

# LEELANAU COUNTY, MICHIGAN



## GOING TO COURT

## FOR KIDS

**My Name is** \_\_\_\_\_

**I am going to court because I am a witness.**

Hi! If you are going to court for the first time, you probably have lots of questions. Going to court and everything involved with that may be a new experience for you. Sometimes, new experiences can feel scary. We want you to feel comfortable as you deal with court. We hope this activity book will answer some of your questions and help you understand this experience. You can also talk with helpful adults.

### HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

Lots of kids have been to court and they have had all kinds of different feelings about it. It is okay however you feel. Below are faces with different feelings. Circle and label the one that shows how you are feeling. If none of the faces show how you are feeling, draw how you feel.

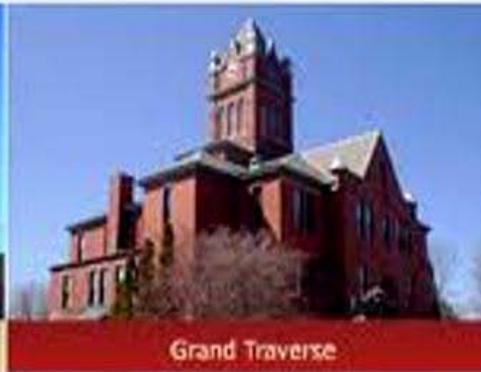


*THE COURTHOUSE AND  
GETTING TO COURT*

COURTHOUSES OF THE 86<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT COURT  
AND THE 13<sup>TH</sup> CIRCUIT COURT



Antrim County



Grand Traverse



Leelanau County

**Antrim County**  
**205 E. Cayuga St.**  
**Bellaire, MI 49615**  
**231-533-6860**  
**(Prosecutors Office)**

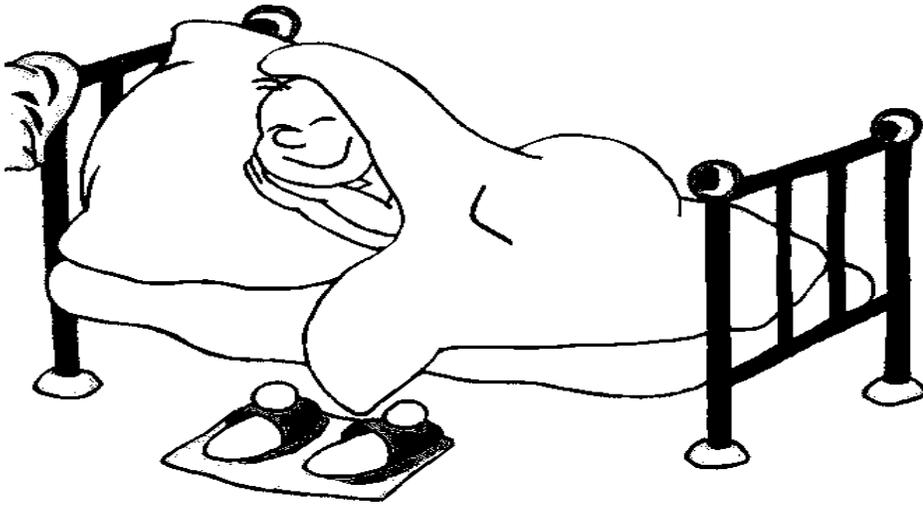
**Grand Traverse County**  
**86<sup>th</sup> District Court**  
**Hall Of Justice**  
**280 Washington Street**  
**Traverse City, MI 49684**  
**13<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court**  
**328 Washington Street**  
**Traverse City, MI 49684**  
**231-922-4640**  
**(Prosecutors Office)**

**Leelanau County**  
**8527 E. Govt Cntr. Dr.**  
**Suttons Bay, MI 49682**  
**232-256-9872**  
**(Prosecutors Office)**

The 86<sup>th</sup> District Court and the 13<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court serves Antrim, Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties. The judges in each court must travel to the counties to preside over court proceedings. You may be required to go to one of the above courthouses.



## What to Do Before Going To Courthouse



Get a good night sleep before court so you are rested. Sometimes court takes a long time so you do not want to be tired.



Be sure to dress neat but be comfortable. Maybe you can wear your favorite socks. What color are your favorite socks?

\_\_\_\_\_

Eat a good breakfast. Bring a snack in case court takes a long time and you get hungry. What is your favorite snack?

\_\_\_\_\_



*Meeting With The Prosecuting Attorney and the Victim-Witness Advocate*

Hi, my name is Sam. Does someone talk to kids before they go into the courtroom to be a witness?



**YES**, the Prosecuting Attorney and Victim-Witness Advocate will meet and talk with you before going to court. The Prosecuting Attorney represents the State of Michigan, and must know the laws of Michigan, and must decide if a law has been broken. The prosecuting attorney's job is to try to prove the defendant broke the law.



**Do you know the name of the Prosecuting Attorney handling your case?**

---

## *Victim/Witness Coordinator*



A victim/witness coordinator is a person who supports children in and around court. Sometimes this person helps the prosecutors with their job. You can ask your victim/witness coordinator any question you have about going to court. They may go to court with you.

*This is a picture of the Children's room in the Prosecutors Office. This is a GREAT spot to hang out and wait until it's time to go into court to testify!*



**List some activities that you may do while waiting in the Children's room?**

---



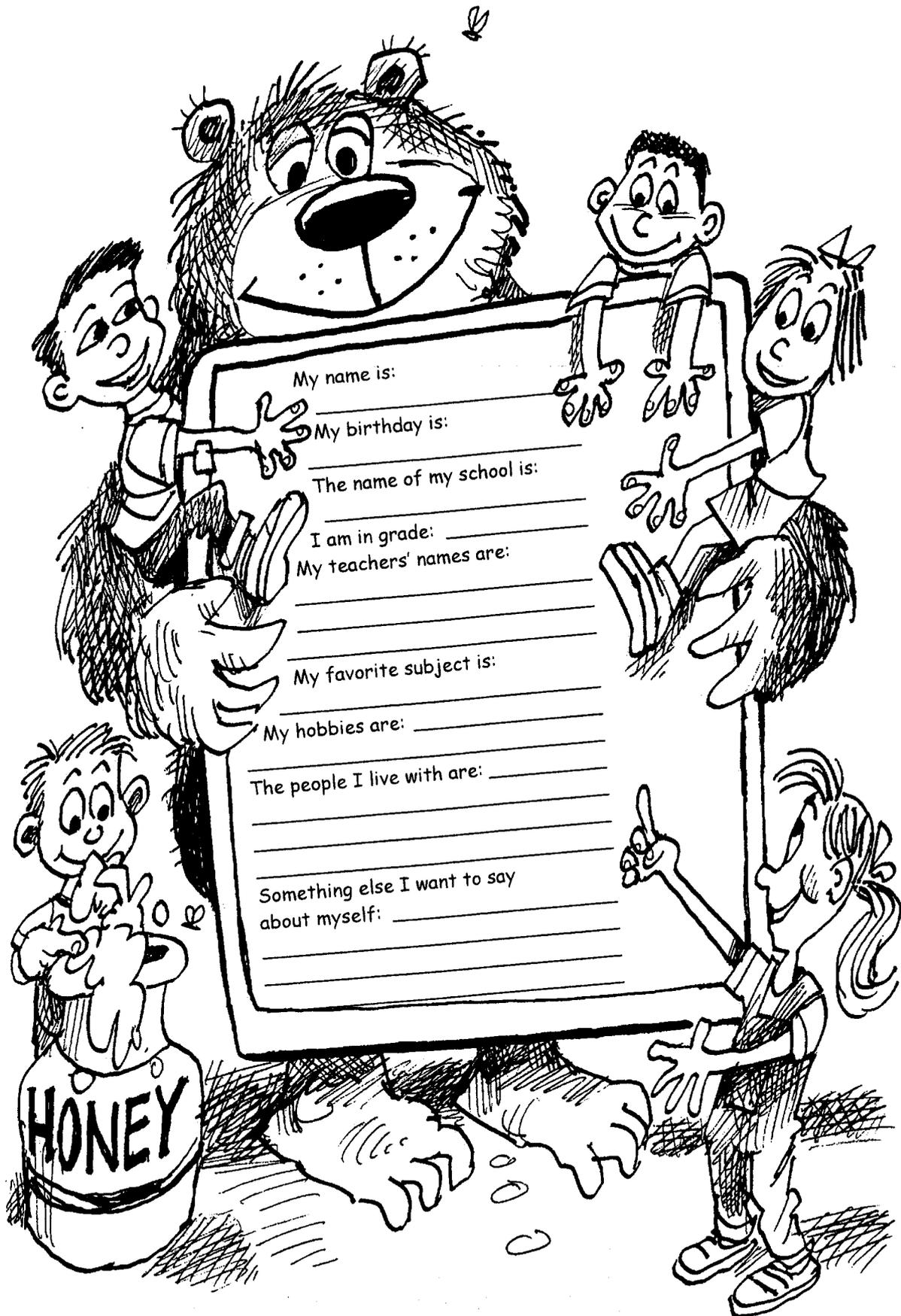
This is a picture of Courtroom A in the Leelanau County Government Center, which is located on the second floor. This is known as the District Court. Courtroom B is the Circuit Court and Courtroom C is the Family Courtroom.

The Prosecuting Attorney and the Victim/Witness Coordinator will walk you into the courtroom. They can also tell you which chairs will be filled when you testify.

Can you circle the spot where you would sit as a witness?

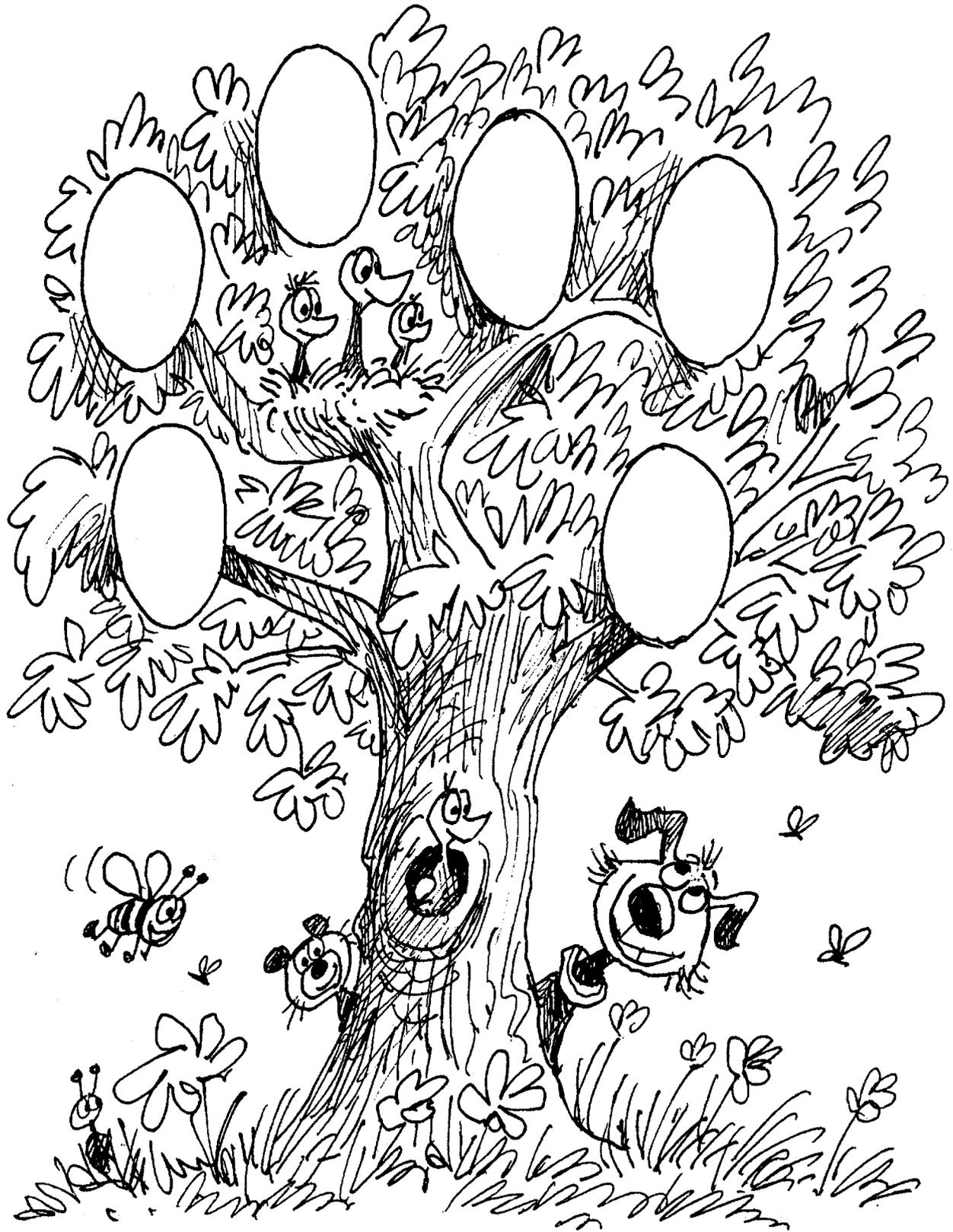
Can you label the other areas in the courtroom?

# Facts About Me!



# Who Are The People You Are Connected To?

Draw them or write their names.



## **WHO ARE THE PEOPLE IN COURT?**

### **JUDGE**

Many people work in a court. Everyone has a job to do.

First, there is the **judge**. In many courts, the judge will be wearing a black robe. The judge usually sits at the front of the courtroom. The judge's name is often on a sign near the place where he or she sits.

It is the judge's job to listen to what everyone says in court. The judge knows what the law is and decides what needs to happen to keep kids safe. If the judge asks you a question, it is very important for you to tell the truth. The judge needs to know the truth to make the best decision for you.

### **CLERK OF THE COURT**

The court clerk's job is to help the judge. A court clerk keeps all the papers about the cases in the court and organizes them. The clerk keeps track of the decisions or orders that the judge makes during court and also keeps the court's schedule.

### **ATTORNEYS**

When people go to court, they often are represented by an attorney. Attorneys are also called lawyers. In a criminal case, the State of Michigan is represented by the Prosecuting Attorney and the person who has been criminally charged is represented by a Defense Attorney. The Defense Attorney will sit next to their client, who is the Defendant in this criminal case.

It is the attorney's job to talk to the judge. The attorneys will ask the witnesses questions.

### **BAILIFF AND DETECTIVE**

The job of the bailiff is to keep everyone safe in court. The bailiff wears a uniform and tells people when to stand up and sit down.

Often, the detective or police officer who spoke with you will be in court. They will sit next to the Prosecuting Attorney. They will also be a witness who will testify in court.

## ***RULES FOR HOW TO ACT IN COURT:***

- Be on time.
- Dress neatly.
- Show respect to the people who are there.
- Don't eat or drink in court.
- Don't chew gum.
- You can't listen to music in court.
- During court, pay attention. No cell phones or video games.
- There may be other cases before yours. You have to be quiet and wait.
- Call the judge "Your Honor". This is a sign of respect.
- Don't speak unless the judge or attorney asks you to.
- If you don't understand something, say that you don't understand. Don't guess. Someone will explain it again to you.
- Tell the truth.

### **WHAT IF?**

1. ***You're asked a question you don't understand?*** If you don't understand what people are asking, say "I don't understand." If they repeat it and you still don't know what they mean, ask them to say it in a different way or an easier way.
2. ***You're asked a question and you can't remember the answer?*** You might be asked about things that you don't remember or about things that didn't happen. If you don't remember, say "I don't remember." Don't guess. If you know something never happened, say so. If you forget the order in which things happened, it's okay. The most important thing is to tell the truth.
3. ***You cry in court?*** Lots of people cry in court. It's okay. If you think you might cry in court, tell the prosecuting attorney. The prosecutor can make sure there are tissues. Tell the prosecuting attorney what you want to happen if you cry: do you want a break or do you want to keep going?
4. ***You're asked more than one question at a time?*** It is easy to get mixed up or to mix up people who are listening to you if you're asked too many questions at one time. You might tell the lawyer who is asking you questions to ask you only one thing at a time so that you can answer properly.
5. ***You only know part of the answer to a question?*** Tell only what you know.



My name is Hank. What I have to testify about makes me very sad and it is embarrassing. I am worried about crying in court.

***You're asked an embarrassing question?*** You might be asked to talk about things that are embarrassing. That's hard to do. Remember that judges, lawyers, and everyone in court have heard people talk about embarrassing things a lot of times. Besides that, everyone has had embarrassing things happen to him or her, so they will understand how difficult it is for you. You can tell the judge you're embarrassed, but you should tell the judge what happened even if it is embarrassing.

***YOU ARE VERY BRAVE*** to come to court and testify; to tell the truth about what happened!



My name is Margie. I am happy to testify but worried because when I get excited I have to go to the bathroom. What if I have to go to the bathroom while I am testifying?

***You need to go to the bathroom?*** It's always a good idea to go to the bathroom just before you go into court to be a witness. If you need to go to the bathroom while you are testifying, tell the judge you need a break. If you're nervous about doing this, talk to the prosecuting attorney before court about what you should do. You might agree to raise your hand so that the prosecuting attorney can tell the judge you need a break.

What are other things that worry you about testifying?

---

---

---

## Waiting to Testify

Sometimes court gets over quickly but most of the time court takes quite a while.

After you have met with the Prosecuting Attorney and Victim-Witness Coordinator, you will probably have to wait for a while, so it is a good idea to bring a book or something to do while you wait.



**COLOR** these kids who are waiting to testify.



**DRAW** other activities you enjoy doing as you wait!



*Max is having a snack while he waits  
for his friends in court.  
Can you color his silly sandwich?*



Do you swear or promise that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

I do.



## ***The Job of a Witness and Taking the Oath***

*The job of the witness is to tell the truth. Remember, that job never changes. Telling the truth is so important in court that ALL witnesses take an oath to tell the truth. An oath is like a promise.*

*Testifying means answering questions in court after taking the oath. The Prosecutor and Victim/Witness Coordinator will bring you into the courtroom and take you to the witness chair where you will sit and testify.*

*Then you will take the oath.*

### ***Taking the Oath***

*The judge or person the judge has chosen will give you the oath.*

*Most of the time it is someone who works for the judge whose job is called a court clerk. The*

*clerk will ask you to swear or promise to tell the truth. You take the oath to tell the truth by saying, "I do."*

Hi. My name is Mark. What happens after I take the oath?



### **You Answer Questions.**

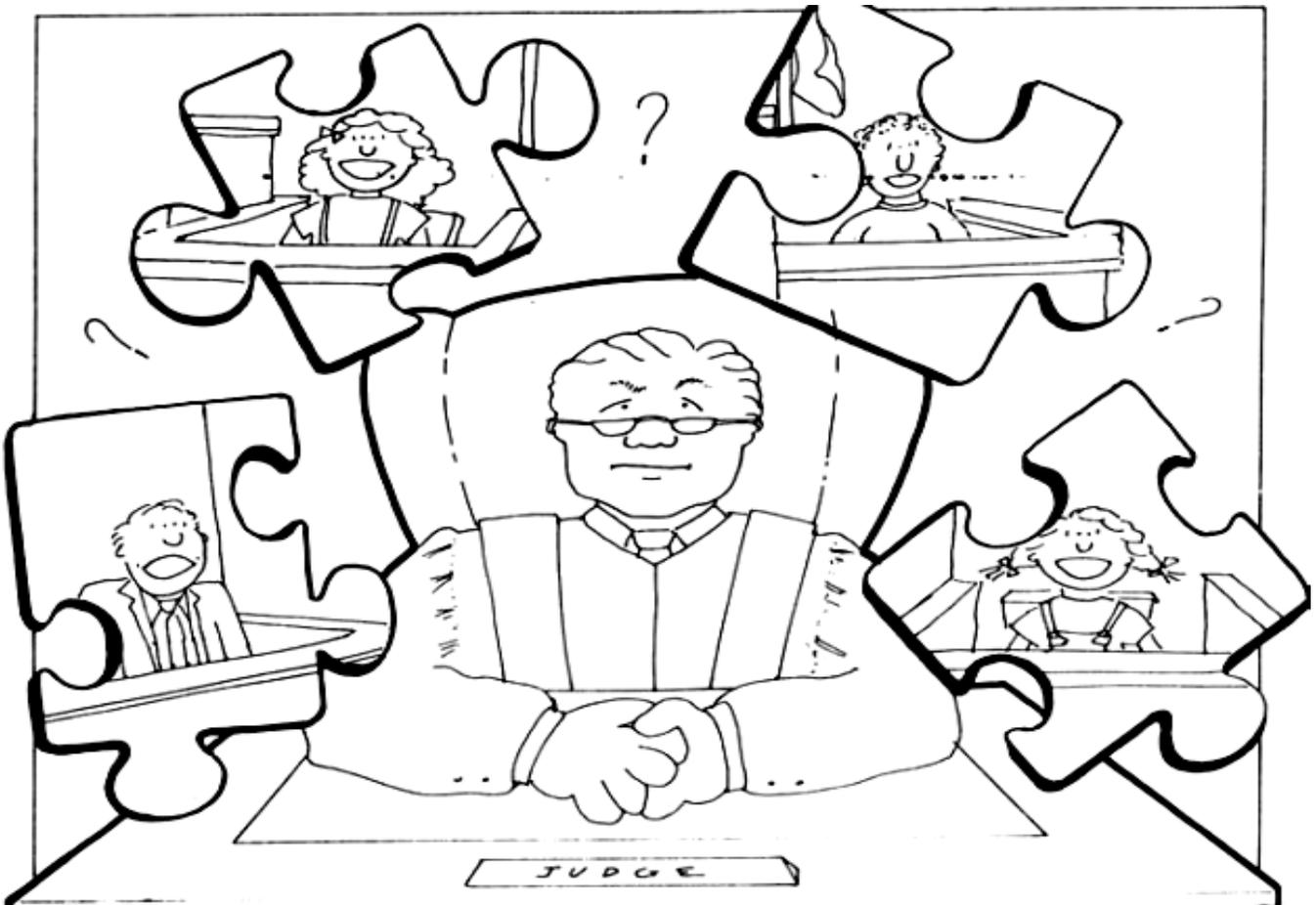
First, the prosecutor will ask you questions. Then, the defense attorney will ask you questions.

It is their job to think of all the questions that they want to ask you. It is your job to answer the questions they ask and to always tell the truth.

Sometimes when you are answering a question, the other attorney will stand up and interrupt you by saying "objection." They say that so they can talk to the judge. Do not worry if that happens. You have not done anything wrong. Just stop talking until the judge tells you to answer questions again.

## The Judge or Jury's Decision

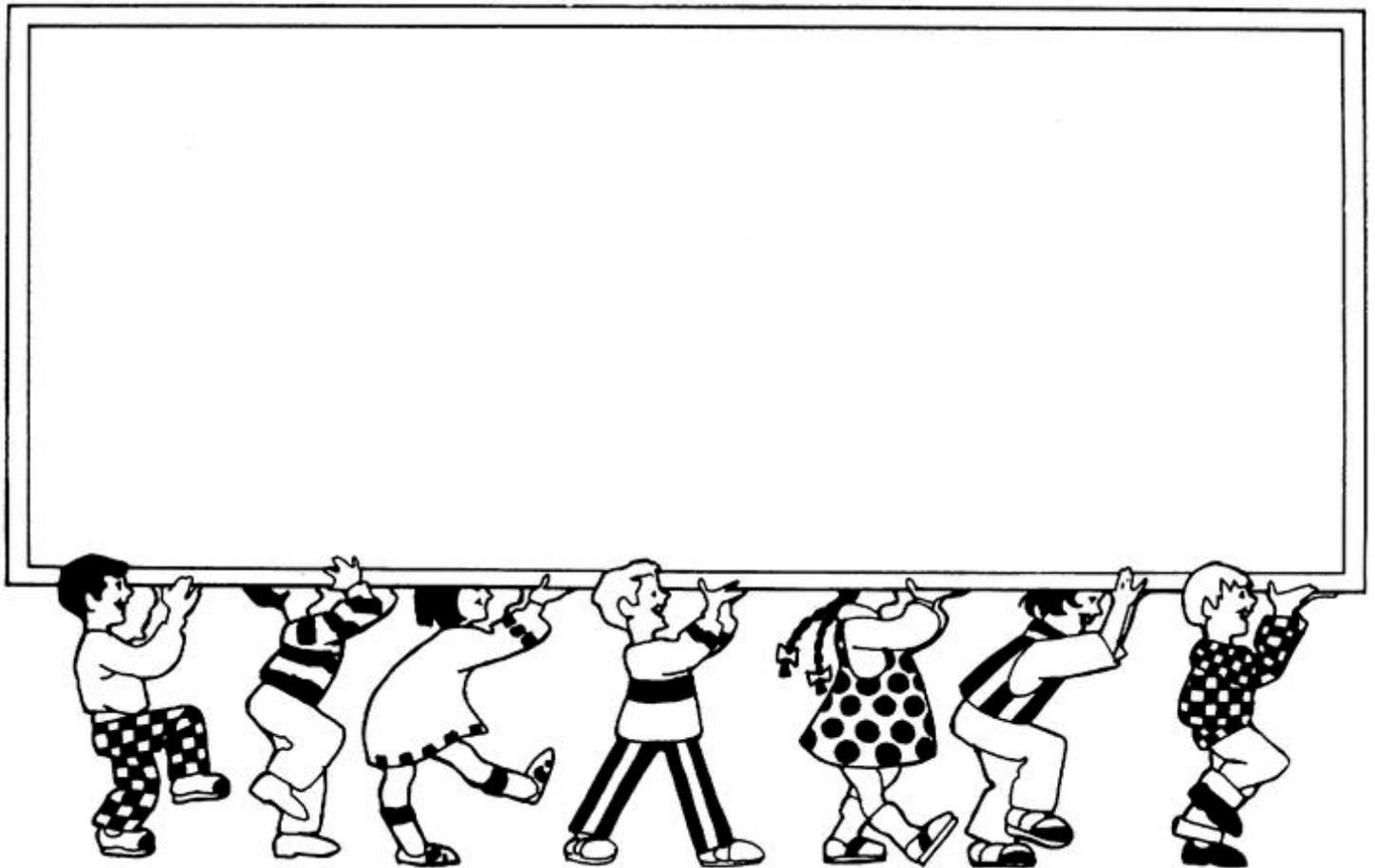
After all of the witnesses have testified, the judge or the jury has a job to do. That job is to decide if there is enough evidence to prove the defendant broke the law. This is like putting a puzzle together. Sometimes the jury or judge will feel confused or think that an important piece is missing. If that happens, they may find the defendant not guilty of breaking the law. It does not mean they do not believe you or the other witnesses. The witness does his or her job by answering questions and telling the truth.



**JURY** ~ Guilty or Not Guilty?????????

If the Judge or Jury decide the Defendant broke the law (found guilty), the Judge decides how the Defendant should be punished. It is the Judge's job to make sure the Defendant won't break the law again.

Sometimes kids who have to go to court and testify against the Defendant feel bad that they helped the Defendant get punished. But witnesses shouldn't feel bad because they came to court and told the truth. You didn't do anything wrong. You are always welcome to talk with the Prosecutor and Victim/Witness Coordinator about your thoughts and feelings. BUT MOST important of all, they will want to tell you that you are a **VERY BRAVE** person. Being a witness is an important job and you'll do a **SUPER** job! **THANK YOU!!!!**



(Draw a picture of the people you met when going to court!)

*Publication of this booklet was made possible through funding provided by the Crime Victim Services Commission and the Prosecuting Attorney's Association of Michigan.*

*Courtesy of the Leelanau County Prosecutor, Joseph T. Hubbell, and created by Laurie LaCross Victim/Witness Coordinator. (April, 2014)*

# Drawing Page

