Activities for *Niko Draws a Feeling* by Bob Raczka

Niko loves to draw, but no one seems to understand his art until he becomes friends with Iris.

You can check out the eBook by visiting denverlibrary.org/downloads and choosing Overdrive.

Visit youtube.com/denverlibrary and check out the Book Explorers playlists to learn more about the book. Then, try one of these activities to extend the experience.

**Niko likes to draw the ring-a-ling of the ice cream truck and the warm feel of sun on his face. You can draw how you hear and see things too by taking a minute to focus on just one of your senses.**

**Guided meditation/mindfulness**

We are going to focus on our sense of hearing. Turn on a timer or ask someone to let you know when 1 minute is over. Sit with your eyes closed. Take three deep breaths and turn off your voice. Turn your attention to your ears and what you hear. Raise a finger for each sound you hear. Do you hear wind in the trees? Maybe an air conditioner blowing or a family member walking around the house? After you finish your minute of mindful listening, think about what those sounds might look like. What color is a gentle summer breeze? Take 2 minutes to draw one of the sounds you heard.

**Grounding Exercise**

Focus on these 5 senses to help yourself feel calmer.

- Look for 5 things you see around you. What colors do you see?
- Find 4 things you can touch around you. How does the floor feel under your feet or the paper in your hands?
- Listen for 3 things you can hear. A dog barking or a grown-up washing the dishes?
- Sniff for 2 things you can smell. Can you smell the soap on your hands?
- Find 1 thing you can taste. What does the inside of your mouth taste like? Toothpaste?
Play Pictionary!
You could do this activity with family at home or with someone over a video call. Have each person write down at least 2 nouns on separate pieces of scratch paper. A noun is a person, place or thing. For example, I could write down the word dolphin. Then fold up the papers, put them in a bowl or a basket, and create teams. Take turns having one person on each team pick a word out of the bowl or basket. Don’t let the other team see the word! The artist then needs to draw a picture representing that word and the other person needs to guess what they are drawing! The artists cannot give any hints - so, no talking and no writing! Just pictures! Repeat until you have finished all the words.

Inspiration Walk
The book says, “When Niko was inspired, it felt like a window opening in his brain. An idea would flit through the open window like a butterfly…” If our brains are cluttered with homework, chores and sometimes even plain old boredom, it’s good to provide opportunities for the window of inspiration to open again. What inspired each of us is different for everyone, but one simple thing you can try is taking a walk. Try to walk for at least 10 minutes. Pay attention to everything around you - the trees, kids playing outside, a car passing by, the sound of your steps. Walking clears our busy brains and circulates blood through our bodies faster and, you never know, you might see or hear something that inspires your creativity.

What to read next

*The Dot* by Peter Reynolds

*Drawn Together* Written by Minh Le and illustrated by Dan Santat