

"Let's plant flower bulbs"

Objectives

This activity is centred on action. Upon completion, the benefits from completing this to the Christian community include:

- more beautiful church grounds that make the church members' love for Creation visible to the neighbourhood;
- creation of new habitats for the numerous insects such as butterflies and bees attracted to the flowers from the bulbs the congregation planted;
- greater awareness among the faithful of our closeness to the land and increased motivation to care for it;
- church members getting a taste to take their turn at planting bulbs at home.

Equipment

General Material: Bulbs, trowels, measuring tape, watering cans, a camera, the lyrics and music of the songs.

6 years and under: Magnifying glasses, plastic critters, a large cardboard, a photo of a church, drawings (see Annex 3), perfume, a glue stick, yellow props, plastic watering cans, one watering can with a heart (see Annex 4).

7 to 12 years: flowers in a vase, a flower bulb, drawings of a flower (Annex 5), crayons, a bulletin board, big cardboard for the common work, a glue stick, perfume, drawing of a watering can (Annex 5), laptop, projector drawings of pollinating insects (see Annex 6).

Teenagers and adults: Bibles/sheets with Matthew. 6: 28-29 and Song of Solomon 2: 12-13), laptop, projector, speakers, videos.

Duration

About 2 hours

Locale

The community hall and available rooms for activities by age group. Outdoors for bulb planting.



Before the Activity Day:

The pastoral team selects the kinds of flower bulbs to be planted. There are a few things to consider before you decide. As a first step, make sure you choose a "fall bulb". Also, check whether the planting plot is in the sun or in a shady or semi-shaded area as some flowers prefer the sun and others like more shady areas. The type of soil in the garden plot should be determined. Is it moist, drained, fertile or sandy? In general, flower bulbs grow better in a well-drained and fertile soil. Some compost could be added to enrich the soil.

It would be helpful to get advice from a gardening centre near you. Who knows, maybe they would be ready to supply discounted or free bulbs in exchange for publicity of their enterprise at the church? In Annex 1 "Request for Sponsorship", you will find a model letter inviting such a sponsorship.

Here are some examples of bulbs that can be planted in the fall: tulip, daffodil, narcissus, iris, Allium, crocus, Chionodoxa, colchicum, Eremurus, Fritillaria, Calanthe, hyacinth, Muscari, and Scilla.

For the smooth running of the activity, it will be important to inform the church members about the logistics of this special day (see sample letter in Annex 2, "Message to the Christian community"). For example, they should be told to bring gardening gloves, trowels, a measuring tape and watering cans.

Welcome and Introduction (10 minutes)

-Gather the members of the Christian community at the entrance of the community hall.

-A member of the organizing committee welcomes the participants

- The activity begins with a skit

Sarah bends down to look at a butterfly through her magnifying glass. Jacob notices this and goes over to her

-Hey Sarah, what are you doing

-I'm looking at a butterfly with my magnifying glass. It is so beautiful! I don't often see such beautiful ones.

-At school, I learned that butterflies and bees are attracted to flowers.

-That's fantastic Jacob! We should plant flowers everywhere to attract insects! Even more, flowers smell good and they're beautiful to see!

-That reminds me of last Sunday's reading at church. (Jacob takes a Bible out of his bag and reads Mt 6: 28-29): *And why are you worried about clothes? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor weave clothes, yet I tell you, even Solomon with all his wealth, did not have clothes as beautiful as one of these.*

- That makes me think of the Bible verse my godparents chose for their wedding. It comes from the Song of Solomon:

*The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove
is heard in our land.
The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance. (Song 2, 12-13)*

- Sarah! I have an idea! We could plant flowers on the church property to make it more beautiful, to add the perfume of flowers to the air and to provide food for insects and birds!

-Wow, that's a great idea! Let's go talk to [pastor's name].

The pastor tells the faith community that he thinks making the church property more beautiful is an excellent idea. Today, we plant the bulbs that will give us beautiful flowers this spring!

The activities of each age group and the designated locations are indicated. We take care to present the facilitators as well as the volunteers who will accompany each of the groups.

Dispersal (5 minutes)

The young people go to the assigned rooms while the adults remain in the hall.

Activities by age group (1 hour)

6 years and under

1. Game with the Magnifying Glass



Invite the children to imitate Sarah character in the skit as she studied bugs with a magnifying glass. Alone or in teams of two, the children circulate around the room and use their magnifying glasses to observe the plastic insects placed in different spots. (If plastic insects can't be found, paper cut outs of insects could be used.)

2. Crafts

Attached to a large cardboard is a picture of a church (a print of your own church would make it more real for the children). Children are given the choice of colouring a tulip or a daffodil (see the two drawings in Annex3).



Once the colouring is finished, the child takes it to a volunteer who writes his name on it and puts a touch of perfume on his drawing. The volunteer tells each child: *Thank you for being a flower in the garden of God.* With the help of the volunteer, the child sticks his flower on the big cardboard. The volunteer puts some perfume on the hand of each child.

3. Gardener's Game



The facilitator praises the children for surrounding the beautiful church with such sweet smelling flowers!

What do flowers need to grow and keep looking so pretty? (sun, water, good soil)

According to your imagination and the materials you have, distribute yellow accessories (hats, scarves, bracelets, necklaces ...) and plastic watering cans to the children. Invite the children to come forward one at a time or in teams of two, to water the flowers on the large church picture.

Then explain to the children that we are God's flowers! God waters us with his love. From the love he puts in our heart, we plant seeds of love all around us and this smells sweet to all those we meet. An adult personifying God and carrying a watering can with a big heart on it (see Annex 4) circulates among the children and pretends to water them as if they were flowers!

4. Song Time – Suggestions



"High Hopes":
<http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?lyrics=10316>

"April Showers":
https://www.aldielyrics.com/lyrics/bing_crosby/april_showers.html

5. Free Time

 7 -12 years

1. Flowers in God's Garden (45 minutes)

Some flowers have been placed in a vase. Ask the youth to describe the flowers. Invite them to come and smell them.

The youngsters will surely say that the flowers are beautiful and they smell...



Show them a bulb and explain that some flowers grow from bulbs. The bulbs we plant today will produce flowers in the spring. They must go through a long period of cold to be able to bloom.

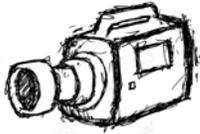
"Bulbs require so little and give back so much. In the beginning they look homely, even ugly, and in the end, they are completely transformed."

- Lauren Springer Ogden, American writer

We are a bit like flower bulbs. God loves us with our bumps and hollows, with our faults. God helps us to grow into beautiful flowers just as he did with Jesus who passed through death and rose to new life (resurrection), God transforms our little deaths (our failures to love, our sins..) into life, into resurrection.

Hand out a picture of a flower to the youngsters (see Annex 5). Ask them to put their name in the centre of the flower and to write one of their qualities or talents on each of the petals. It may be helpful to do a bit of brain storming beforehand about how to recognize qualities so as to give them some ideas. Allow time for the young people to colour their flowers. When they have finished, they come and stick their flower on a big cardboard (common artwork). They are invited to put some perfume on the flower and on their hand.

Then explain to the young people that we are like God's flowers! He has given me qualities that he helps me bring to bloom so that his goodness shines through me on all those around. With my own perfume and my interior beauty, I can display the beauty of God to others. Together, as a Church, we form a beautiful field of flowers. We'll keep this in mind as we plant the bulbs that will become lovely flowers in the spring and will make God's love visible to all who pass by: a Christian tries to beautify the earth with his perfume of love. God waters us with his love (the facilitator sticks the image of a watering can on the common artwork; (see Annex 5). With the love God puts in our hearts, we sow seeds of love around us and this gives off a sweet perfume to those around us.



2. Video and Discussion (15 minutes)

Why do we Need Bees? By Earth Rangers

Length: 3:32

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CxCTyxRFho>

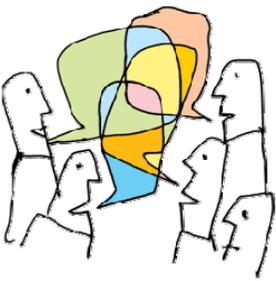
Ask the youth to summarize, in their own words, what they understood about pollination.

Show a few photos of pollinating insects (see Annex 6).

Bumblebees, honeybees, butterflies, ladybugs, beetles and some flies are all pollinating insects.

Adolescents and Adults

1. Group Discussions



Ask the teenagers and adults to split into small discussion groups (the exchanges could be more fruitful if the adults remain together and the teenagers stay with other teens). Make sure each subgroup has a facilitator who will ask the questions and assure the smooth flow of the discussion. Bibles can be

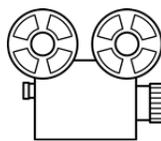
distributed or papers with both texts (Mt. 6: 28-29 and Song of Solomon 2: 12-13).

Here are some examples of questions that could be asked:

- What touches or challenges me in these biblical texts?
- Am I inspired by God's Creation? How? What do I feel when I contemplate insects, birds and flowers?
- Is it part of my role as a Christian to take care of Creation, insects, birds and flowers? Why?

2. Viewing Videos

First, watch the video:
The Death of Bees Explained,
6.20 minutes



<https://www.science.org.au/curious/video/death-bees-explained>

Then, watch the video:

Canola and Bees - A Sweet Relationship, 4.03 minutes. <https://www.canolacouncil.org/markets-stats/industry-overview/bees-and-canola-a-sweet-relationship/>

Here are some examples of questions that can be asked in discussion groups:

- What are my feelings after seeing these videos? What concerns me?
- What can I do, as a Christian, to combat the loss of pollinating insects?

The group leader can ask a few more questions. For example:

Do I use pesticides and/or insecticides at home? After viewing these videos, will I stop using dangerous products and look for other ways (perhaps homemade natural mixtures) to care for my garden and lawn? Do I appreciate the important role pollinating insects play in the reproduction of plant species? Do I want to do something personally to protect and nourish these pollinators by planting bulbs or flowers at home?

3. Return to the Videos

One of the leaders recalls the important elements of the two videos and links these to today's community project of planting bulbs

A few ideas:

- We learned from the first video that the bees and butterflies *that pollinate flowering plants guarantee the reproduction of many plant species*. It mentioned that one-third of the world's diet results from this pollination.

Ecology is always connected to the human being! Taking care of our environment means taking care of humanity! Is it not our role, as Christians, to take care of our brothers and sisters? We must listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

So, taking care of bees for example, allows the poorest of our planet to eat! By promoting biodiversity (in our case by planting bulbs that will become flowers in the spring), we create a favourable environment for pollinating insects to forage and subsist. These flying insects pollinate tomato and cucumber flowers in large fields and small vegetable gardens, thus helping to feed humans. Let's do our part to protect this sacred balance!

-The second video shows how cooperation between beekeepers and canola farmers provides better crops and healthy pollinators. By planting flower bulbs today, we do our part to counter the decline of pollinating insects. In addition, planting these bulbs becomes a visible sign to the neighbourhood that we, as Christians, are serious about protecting Creation and strengthening biodiversity.

-The two texts we have read (Mt. 6: 28-29 and Song 2: 12-13) evoke the beauty of Creation. In planting these flower bulbs, we become co-creators adding new beauty and new life to God's Creation.

Achievements and Planting Instructions (20 min)

The youngsters rejoin their parents. The collaborative creations of the 6 years and under group and of the 7-12 years are presented. The 6 and under children may also sing the 2 songs they have learned. The youth can have their parents smell the perfume they have on their hands.

One of the leaders outlines the procedure to be followed in planting the bulbs. It is important to explain how deep to plant the bulb and how much space to leave between them (This will probably be indicated on the packaging or you can ask for advice from the horticultural centre where you buy your bulbs). If you decide to put compost or mulch around the bulb, be sure to give the necessary instructions for this. Also, remind the community members to water the bulbs after planting is completed. You may want to use slides or posters to make your explanations more visual and maybe summarize the steps to be followed on a paper to be distributed to each team. Depending on the number of participants, you can distribute one or more bulbs per family-team.

Planting Bulbs (20 minutes)

The members of the Christian community plant the bulbs. The organizers of the event may want to take pictures of the teams getting their hands

dirty. These photos could be placed in the parish bulletin and posted on the website and on social networks. Why not share such good news? In the spring, a picture of community members in front of the flowers that have blossomed from these bulbs could also be shared.

The pastor could ask God to bless the planting of the bulbs. Here is an example of such a prayer:

*Creator God,
We ask you to bless these bulbs planted by the women and men of this community.
May they produce abundant flowers to nourish the pollinating insects and to lift the hearts of all who behold them in praise of your beauty and your goodness to all Creation.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

Suggestions for a song to close the activity:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w57WdVB eFl8> "Take My Hands" 3.15 minutes or

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQ93HVuY d5Y> "Take My Life and Let It Be" 3.47 minutes



Annex 1: Request for Sponsorship

Sudbury, June 12, 2018

Dear Mr. Green,

I am writing to you today to invite The Green Thumb horticultural centre to be a sponsor of the planting of flower bulbs in front of Saint Francis of Assisi Church in Sudbury. Our activity will take place on September 1st 2018 and the support of your business would greatly help to make it a successful event. Members of the church community will plant flower bulbs to mark the World Day of Prayer for Creation which takes place every year on this date. As passers-by and the people of the neighbourhood admire the beautiful flowers issuing from these bulbs in the spring, they will also behold a living testimonial of how Christians love and care for God's Creation.

We would like to let the members of our community know that your horticultural centre made it possible for us to beautify the grounds of our church. If you would like to make a donation or perhaps provide some bulbs gratuitously or at a reduced price, we would be happy to post your company's logo on our property so that passers-by know where to go for such beautiful flowers. Your generosity (along with your contact information) could also be acknowledged in our church bulletin and on our website.

It would be my pleasure to discuss with you all the details regarding your donation.

Thank you very much for taking the time to consider our request.

Please accept, Mr. Green, my best regards.

*Marguerite Bloom
Planting Committee
438-123-4567*

Annex 2 : Message to the Christian community

Dear members of our beautiful Christian community,

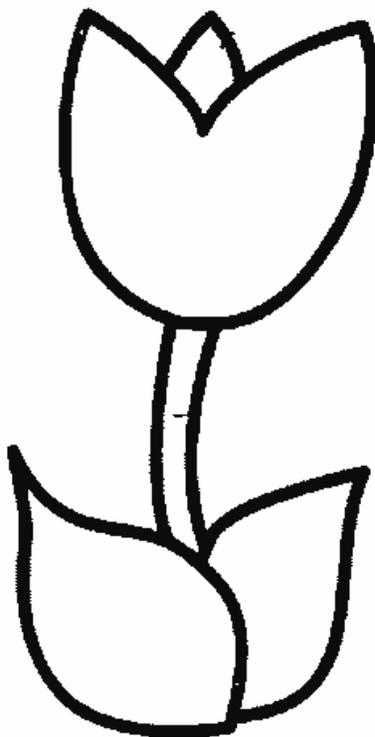
On September 1st, as part of the World Day of Prayer for Creation, we invite you to join in the planting of flower bulbs in the front of the church! An introductory activity for each age group will take place from 9:30 to 10:45 before planting begins.

For the activity to be successful, we thank you in advance for bringing with you gardening gloves, a trowel, a ruler and a watering can. Also, we will go ahead with putting the flower bulbs in the ground whatever the weather, rain or shine. We count on you to dress accordingly.

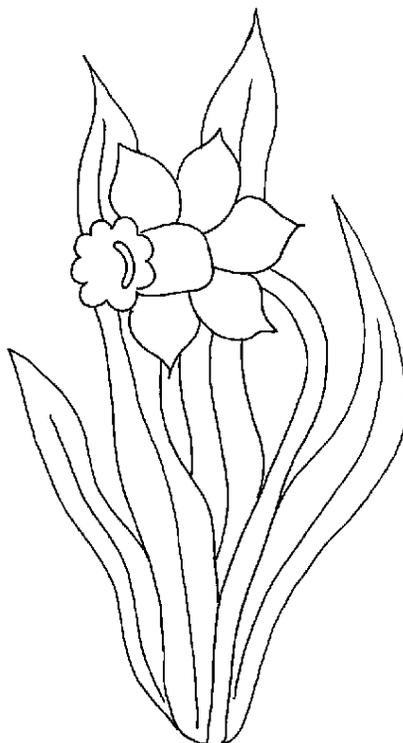
We look forward to welcoming a good number of participants at this ecological event!



Annex 3



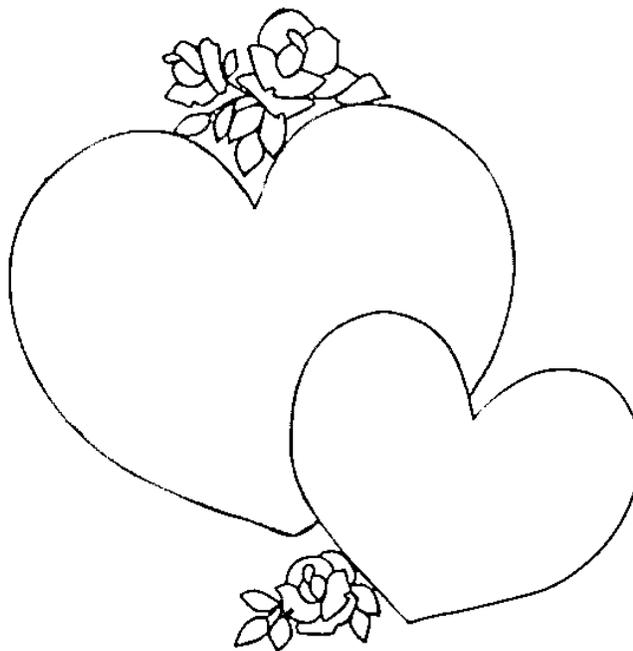
source: coloriagestars.me



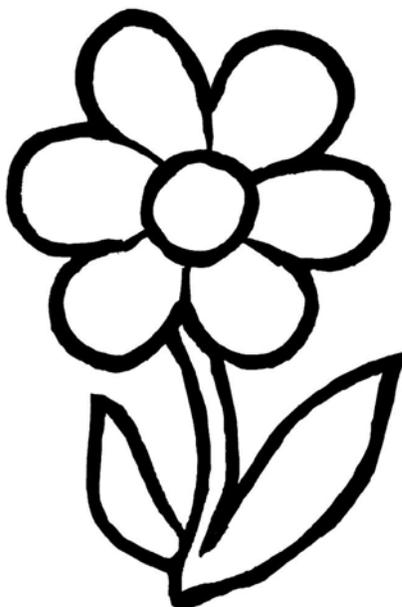
source: coloriagestars.me



Annex 4



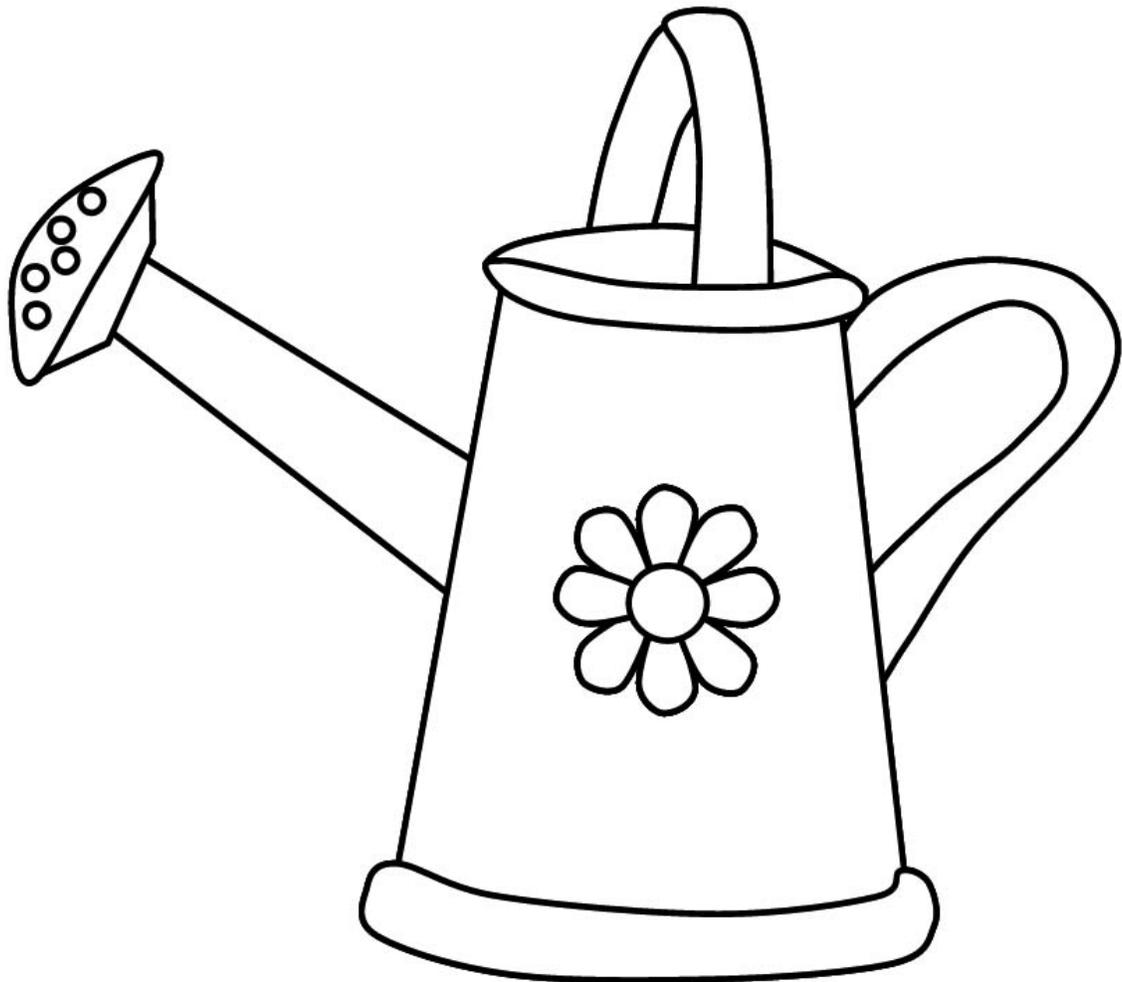
source: coloriagestars.me



source: coloriagestars.me



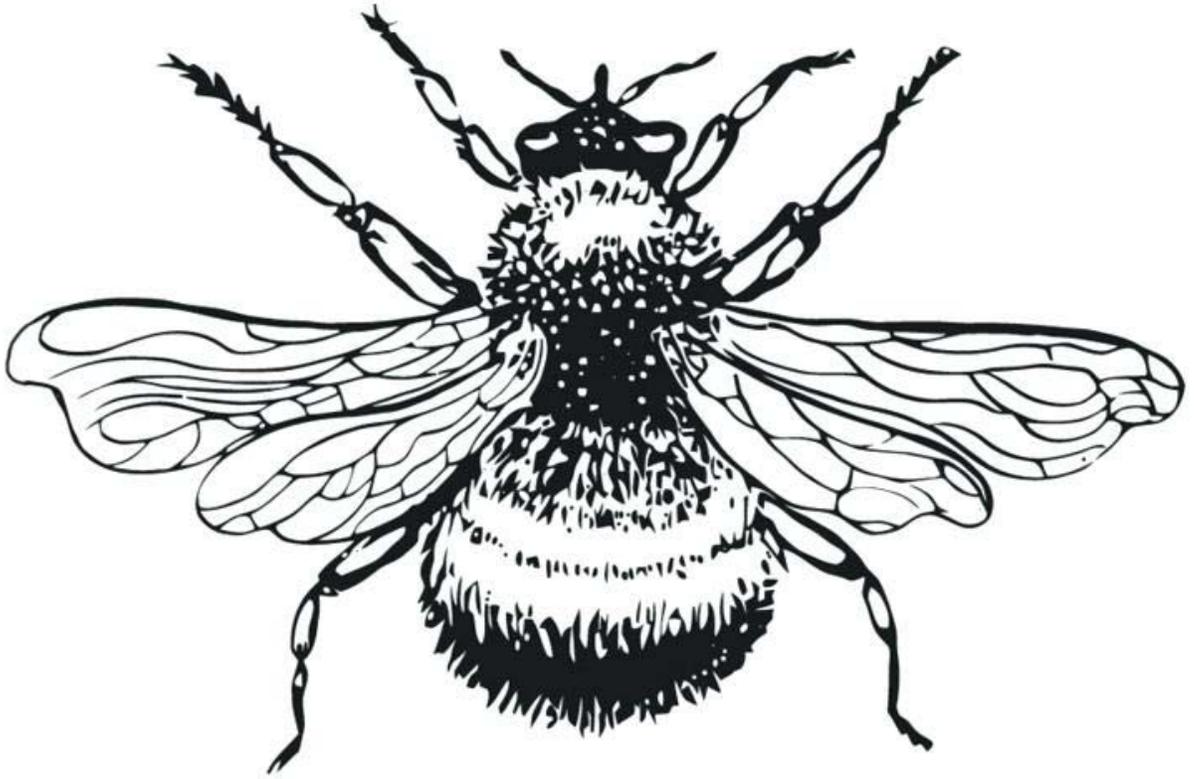
Annex 5



source: cocoloriage.com

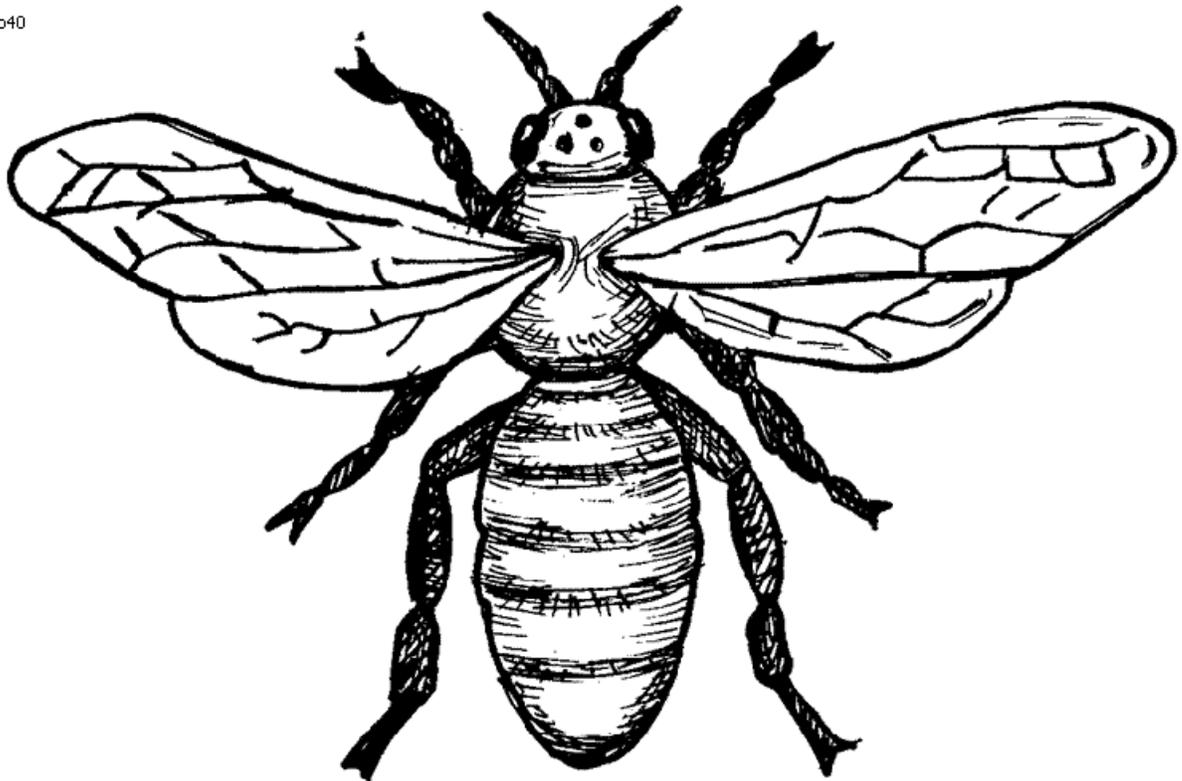


Annex 6

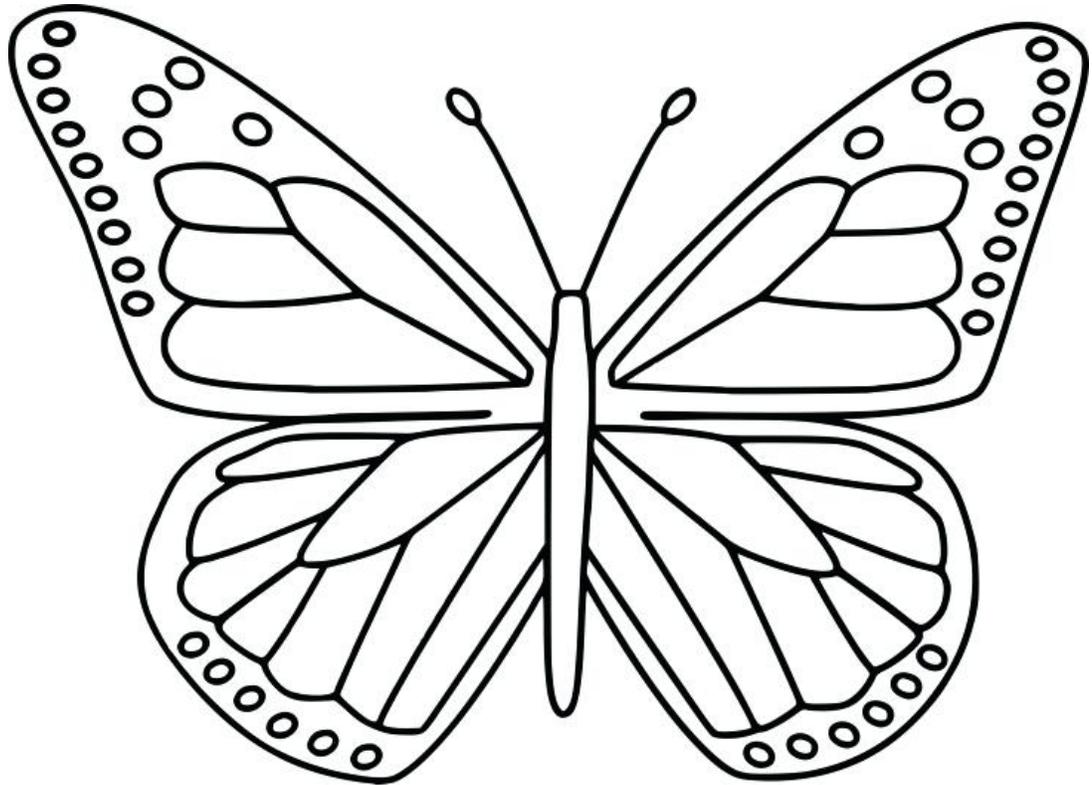


source: smartgorod.me

4to40



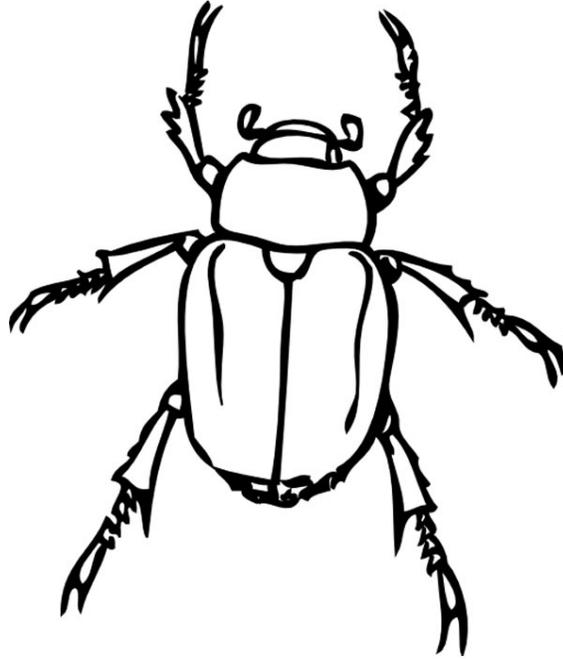
source: hanslodge.com



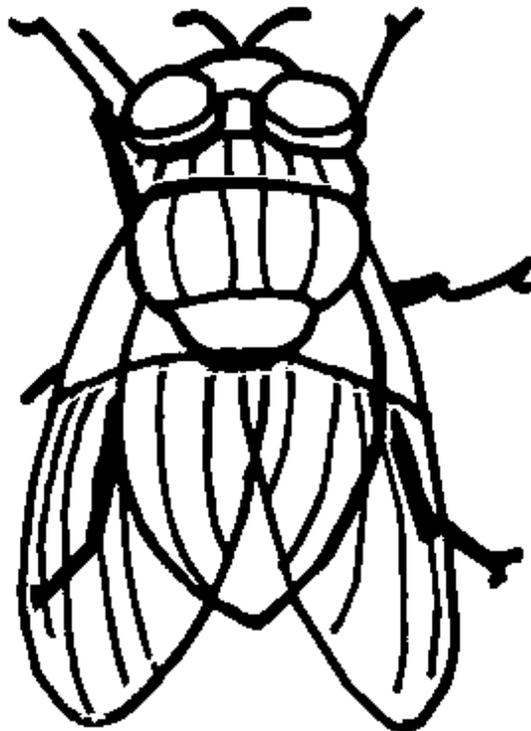
source: rimsdrivertraining.info



source: www.mes-coloriages-preferes.biz



source: coloriages.ca



source: www.poursamuser.com