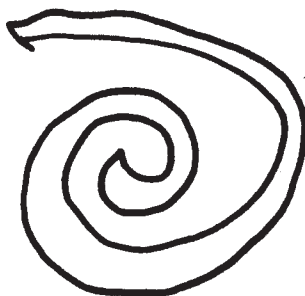


# Coloring Book

## Pages

for Kids



Written & Illustrated by Deborah Butler



My dad works in the military. When I go to school, he goes to work.



One day Mom told me she was going away.  
I wondered where she was going.

When you were gone, I sometimes felt...

(Draw how you were feeling below.)

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing. It occupies the central portion of the page below the text.



But I still kept busy while you were gone.  
I worked ...



And I played.



I missed you on my birthday!



But we celebrated again when you got back. <sup>8</sup>



While you were gone,  
we didn't forget you!

MARCH				
		X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X
X				





I'm proud of you.

My family's proud  
of me too.



## Coloring Book Pages for Children - Discussion Topics

This coloring book is for children whose parents have deployed or will deploy in the future. The goal is to give parents (or other family members) an additional opening for talking with their children about what a parent's deployment is like for them. Parents who will deploy can talk about the coloring book pages with their child. Children whose family members are currently deployed might color one or more pages and then mail them to their parent. Or children might want to talk with or write to their deployed parent about the thoughts and feelings that come up for them while coloring the pages.

The following are suggested questions and discussion topics for each of the coloring book pages. Please modify according to whether the parent will be deployed, is currently deployed, or has returned from deployment. Discussion can also be modified to talk about another family member's deployment.

### **Picture 1 (My dad works in the military. When I go to school, he goes to work.)**

Does your child know that you go to work with other moms and dads? Does your child know that you learn skills to help people and to keep people safe? Does he/she know that sometimes your keeping people safe means that you need to travel far away from home?

### **Picture 2 (One day Mom told me she was going away. I wondered where she was going.)**

How did you or how do you plan to tell your child that you are leaving for military duty? You could show your child a map of the world and point out where you are going to serve. You might also ask your child:

- Is there anything you would like to do together before I leave?
- Is there anything you want me to take along with me?
- Let's talk about how we will stay in touch while I am gone

### **Picture 3 (When you were gone, sometimes I felt...)**

Has your child had a chance to talk about his/her worries about a parent leaving? Has your child had a chance to talk about his/her worries while a parent or family member was away? Parents can encourage their children to share their concerns by modeling talking about their own feelings and concerns (in an age appropriate way). Children might be shy and need to be asked specifically about how they feel. In addition to discussing their concerns, parents can share with their children positive ways they use to cope when they are worried or facing challenges.

Questions you might ask your child:

- How did you feel when you found out I was leaving?
- Were your friends nice to you while I was gone?
- What kinds of things did you do when you felt sad, worried, tired, hurt, happy, ...?
- What do you do that helps you feel better?

**Picture 4 and 5 (But I still kept busy while you were gone. I worked...and I played.)**

Questions you might ask your child:

- What did you do while I was gone?
- Did you help out at home? How?
- What did you do at school?
- What did you do for fun?
- What did you do with your friends?

**Picture 6 (I missed you on my birthday.)**

What family celebrations or events did you miss while you were away? Have you had a chance to talk to your child about these? Questions you might ask your child:

- What did you do for your birthday?
- What did you do to celebrate your graduation?

**Picture 7 (But we celebrated again when you got back.)**

Many families find that if a loved one has to miss a significant event, like a birthday or a graduation, they can celebrate these events again when the parent returns home from deployment. Have you had a chance to celebrate birthdays, graduations, holidays, or other special events since you got back? Questions you might ask your child:

- How shall we celebrate your birthday [or other event] again now that I'm back?
- What would you like to do?

**Picture 8 (While you were gone we didn't forget you!)**

How did your child stay in touch with you while you were away? Next time you deploy, is there a new, special way that you hope to use to keep in touch with your child? Is there something special that you would like to take with you when you deploy, like a picture your child can draw for you, or a picture of you and your child together? Is there a special way that your child would like to keep in touch with you or remember you? You might consider, for example, giving your child something of yours to keep while you are gone, or a picture of the two of you, to help him/her feel more in touch with you. Topics you might discuss with your child:

- What did you do to keep in touch with me while I was away? (If your child kept in touch with you through email, letters, photos, or in other ways, you can express appreciation for the things you received.)
- What was it like for you to write/call/send emails to me?
- How did you remember me when I was gone? (If you gave your child a special object, you might ask about that object.)

**Picture 9 (I'm proud of you.)**

You can let your child know how happy you are that he/she is proud of you.

**Picture 10 (My family is proud of me too.)**

When a family member deploys, everyone in the family takes on new roles and responsibilities. Children often become more resourceful and independent.

- Here's another chance to tell your children how proud you are of them.
- You can thank them for all they did to help while you were gone.
- You can complement them on the growth they've made.

Deborah Butler, MSW  
Erika Curran, LCSW  
National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder  
VA Palo Alto Health Care System  
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