Chinese New Year

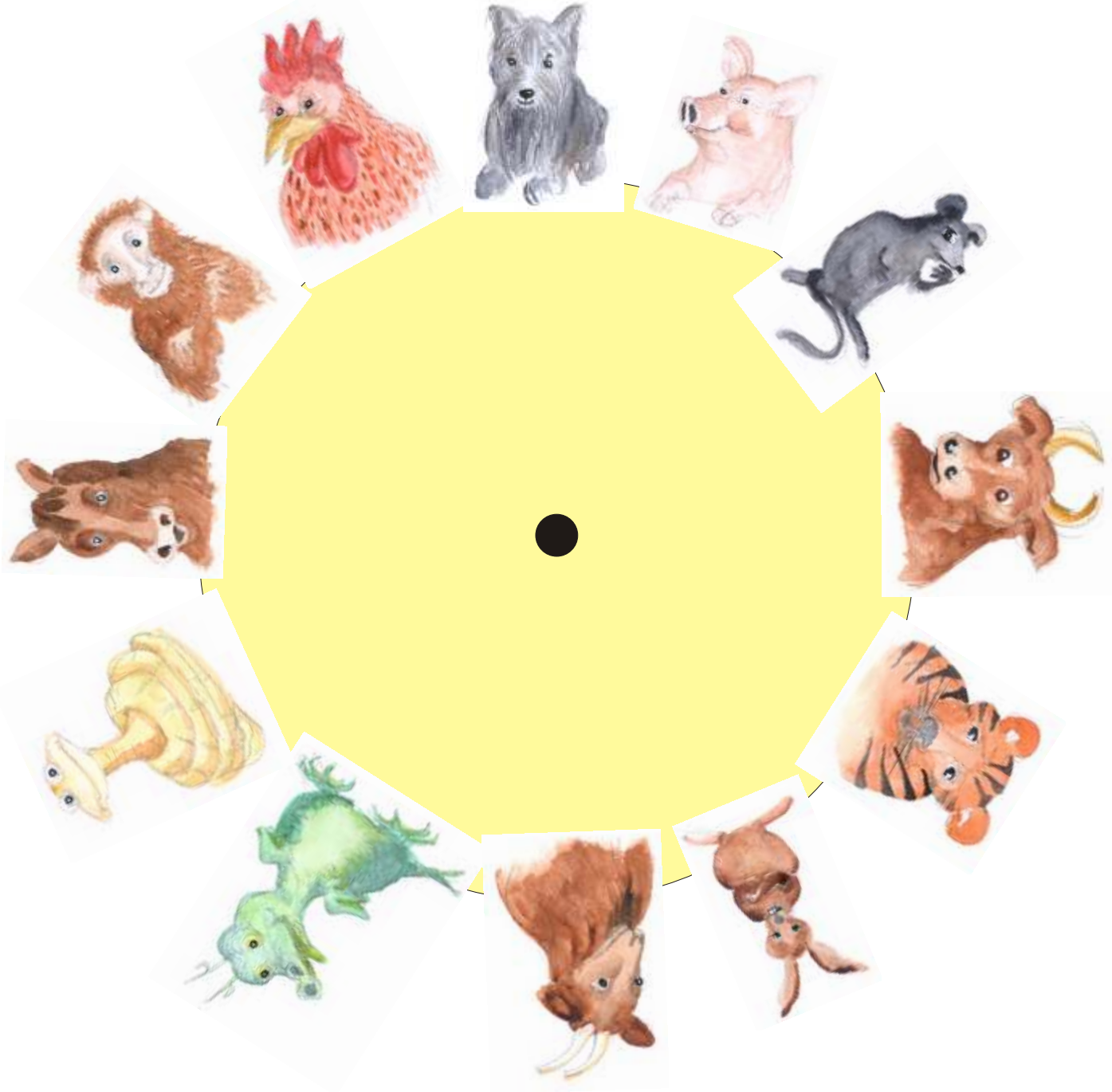
CHINESE NEW YEAR LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Teachers and leaders can adapt the following to suit their own needs.
- The methodology that worked best on the pilots was 'circle time'. For more information about methodologies that build a positive learning environment please see the chapter on group work and facilitation in Lynagh N and M Potter, *Joined Up* (Belfast: NICIE, Corrymeela) 2005, pp 43 – 86. There is a hyperlink to this in the 'Getting Started' section of the 'Introduction'.
- Teachers/leaders need to explore and be comfortable with their own identity before discussing identity with the class/group. It is also important for us to accept others both for the ways in which we are different and also the ways in which we are similar. It is important to be positive and also to know more about our identity and express it in ways that do not harden boundaries with others. You can find out more about sectarianism and approaches to difference in the trunk and branches sections of the downloadable 'Moving Beyond Sectarianism'(young adults) at: www.tcd.ie/ise/projects/seed.php#mbspacks
- It is important that parents are aware of the issues in this unit. Write a letter to let them know what you will be covering and why. Another great way to involve parents/grandparents is to ask if any of them could make or sew the finger puppets for the Great Race.

STEPPING OUT LEARNING ACTIVITY **CHINESE NEW YEAR** A programme for 4 sessions of 30 – 40 minutes **LEARNING INTENTION:** In sharing our stories of the celebrations of events throughout the year and focusing on Chinese New Year, we recognise the similarities and differences amongst us as citizens of different ethnic/cultural background in the local and wider community	**SUGGESTED SUCCESS CRITERIA:** • We will explore and discuss celebration and learn more about Chinese New Year and how it is celebrated • We will encourage active listening, empathy and interactive storytelling • We will share our knowledge and understanding of similarities and differences amongst people of different ethnic/cultural background in the local and wider community • We will affirm/be affirmed and continue to build trust and learn more about one another • We will learn more about competition and co-operation; conflict and ways of handling it • We will share and evaluate what we have learnt from a baseline

CHINESE NEW YEAR LESSON PLAN This column gives suggestions for a lesson outline	**DETAIL OF WHAT TO DO** This column lists resources needed and gives sources for background information for each lesson
SESSION 1 **Opening activity** **Events Calendar** Use this group activity as an opportunity to construct a baseline. Talk about celebrations and events throughout the year. Find New Year - share information about the 'New Year,' celebrated at different times and in different ways, in different parts of the world. You may find a globe or map of the world useful here or a Calendar of Religious festivals. Find Chinese New Year and share what we know about it. **Zodiac and Calendar wheel** Talk about the 12 Animals, using the pictures. Invite members of the group to find out which animal represents the year they were born. Talk about that animal's characteristics and if they are like ours. **Closure All change** Try using specific statements about customs & traditions around celebration e.g. whether they ever:- visited China; sent cards to people for celebrations other than their own; went to church on Christmas day; celebrated Chinese New Year; fasted during Ramadan or Lent; waited up past midnight to see in the New year etc.	**SESSION 1** **Opening activity –** Choose appropriate opening and closure activities from the '**Games'** in the 'Resources' section **Events Calendar** - Print out your own from the 'Resources' section **Zodiac and Calendar wheel** available from this section. Cut out the window and use a paper fastener to hold the pictures and wheel together **All Change Game** – read the instructions for playing this game in 'Games' in the Resources section. Think about how you will use it.
SESSION 2 **Opening activity** **The Great Race Story** Read 'The Great Race' story using the picture and finger puppets Talk about the story and all of the animals involved. Discuss what we learn about difference; strengths and weaknesses; different skills and talents. Talk about the 'characteristics' - skills; abilities; talents we might look for in different members of the class for different tasks. **Closure**	**SESSION 2** **Contact** the **Chinese Welfare Association** see '**Contacts**' in the Resources section and find out if you can arrange for someone to visit the class/group during one of the sessions **The Great Race Story** - Print out your own copy of the story and accompanying picture from the Leader's notes. **Finger puppets** - Print out 'Finger Puppets to Make/Sew' whatever your preference. Cut out and make, or find appropriate fabric and sew, finger puppets to represent each of the animals in the race.. Or send the patterns home with various members of the school community inviting them to help.
SESSION 3 **Opening activity Gate Game** **Discussion** Talk about the words 'minority' and 'discrimination' what it means to be in the smaller 'minority' group re gender; eye colour; whether or not you wear glasses/a brace etc. Talk about how it feels to be in a minority. Express preferences for a particular group over the other – e.g. boys are much stronger than girls; people who wear glasses are more intelligent etc. Introduce the term and talk about' discrimination' - against people according to gender; eye/hair colour; age; skin colour; or religion and introduce the terms - racism; sectarianism as appropriate. **Skin Colour** Talk about the different colours appearing under the holes and invite guesses as to how many people are in the picture below. Does anyone say one? Are there any surprises? Think about the factors/circumstances that change our skin and hair colour **Map of the world** Share what we know about	**SESSION 3** **Gate Game** – read the instructions for playing this game in 'Games' in the Resources section. Think about how you will use it. This game, which 'sorts' people into categories according to gender; appearance; clothes worn etc. helps us experience what it's like to be 'grouped' together. It will raise the issues of minority/majority; discrimination, and possibly racism; sectarianism. **Flashcards** Make a few flashcards with the words you wish to introduce along with the game – minority; majority; discrimination; racism; sectarianism. Save the Children have produced a booklet, **'Think of me, Think of you'** and another with Barnardo's entitled, **'Fair Play'** either of which you will find very useful for this session **Skin Colour** - Print out your own copy of the girl and the overlay from the Leader's notes. Cut holes marked on the overlay and feel free to add additional ones. Attach with a staple. This is an activity that helps us to understand that skin/hair colour varies in

different countries on the map/globe and why we know. How might where we live in the world affect the colour of our skin/eyes/hair? What can we share about people we know in different countries and why they move **Closure** Passing the globe around the circle, inviting people to find the country – where they live now; have lived before; have visited or know someone who lives there.	a single individual, as much as between members of a family; a community; or a country in various parts of our world. **Map of the world** – Invest in an inflatable globe.
SESSION 4 **Opening activity** **Co-operative Animals** When the five small groups have finished, gather into the large group again and discuss. What were the observations; feelings? What do we learn about co-operation and competition? **Red packets** Talk about celebrations – birthdays; Christmas etc – Share stories of how we celebrate them. Talk about the red packets and share our associations with different colours – does anyone have a 'lucky' colour – what is it? Why is it 'lucky'? Talk about 'lucky' money. **Closure - Wool Web** Pass the ball of wool around the group until everyone has received it and passed it on once. Web pattern connects everyone up. Talk about connections with one another; similarities and differences in how we celebrate events; what we have learnt from Chinese New Year about identity; co-operation; different skills and characteristics; and interdependence.	**SESSION 4** **Co-operative Animals** Print out your own copy of the co-operative animals game from the Leader's notes. Cut and arrange the animals in 5 envelopes as directed. **Red packets** If you wish you can make some Red packets. Print out your own copy of the Red packet pictures from this section. Print the outline onto some red card – cut and make up the packet, fill them with a few chocolate coins (lucky money – see Leader's Notes) and share them with the class/group. Alternatively the class could make and exchange their own red packets. **Wool Web** Read the instructions for playing this game in 'Games' in the Resources section. You will need a ball of wool. This is an affirmation exercise as well as a closure. We have an opportunity to talk about what we have learnt as well as the importance of connections and interdependence. An evaluation can be made of the learning from this and the baseline after the first session



Chinese New Year

THE GREAT RACE

Every New Year in China is named after one of twelve animals in turn. Animal signs are used for festivals and ceremonies, birthdays and working out horoscopes. There are many stories about how the cycle of the years came about and this is just one of them.

It all started with the animals having an argument. They argued about which of them was the strongest, the fastest, the cleverest and the best. To settle the argument once and for all the emperor decided that there must be a race. The race must take the animals through vast areas of forest, mountain, desert and river.

The monkey gained a lot of advantage over the other animals in the forest swinging at ease through the trees, the ram was at home in the mountains and his sure feet won him the lead, snake excelled in the desert and sped along whilst others got stuck in the soft sand. It was ox however who took the lead in the river and his strength kept him on a straight course going through the rapids. All of the other animals struggled on behind except for rat who had crept unnoticed onto ox's back. Just before Ox reached the finishing line on the opposite bank, rat leapt off and was the first to cross the line and win the race.

The emperor had watched all the animals compete and had observed their different gifts, strengths, talents, wisdom and endurance gaining them advantages in forest, mountain, desert and stream. He decided that the fairest way to settle their arguments was to make each of them special during one year in the order in which they crossed the finishing line. And because there were twelve of them, so the twelfth animal preceded the first and the cycle continued – all special and all honoured. Just as all of the animals have strengths and weaknesses so too we ourselves, born during the year of the:-

- Rat, may have a hot temper but a lot of charm and always finish what we set out to do;
- Ox, may be quiet and calm and keep a secret but like doing things on our own;
- Tiger, may be brave and have a strong will, but also get angry;
- Rabbit, may be patient and shy and also a bit moody sometimes;
- Dragon, may be sensitive and a good leader, but also ask a bit too much of other people:

- Snake, may be wise and attractive but sometimes boastful and mean;
- Horse, may be clever and cheerful but also very independent;
- Ram, may be artistic calm and caring but can't always make up your mind;
- Monkey, may be creative and successful but can also be troublesome;
- Rooster, may be clever and hardworking, but not always very modest;
- Dog, may be hardworking and loyal but have a strong will;
- Pig, may be kind and honest, but only learn about the things that interest you.

Take a look at the animals and the years they represent.
Which animal year were you born in?
Do any of the characteristics attributed to people born in that year apply to you?

The Twelve Years

Rat - 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008 - People born in these years are usually kind and cheerful. They are bright sociable people who make friends easily. They are also good at saving money.

Ox - 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009 - People born in these years are usually strong and quiet and good with their hands. Like oxen some keep themselves to themselves and are often stubborn; others are warm and loving and have many friends.

Tiger - 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010 - People born in these years are usually brave and powerful; often they are leaders. Like tigers, they can also be agile and athletic.

Rabbit - 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011 - People born in these years are said to have good taste; they are usually lucky and successful. They are also very patient and are sometimes shy.

The Twelve Years

Dragon - 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000 - People born in these years are usually healthy, energetic, brainy and lively. They are brave and honest and make good leaders.

Snake - 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001 - People born in these years are usually wise and gentle. They are often good-looking, but can also be vain. They have plenty of patience, and like to do things well and will keep working at a job until it's done. Because of this they often end up rich.

Horse - 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002 - People born in these years are usually cheerful and hard-working, independent and intelligent. They are good neighbours, and enjoy meeting people and making new friends. They seem strong but are often timid underneath.

Goat - 1955, 1967, 1979,1991 2003 - People born in these years tend to be polite, gentle and shy. So they tend to be followers and not leaders. They like to eat well, like working with other people and are often good at making money.

The Twelve Years

Monkey - 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004 - People born in these years are usually creative and good with their fingers. They enjoy jokes and, like monkeys, they are always curious and often talk too much.

Rooster - 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005 - People born in these years are usually high-spirited and eager. They are often brave and want to get to the top of the class or the top of their profession. They are not shy and like to know all about other people. They enjoy music, and are often good at singing or playing instruments.

Dog - 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006 - People born in these years are usually helpful and loyal. They work hard and are good at keeping secrets. You can always trust them. They enjoy visiting new places and finding things out.

Pig - 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007 - People born in these years are very kind and honest. They are good cooks, enjoy food and drink, and are especially good at giving parties. In fact they like to take things easy.

Chinese Zodiac

Rat
1948 1960 1972
1984 1996 2008

Kind and cheerful
Make friends easily
Good at saving money

Ox
1949
1961
1973
1985
1997
2009

Strong and quiet
Good with your hands
Stubborn
Warm and loving

Tiger
1950 1962
1974 1986
1998 2010

Brave and powerful
Often leaders
Agile and athletic

Rabbit
1951 1963 1975
1986 1999 2011

Good taste
lucky and successful
very patient
sometimes shy

Dragon
1952 1964
1976 1988
2000 2012

Healthy and energetic
Brainy and lively
Brave and honest
Good leaders

Snake
1953 1965 1977
1989 2001 2013

Wise and gentle
Good-looking and vain
Patient and often rich

Horse
1954 1966
1978 1990
2002 2014

Cheerful and hard-working
Independent and intelligent
Enjoy meeting people
Timid underneath

Sheep
1955 1967
1979 1991
2003 2015

Polite, gentle and shy
Work well with people
Good at making money

Monkey
1956 1968
1980 1992
2004 2016

Creative and curious
Good with your fingers
Enjoy jokes
Talk too much

Rooster
1957 1969
1981 1993
2005 2017

High-spirited
Brave and eager
Like to get to the top
Enjoy music
Good singers

Dog
1958 1970
1982 1994
2006 2018

Helpful and loyal
Work hard
Good at keeping secrets
Enjoy visiting new places
and finding things out

Pig
1959 1971
1983 1995
2007 2019

Kind and honest
Good cooks
Enjoy food and drink
Good at giving parties
Like to take things easy

Finger Puppets to Make

Finger Puppets to Sew

Use felt, wool and feathers to make some finger puppets that can be used over again in class

SONG FOR CHINESE NEW YEAR (2006)

(To the tune of Old Macdonald)

This song was written to use with a class of young children with severe learning difficulties, using Makaton signs for the animals and lots of sounds – great fun!

Animals mark Chinese New Year
E-I-E-I-O
And what do you think those animals are?
E-I-E-I-O

Its dog this year wow wow wow
Pig next year oink oink oink
Rat next year squeak squeak squeak
Ox next year moo moo moo
Tiger next year roar
Rabbit next year tap tap tap
Snake next year Sssssssss
Dragon next year Shhhhh
Horse next year neigh neigh neigh
Goat next year maa maa maa
Monkey next year oh oh oh
Rooster next year cock-a-doodle-doo

Animals mark Chinese New Year
E-I-E-I-O

SKIN & HAIR COLOUR

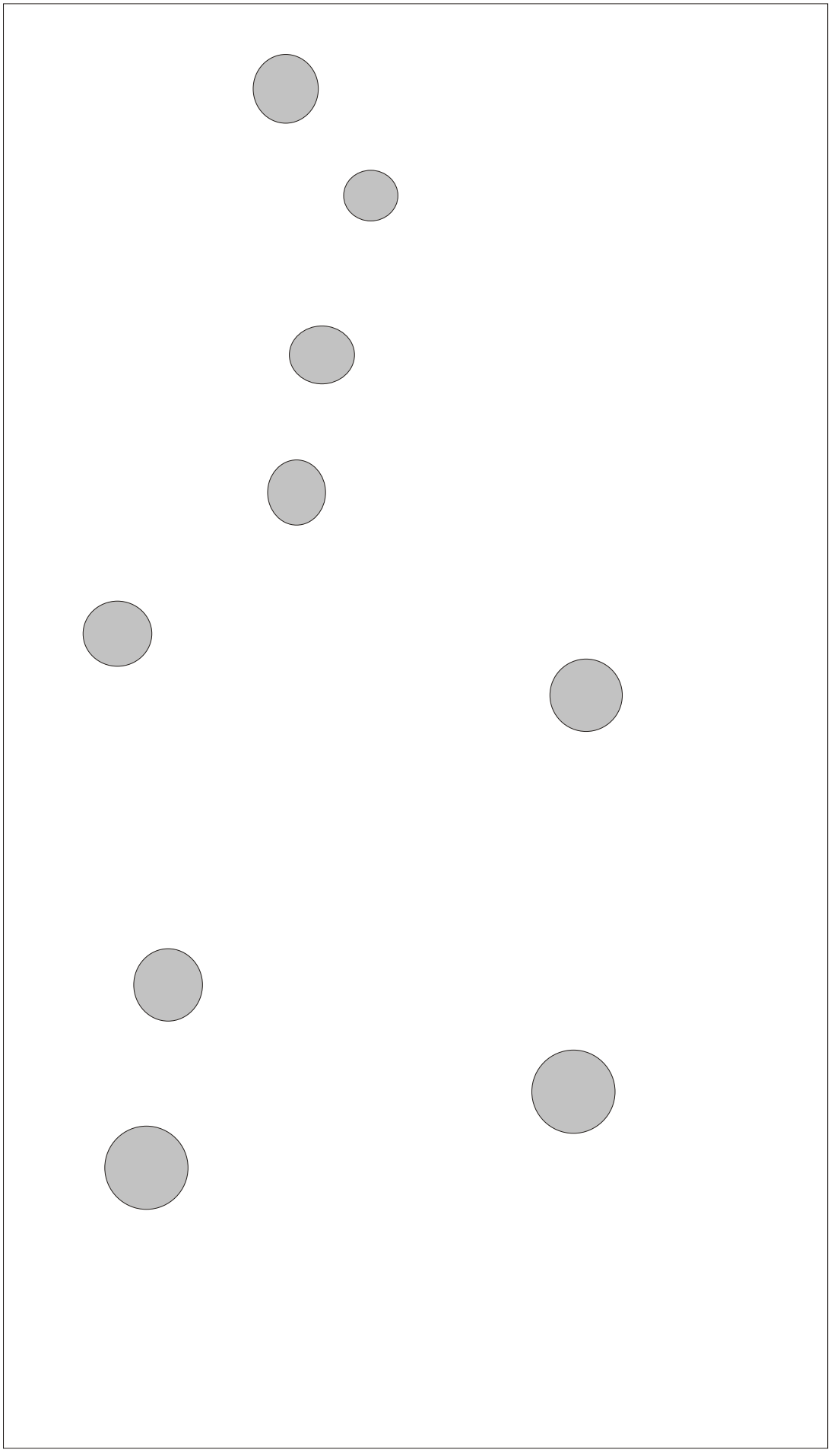
This is an activity that helps us to understand that skin/hair colour varies in a single individual, as much as between members of a family; a community; or a country in various parts of the our world.

Method:

- Find a piece of A4 card that will overlie the drawing of the girl.
- Cut a number of holes onto it so that different skin colours on the different parts of her body show through
- Ask the children to look at the different colours under the holes and ask them to guess how many people are on the picture below
- Did anyone say one? Are there any surprises?
- Think about the factors/circumstances that change our skin colour and hair colour

Follow-up activity

- Sitting on our knees in a circle on the floor, ask everyone in the circle to put their hands, palm down on the floor in front of them.
- Ask them to lift their right hand and move it to the right
- Ask them to put their hand palm down to the right of their neighbour's left hand.
- Ask everyone to look at the range of colour in the hands around the circle.
- Are any of the colours black/white/etc or is there really just one spectrum of colour darker to lighter to darker?



CO-OPERATIVE ANIMALS

This is a variation of the game co-operative squares. It involves five of the twelve animals every New Year in China is named after.

Method:

- Cut into three pieces the pictures of the cat; rabbit, rat, cockerel, and pig along the lines indicated
- Put the following into five envelopes. You will need the same number of sets as you have small groups of five.

A – Cat head; Pig bottom

B - Rabbit head; Rat bottom; Cockerel middle

C – Rat head

D – Cockerel head; Rabbit middle; Cat middle; Cat bottom

E – Pig head; Pig middle; Rat middle; Cockerel bottom; Rabbit bottom

- Break the class into small groups of five and give each group a set of envelopes to share with each of the individuals in that group

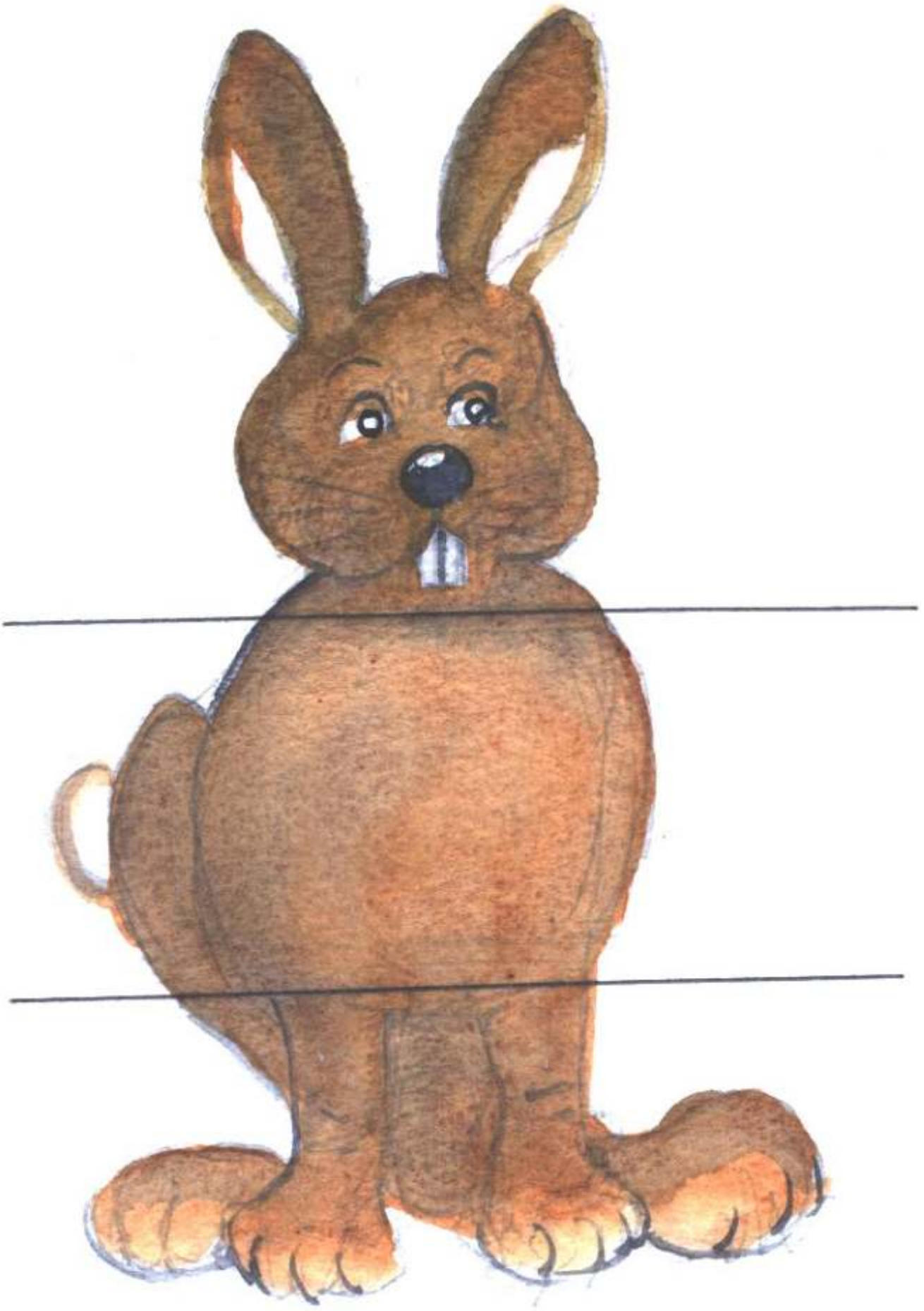
- Ask them to complete the five animals, without talking

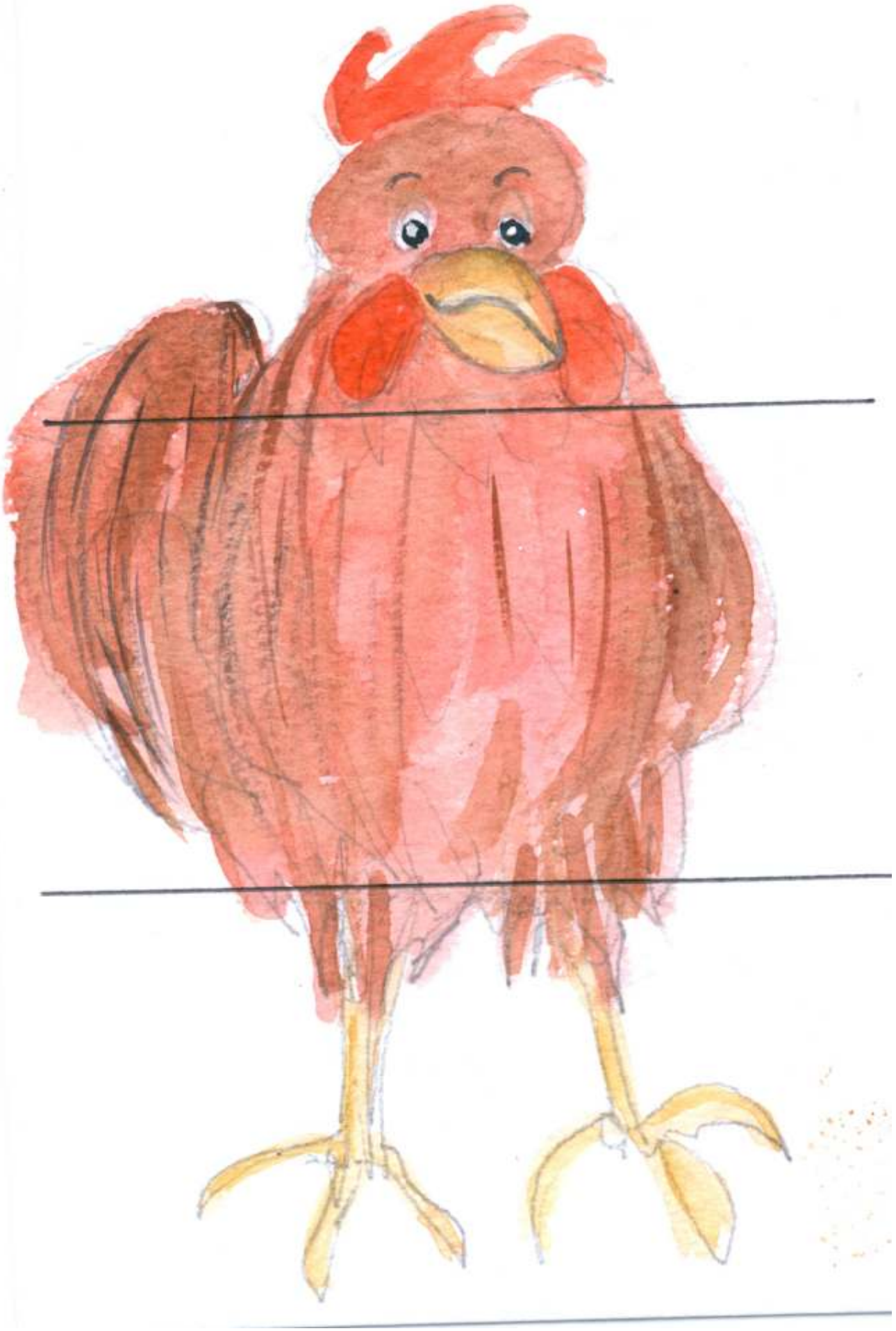
- Explain that no one should take anyone else's piece of picture. They can only offer theirs

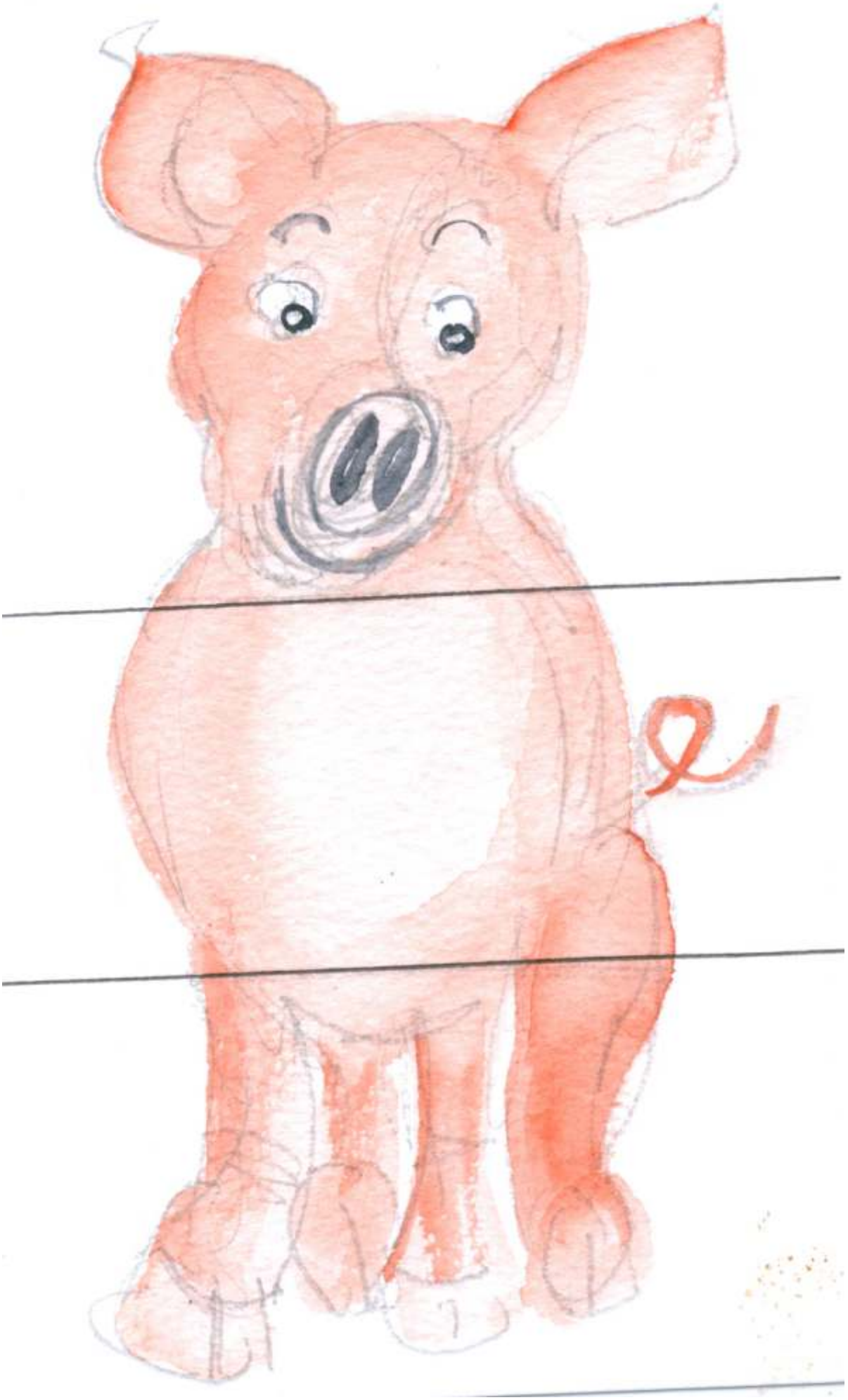
- When all the groups have finished gather into the large group again and discuss

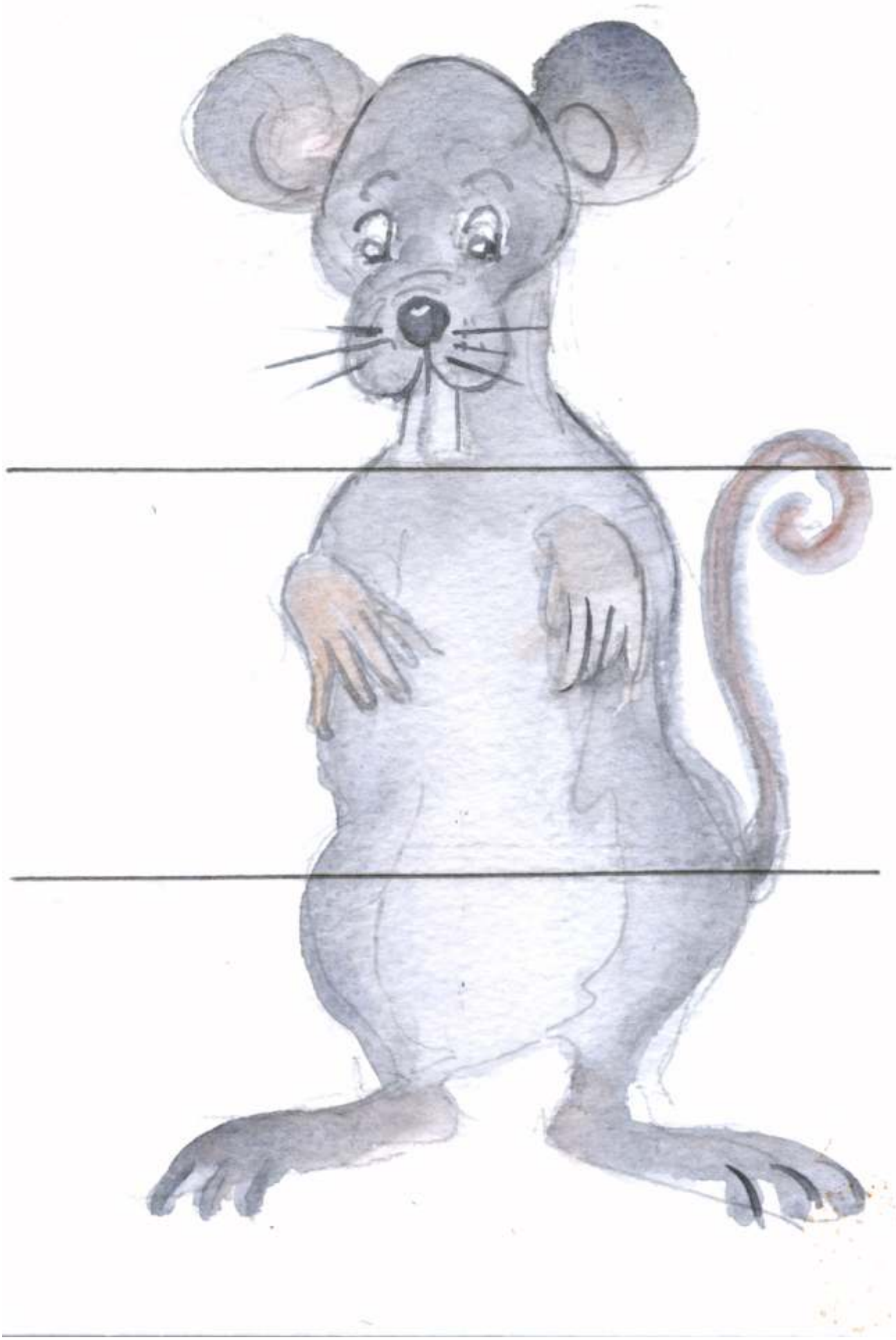
- What were the feelings?

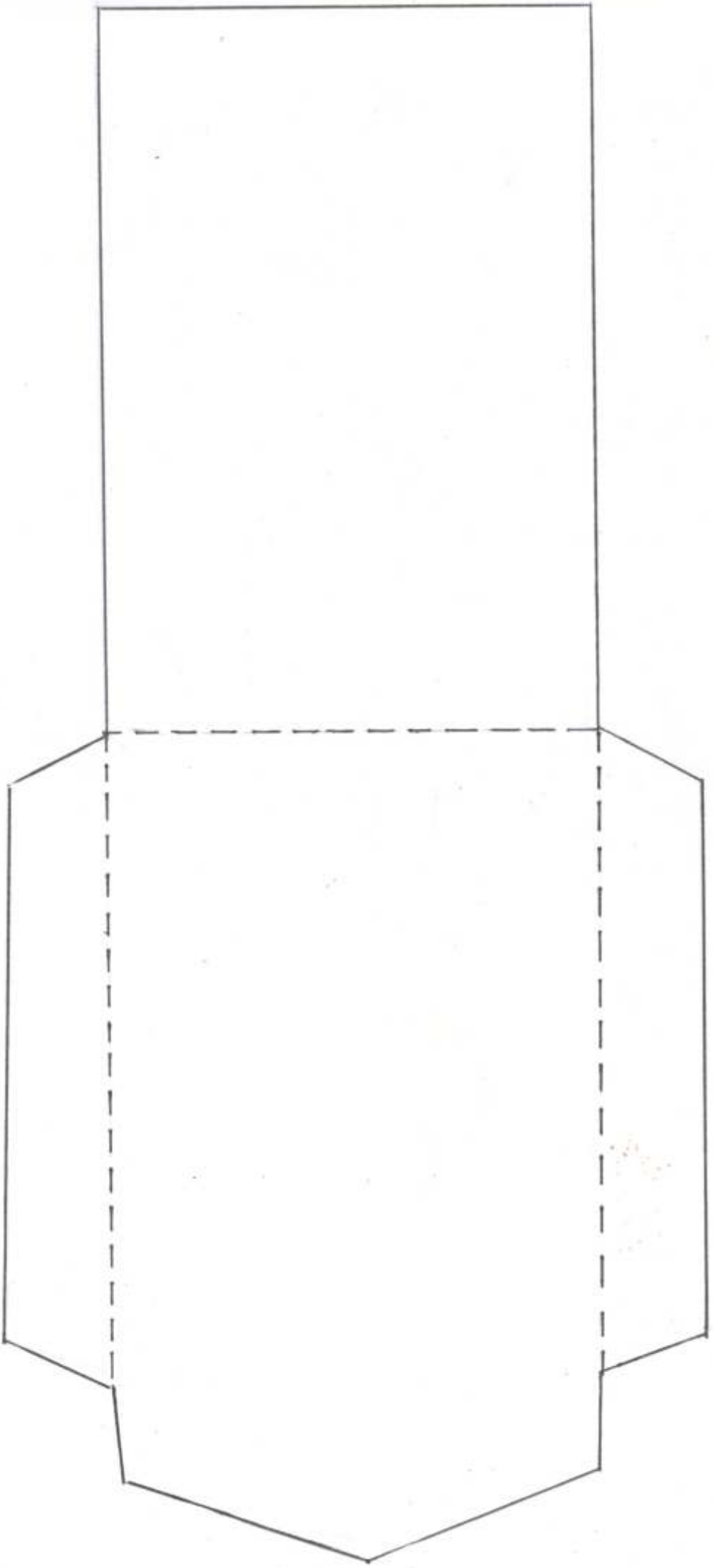
- What is the learning?











Red Packet Pictures

Frog for long life and joy

Crane for nobility and honesty

Bee for industry and thrift

Goldfish for wealth

Mouse for laughter

Lotus for purity

Pine for endurance

T'ai Chi for creativity and harmony in the universe

Panda for happiness

CLASS LIBRARY

Chambers, Catherine, *Chinese New Year* (London: Evans Brothers), 1997.
This is a useful background book with pictures of Chinese New Year celebrations in different parts of the world; recipes; activities and ideas.

CHINA
Demi, *KITES – Magic wishes that fly up to the Sky* (New York: Crown Publications), 1999.
*This book tells the story of a kite maker, the different qualities and characteristics various animals; plants etc represent on the kite and how to make your own – **key stage 1 up**.*
Haski, Pierre (ed.), *The Diary of Ma Yan* (London: Virago Press), 2004.
*The diary of a fourteen year old school girl in a remote region of north-western China; a story of friendship/connection with people in the developed world through the journalist/writer and how that makes a difference, transforming not only Ma Yan's life but that of other young people and families in her community – **key stage 3**.*
McCaughrean, Geraldine, *The Kite Rider* (Oxford: OUP), 2001.
*This is a thrilling story, set in China at the time of Kublai Khan, of a boy who rides a kite to save his family – issues of family loyalty, duty, love and justice – **key stage 2**.*
Mahy, Margaret, *The Seven Chinese Brothers* (London: Macmillan), 1990.
*This story is an ancient Chinese folk tale dating from the Han period, during the building of the Great Wall. It highlights the suffering of the workers who were conscripted to build it – issues of solidarity and justice - **key stage 1/2**.*
Namioka, *Ties that Bind, Ties that Break* (London: Puffin Books), 2003.
*This is the story of Ailin, a young girl in 1911 at a time of great change in China - issues of family traditions; cultural pressure; gender; rebellion; estrangement – **key stage 2/3**.*
Ye, Ting-Xing, *Throwaway Daughter* (London: Faber& Faber), 2003.
*This is a story about Grace, an adopted teenager growing up in the west, coming to terms with her own roots – issues of gender; cultural and political divides – **key stage 3/4**.*

Yen Mah, Adeline, *Chinese Cinderella* (London: Puffin Books), 1999.
This is Adeline Yen Mah's own story about her childhood and struggle for acceptance growing up with her stepmother – a Chinese Cinderella. Some good background notes at the end – ***key stage 2****.*
Comber, Leon, *Favourite Stories from Asia* (Hong Kong: Heinemann), 1971 –
This is collection of short stories – various parts of Asia – ***key stage 1/2****.*