

A Mighty Family

"We're a mighty family!" Daddy booms.

"Mighty!" we roar back.

—Going Down Home With Daddy

What is a mighty family?

It is immediate family, extended family, foster family, adopted family, feels like family, family that has passed, family on the other side of the world, human family, and any way you define "family" family. It is friends, classmates, neighborhood, mentors, and all those who make you laugh loudly and live strongly.

What is a family tree?

You might have been asked to do a family tree showing who your parents are and who their parents were and who their parents were...and so on.

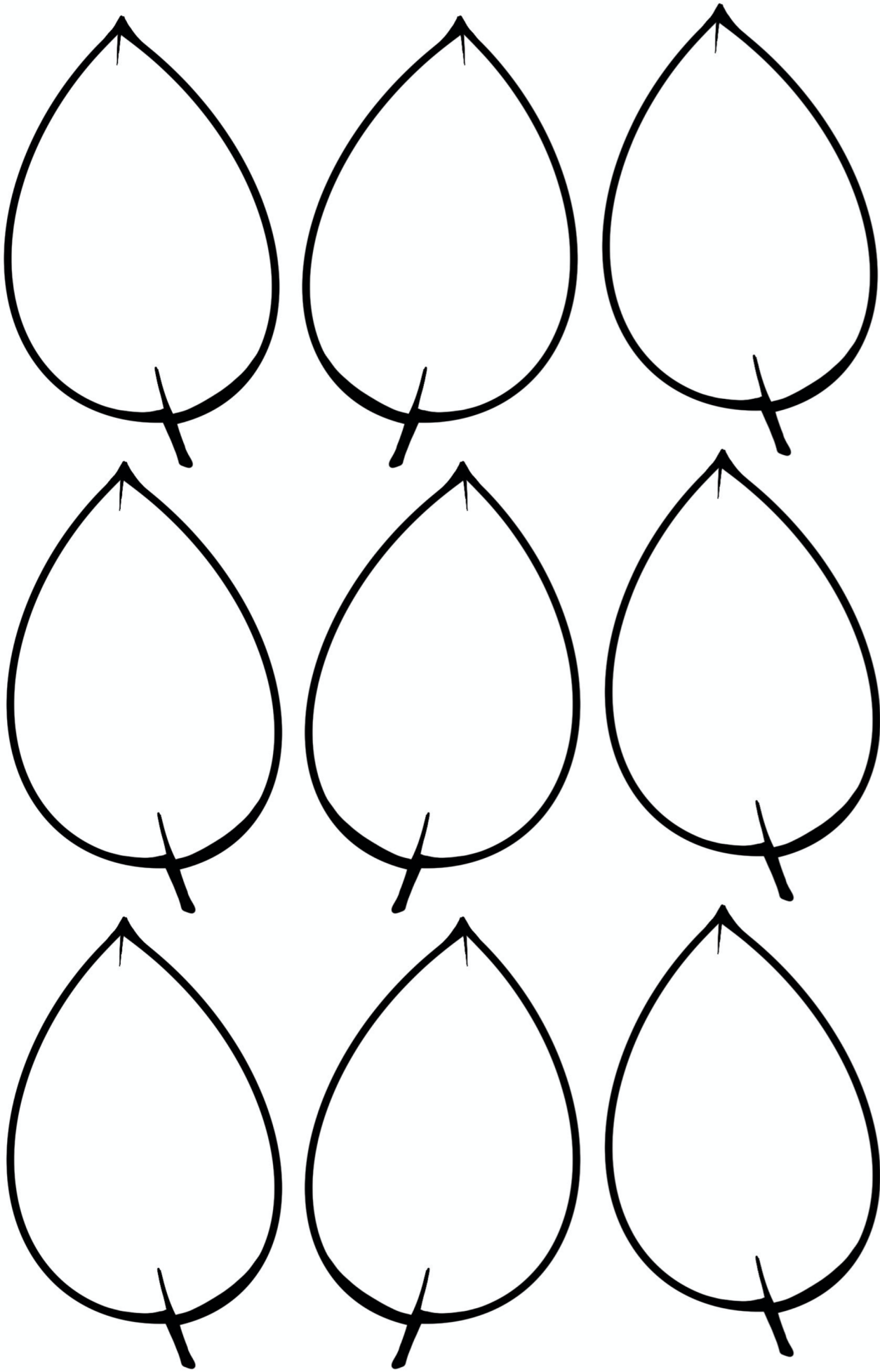
This is not that kind of family tree. Trees do not just grow because one branch makes another. They grow because of sunshine, bees, beetles, dirt, worms, rainfall, wind, and unexpected things. And trees don't stand alone. They grow together in fields, in forests, in groves, and jungles. Trees are even said to "talk" to each other through their roots. Trees warn each other of dangers and share resources. Trees make each other resilient and strong.

Making Your Mighty Family Tree

Making art can let you explore who you are (identity) and where you come from (roots). Making art can let you see your own strength (resilience). Consider making art that shows your mighty family as a tree.

Here's one way to do that:

- Lay your arm and open hand on a piece of paper. Trace your arm to make the trunk and your hand (fingers spread wide) to make the branches.
- Look around your home and neighborhood for papers, fabric, or thin cardboard that is not being used.
- Cut leaf shapes out of those materials.
- Have each leaf represent someone in your mighty family. Draw or write on that leaf until that leaf reminds you of the mighty person you are adding to your tree.
- Collage (collecting things and attaching them to a surface like paper) your leaves onto the tree.
- Make more trees. Remember, the more trees, the more resilient the forest and you are. Grow that mighty family.
- Consider making a big tree on a wall. A paper bag might make a trunk. Ask your whole family to add leaves to the tree. Watch it grow.
- Share your art with other artists online by using the hashtag #beautifulblackbirdfestival. (Always protect your privacy.)
- Build your mighty family. Laugh loudly. Live strongly.



This activity was created for the picture book *Going Down Home With Daddy* by Kelly Starling Lyons & illustrated by Daniel Minter (Peachtree) in honor of the *Beautiful Blackbird* Children's Book Festival. Image © Daniel Minter.