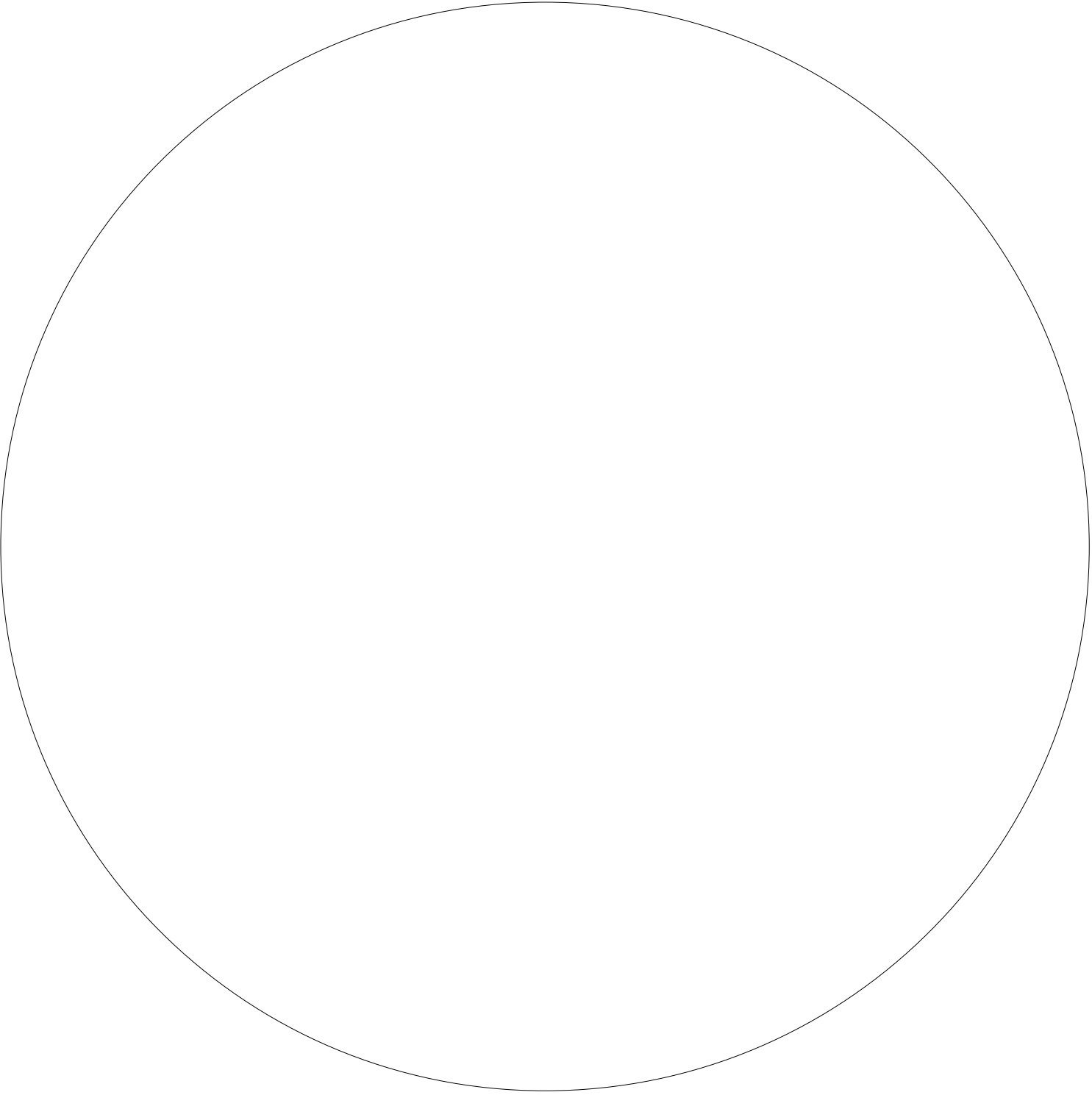
Step 5: Now fill the surrounding space (between the hand and the edge of the mandala). Let this represent the energy that surrounds you.

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#### Reflection/when mandala is complete

- Reflect on your mandala, your energy and how you are interacting with the world.
- Place your palm on the image of your hand and notice how that feels. Does this mandala reflect your creative energy?









### Crystal Mandala

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#### Purpose

Draw this when you want to think about the world and your place within it. You can design your own crystal or use a coloring sheet with a geometric design.



#### Materials needed

- Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)
- Optional: A ruler or a protractor and compass

#### Instructions

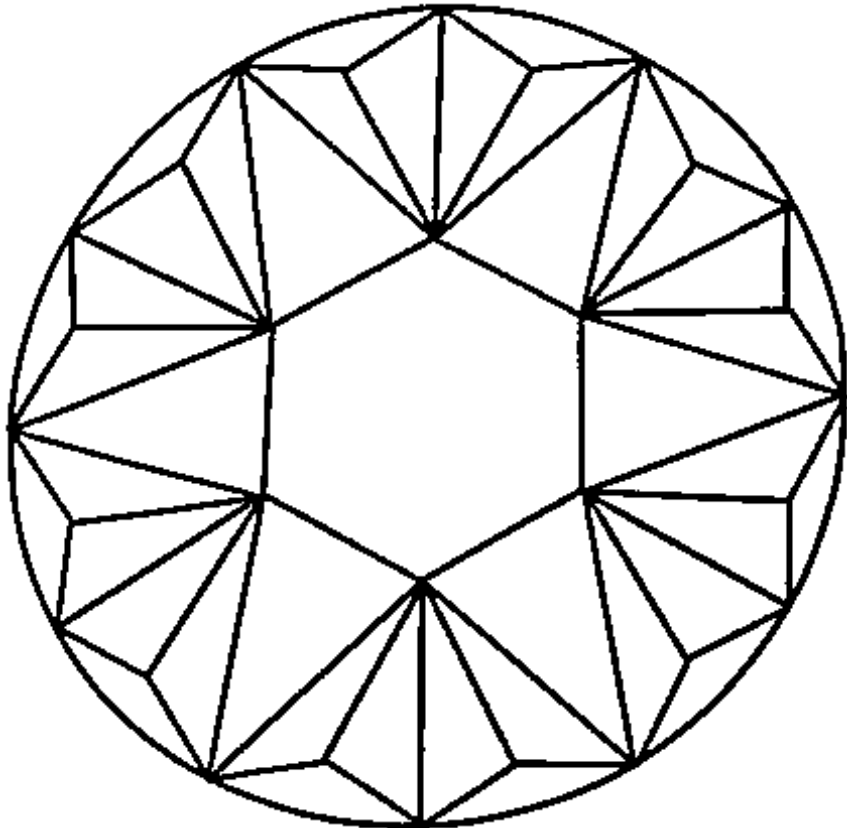
Step 1: Sit down and take several deep breaths. Notice how you feel. Is there tension anywhere in your body? If so, where? What is the feeling?

Step 2: Color your mandala. You can use different colors or you can use different shades of the same color.

#### Reflection/ when mandala is complete

Crystal mandalas help us feel the connection between ourselves and others. Reflect on the world and your place within it.







### Mandala of Letting Go

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**Purpose** Learning to “let go” is a part of life and this mandala is a way to acknowledge what is passing.



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#### Materials needed

- Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)

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#### Instructions

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Notice how you feel.

Step 2: Use a template or trace your own mandala.

Step 3: Reflect: has something ended? What (or whom) are you letting go of?

Step 4: Use a pencil and draw an “x” in the center of your circle. Let these lines be a guide and a starting place for your mandala.

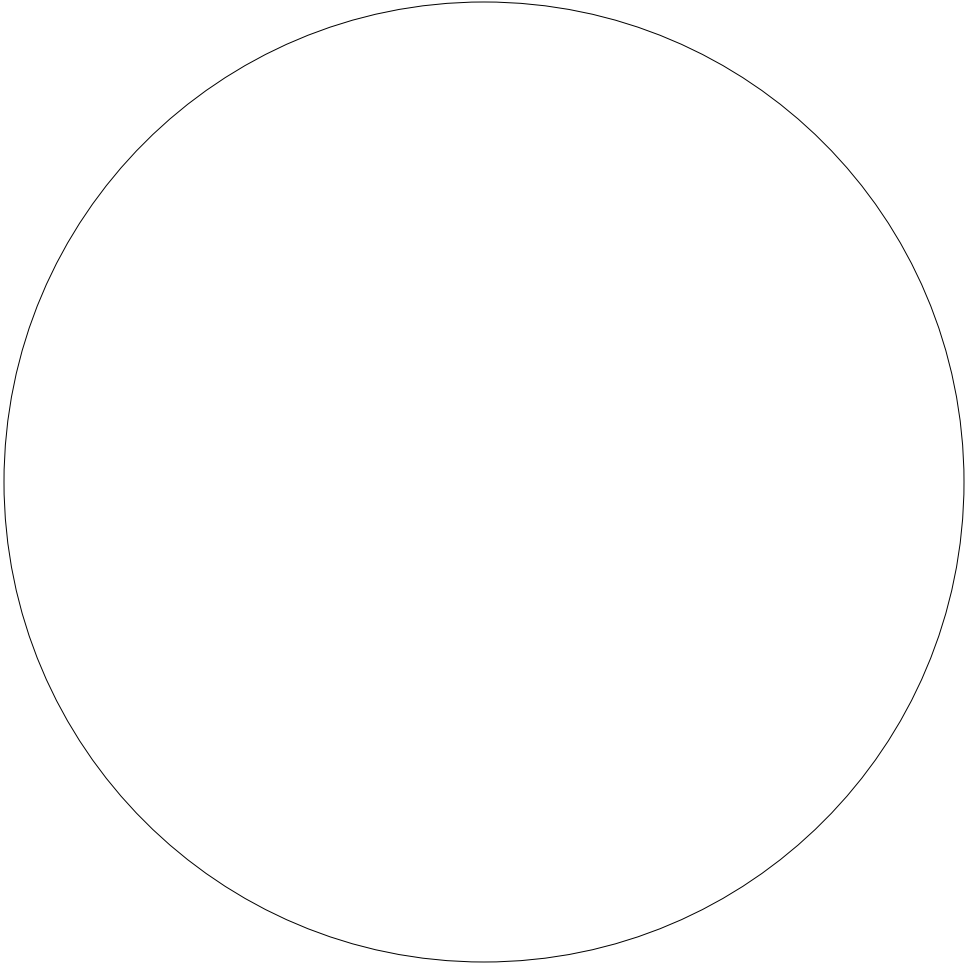
Step 5: Add additional colors, shapes and images to complete your design. Allow it to progress spontaneously as you reflect on life’s changes.

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#### Reflection/ when mandala is complete

- Read the introduction page for reflection questions.
- When you are ready, you can either put the mandala away or you can let go of the artwork by getting rid of it in some way.









### Mandala of Chaos

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#### Purpose

Draw this when things feel out of control. This will challenge you to remain calm and focused even though there may be chaos around you.



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#### Materials needed

- Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chinks, paints, inks)
- You could also make a collage with torn paper, images, words from printed material, and glue

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#### Instructions

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Notice how you feel.

Step 2: Use a template or trace your own mandala.

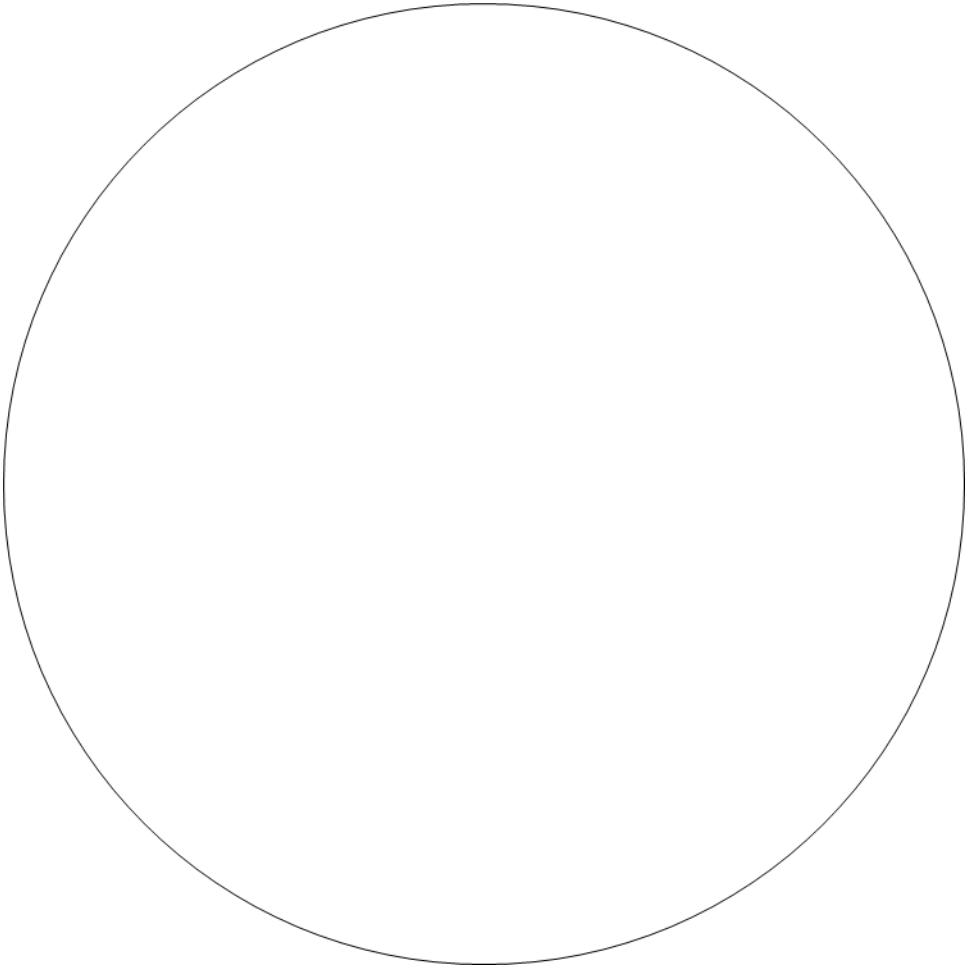
Step 3: Color your mandala. Use bright and clashing colors. Let go of what you are expecting the mandala to look like. You can even draw outside of the lines. Don't try to create something beautiful or pleasing. Make messy, angry, ugly art. You can scribble with markers or splatter it with paint.

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#### Reflection/ when mandala is complete

- How was drawing this different from the other mandalas? What was it like to make messy, angry, ugly art?
- Read the introduction page for reflection questions.







### Mandala of Transformation

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**Purpose** Draw this to make something new out of something old.



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#### Materials needed

- Old cards, photographs, drawings/artworks, letters, and journal entries. Anything that you are ready to “let go”
- Collage materials: scissors (optional) or torn paper, tissue paper, images, and words from printed materials. Glue or Mod Podge and a brush
- Basic art materials (for example, colored pencils, markers, pastels, chalks, paints, inks)

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#### Instructions

Step 1: Take several deep breaths. Notice how you feel.

Step 2: Use a template or trace your own mandala.

Step 3: Begin to rip paper, tissues, images, and any personal items you wish to use. Continue to breathe mindfully as you rip and tear items.

Step 4: Arrange the pieces inside your mandala, layering and overlapping pieces. Once you like how the pieces look, begin to glue them down.

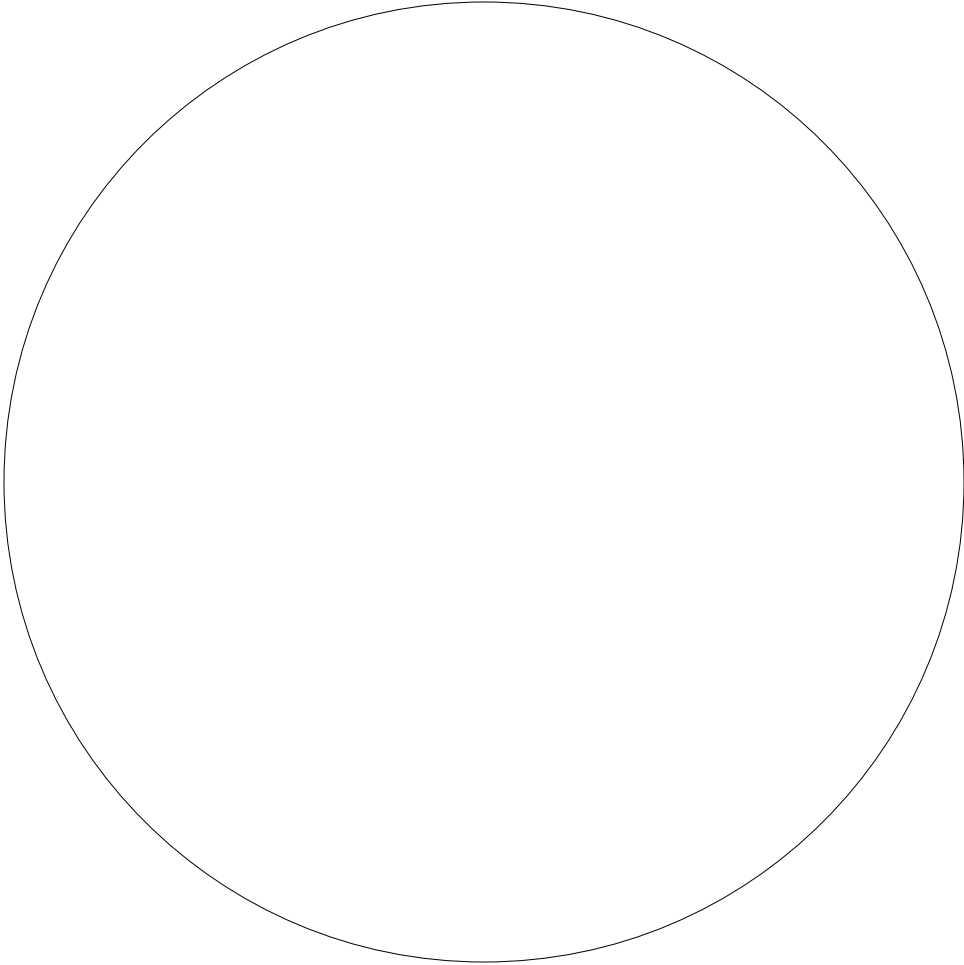
Step 5: Add additional collage pieces and (or) other art media to complete your mandala.

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#### Reflection/ when mandala is complete

- What was this process like for you? Were you intentional with the images, colors, words, and scraps you placed in your mandala? Did you place things randomly?
- Do you wish to keep this mandala? Is this something you need to look at in the future?
- Do you want to transform this mandala again? If so, tear apart the mandala and hold the pieces in your hands. Notice what feelings are coming up for you.





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