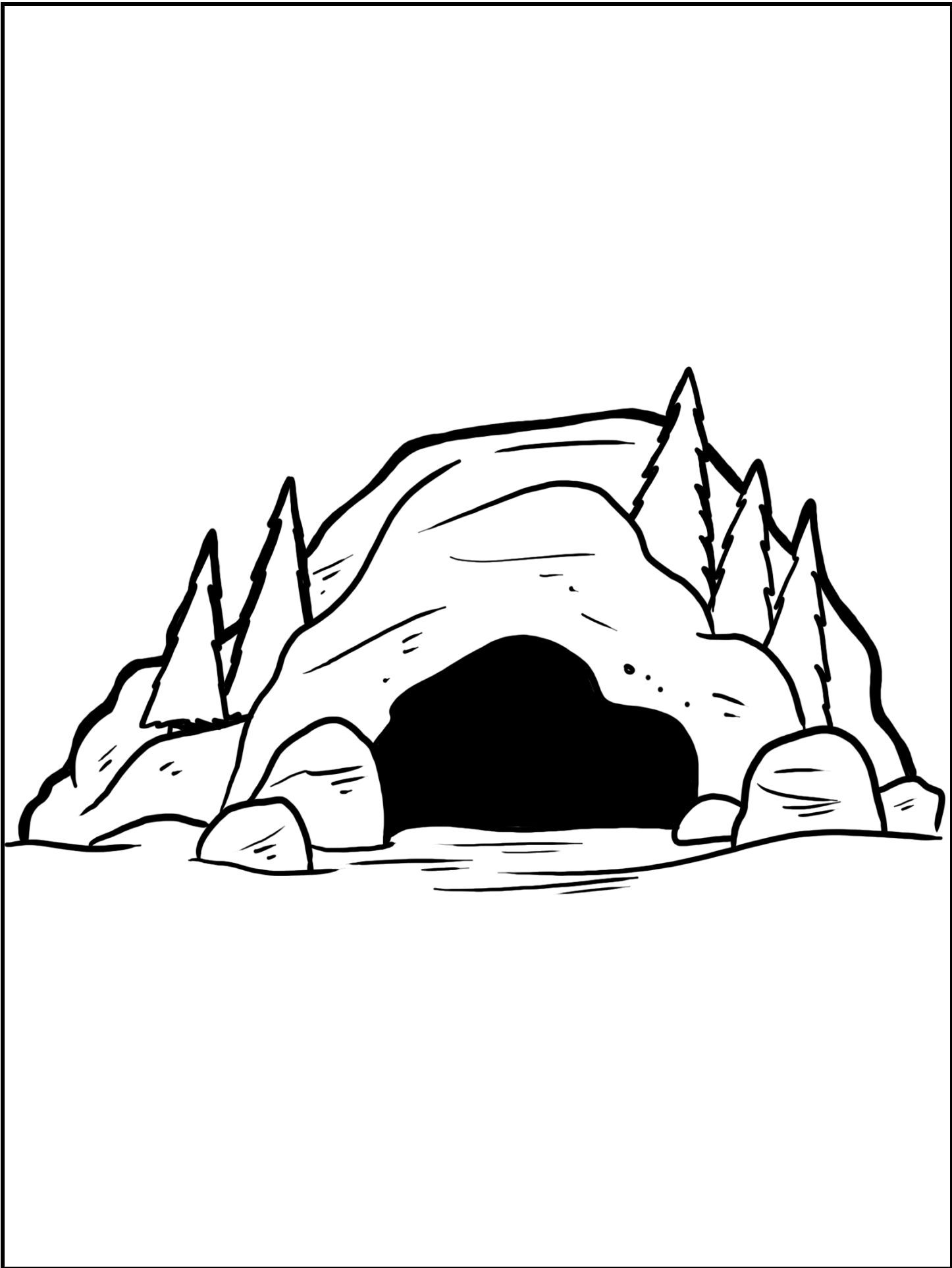# What's In The Cave?

Projective techniques can be very useful in understanding the concerns that bother children, but are hard for them to communicate. This activity can be used in any of three ways:

1.   Simply say to the child "Tell me what you think is in the cave." The child's response may open a

conversation about things that are scary, things that are unknown, specific fears, and so on.

2. Ask the child to draw a picture of what is in the cave.

3. Ask the child to tell a story about a boy or girl who went into the cave.

While projective techniques can be very useful in understanding a child, you should use caution in coming to conclusions about what a single drawing or story may mean. If you are concerned about a child's response, then you should use additional techniques and interviews to explore your concerns.

Additionally, a therapist or counselor may wish to use the this worksheet as part of the Mutual Storytelling Technique, a technique originally developed by Dr. Richard A. Gardner. In this technique, the child tells a story using the picture of the cave as a stimulus and then comes up with a moral or lesson from the story. The therapist then tells a "positive modeling" story with a positive lesson. When using this technique, the therapist is careful not to criticize the child's story, but rather simply provides a different story, where the main character demonstrates positive and realistic resiliency skills, such as communicating feelings, asking for help, problem-solving, humor, and so on.

In Gardner's versions of this technique, children usually earn points for telling a story and coming up with a moral for the story. Making storytelling into a "game" motivates children who would normally be resistant to revealing their inner thoughts and feelings.

In the space below, draw a picture of what you think is in the cave.
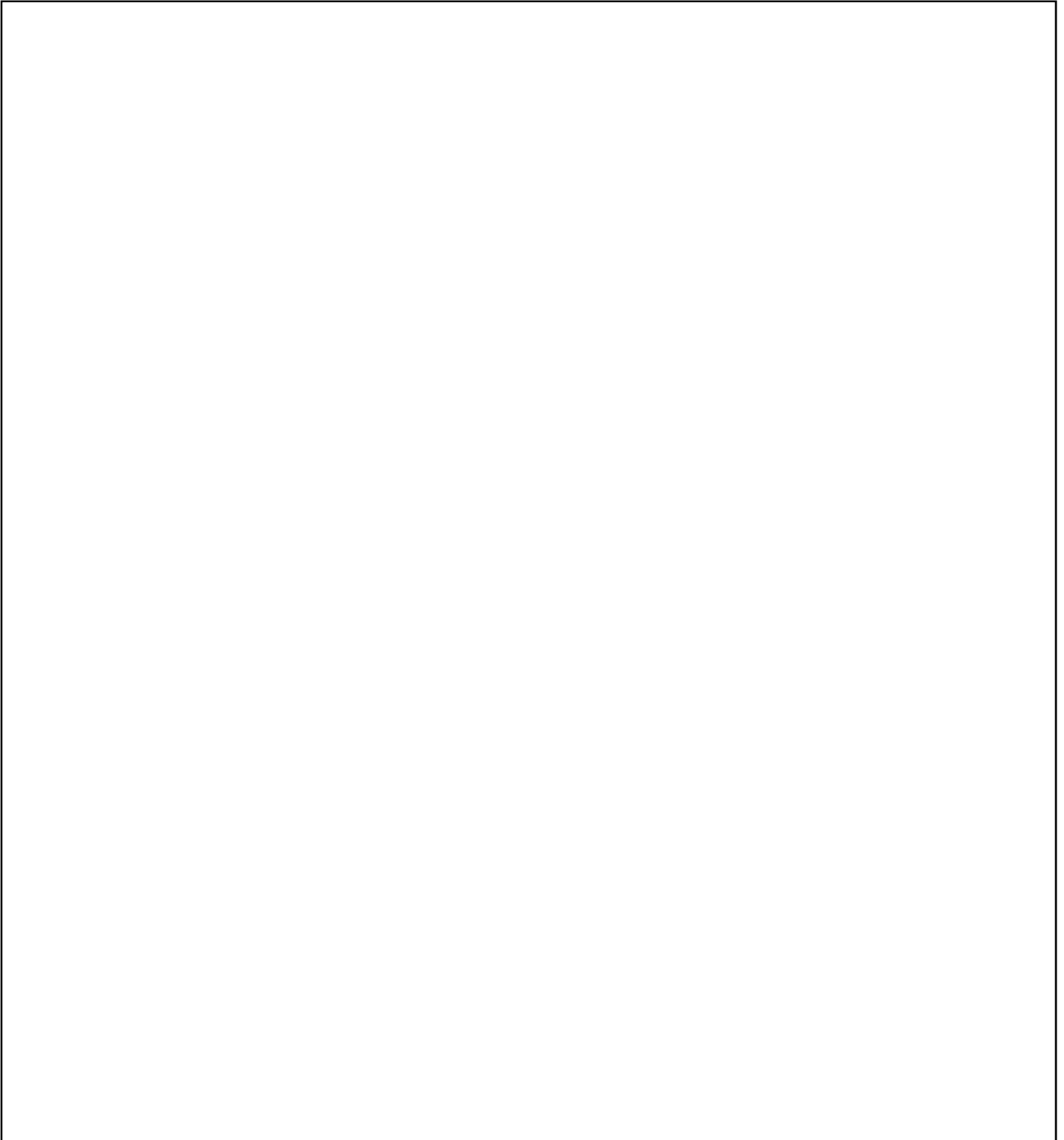
Make up a story about a boy or girl who went into the cave.

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