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# Introduction

A young child will learn by doing, through imitation and play. Later, the child’s feelings become instrumental in the learning processes. How they feel about what is good, right and true is important and meaningful. This is followed (from about 8–9 years of age onwards) by the capacity to think objectively.

A young child will grow in a balanced and healthy way when school lessons engage them in an activity, something which they themselves can do. The 7–10 year old will develop well when their feelings are nourished and cultivated, when they can sense what is right, good, truthful, beautiful, aesthetically harmonious, meaningful, useful and purposeful. An adolescent needs lessons which assist him or her to understand the world through studying geography, the environment, simple geology, botany, relationships between animals and humans, the lives of famous people (e.g. inventors, explorers, artists, people who served humanitarian causes, composers, writers or scientists).

Interwoven with this are the arts: music, poetry, language, painting, drawing, handcrafts, movement.

Above all, intrinsic to all the activities of such a curriculum are the children themselves. Who are they? What are their personalities? How do they learn? How do they relate to others? How do they react, respond, behave? How are they experiencing the world?

One approach to these questions is to consider the temperament of a child. The temperament is a significant aspect of a child’s personality, influencing how they – and we – learn, behave, respond and react. The temperament is an important part of our constitution and life body. It gradually expresses itself through the early-childhood years, and can be observed in early behaviour patterns, responses and reactions. It is an integral part of our personality, and exerts its influence throughout life.

The four temperaments are: sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic. The temperament – or, as is often the case, a combination of two or three temperaments – will influence every child to a greater or lesser degree. If a teacher notices that a child is somehow one-sided or has an overly influential problematic aspect of their personality, it can be due to the temperament. It is possible to balance and modify the temperament through lessons in form drawing. How does this work?

Form drawing engages children in an individualised activity with forms which are tailor-made to suit their temperament. The forms mirror pictorially, and in movements, the tendencies of each temperament. We could say, indeed, that they are a signature of the temperament. The forms then change, each temperament requiring changes of a particular sort (these are clearly visible in the drawings).

When children are actively engaged in drawing the forms, they are in the first instance re-creating a pictorial image of their own temperament. The changes that they then experience in the forms bring about processes within their own experiences of movement and their visual perceptions of structure, composition, form and gesture. These changes ‘work back’ into their constitution, bringing about balancing, modifying and harmonising influences on their temperament.

In this hands-on approach to learning, children are engaged in relevant, meaningfully co-ordinated hand and eye movements which bring them naturally connected, integrated learning experiences. Sensory integration, spatial orientation, hand–eye co-ordination and hand-writing skills can also be improved alongside the purposefully intended harmonising of the temperament.

In 100 years of Waldorf teaching, many Waldorf teachers have developed their own individual approaches to form drawing for the temperaments. A few indications were given by Rudolf Steiner to teachers who were asked to create their own forms. This was initially taken up by a few teachers, but not always satisfactorily. It has remained largely up to class teachers themselves to create suitable forms which work therapeutically, based on the teacher’s own insights.

This book provides a thorough step-by-step guide with many appropriate form-drawing exercises which will have a therapeutic, healing and harmonising effect on the children. Education can become a health-giving, positive and strengthening childhood experience when lessons are transformative and meaningful. It is hoped that this book will stimulate teachers and parents to look at children’s personalities with the temperaments in mind – and to feel confident that, if necessary, they can lend a helping hand.

## Chapter 2

# Overview of the Four Temperaments: How They Come About

row, pleasure, pain, sympathy, antipathy, likes or dislikes, we are responding to sensations with our astral body, which is connected to our soul. Our senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch convey outer impressions to us, and we respond in different ways. It is our astral body which is experiencing the sensation, and conveying it through our nervous system. We can love eating chocolate, crave for alcohol, feel elated by beautiful music, or dislike certain tastes and sounds. These desires and aversions, or likes and dislikes, are within our astral body.

Our ego (or 'I') is the part of us which makes us fully human. We move, think, speak; we have the capacity to cognise, and we have the consciousness of being human, of being ourselves. Each individual can say 'I', and is unique in this expression of him- or herself. It is a magical moment when young children start to say 'I'. Awareness of the self, the ego, is beginning to be expressed in the child's consciousness. The ego expresses itself physically in the circulation of the blood and its pulsation.

We experience good health and well-being when these four members of our constitution are in balance and in a healthy relationship with each other. We can become physically ill or one-sided in our personality if they are not balanced harmoniously.

### Family Influences

Every human being – regardless of when or where they are born, their gender, family line, linguistic or cultural influences – shares in a common humanity. We *all* have a physical body, an etheric body, an astral body and an ego, an 'I' (or that which we refer to when we say 'I am'). This creates the universal human being and gives humanity its common bond. However, we also bear the stamp or the imprint of our inherited family likenesses which pass on particular traits, especially into our physical constitution and appearance. We can be similar to our parents, relatives and siblings. Our bodily build, features and tendencies can all be recognised through a family stream passed on through the ancestral line. These inherited family characteristics may be weaker or stronger; they may even disappear for a time and then re-surface in a following generation, or in a distant cousin, for example.

Such pre-determined influences can be beneficial and helpful, or they can be problematic to health and well-being. Medical science is currently exploring this in the field of genetic research and its many applications in gene technology, medicine, biology, reproduction and health.

### The Individual

A further consideration is the uniqueness of every human being. Parents see that all too soon, a child exerts their own will, develops their own independent personality, preferences and talents. Parents can wonder at the strength of an individuality which they thought was 'their own', and realise that they need

to allow this unique individuality to become independent and to grow into who they really are. The journey from childhood into puberty, on through the teenage years and into adulthood, is a process whereby the individuality establishes itself over and above the line of inheritance, to express and to fulfil its own unique life and destiny.

- To summarise, then, we have:
1. the universal human, or humanity's shared characteristics
  2. influences from the family, or the inherited line
  3. the individual's uniqueness.

All of these combined contribute towards the temperament and its expression within the personality of every child and every person.

In Chapter 2 we will look at each temperament in detail, and consider the ways in which they can be recognised. We shall also see how it is possible to balance and harmonise the temperaments through a sensitive and sympathetic educational approach, in order to help a child gain balance and health in their personality and constitution.

How is it that we all have a temperament? Why are there four temperaments? What is it in us which creates and influences our temperament?

The dominance of different aspects of our constitution plays a significant role. The ***choleric*** individual is fiery, energetic and enthusiastic, tackling life's challenges and experiences 'head on' and full on. Their constitution comes under the influence of fire, of warmth, particularly in the warmth of the blood. The influence of the ego, the 'I am', is strong.

The ***sanguine*** child or person is optimistic, outgoing, talkative, quick-witted and changeable, even 'happy-go-lucky'. Their element is air, related to the lungs. The nervous system is influentially active, and the influence of the astral body is predominant.

By contrast the ***phlegmatic*** person is the quiet reliable 'plodder' working at their own pace, good humoured and not easily ruffled, conscientious and persevering. They have a watery quality which is connected to the glandular system. The influence of the ether, or life body, predominates.

The ***melancholic*** is solitary, introspective, and more inward looking, prone to be affected and saddened by difficult or tragic world-events. Their inner nature is related to the earth, and to the mineral skeleton. The influence of the physical body is strong.

Rudolf Steiner characterised the temperament as follows:

*The temperament stands in the middle between what we bring with us as individuals and what originates from the line of heredity.... The temperament balances the eternal with the transitory.... Of these two streams each human being is composed. We see on one side what has developed from the family line, and on the other what has developed from the individual's innermost being, namely a number of predispositions, characteristics, inner capacities and outer destiny.... This innermost being is the individual ego, which passes from one life to another.... Our eternal being, that which goes from incarnation to incarnation, expresses itself in each new life that it calls forth a reciprocal action among the four aspects of human nature – the ego, astral body, etheric body and physical body; and from the interaction of these four members, or aspects, arises the temperament.*<sup>2</sup>

In the next chapter we will look more deeply into these constitutional considerations and other aspects which influence the temperament.

<sup>2</sup> R. Steiner, *The Four Temperaments*, Anthroposophic Press, New York, 1980.

Is the child...

- passive and content – enjoying peace and quiet?
- self-contained?
- easy to get on with, and easy-going?
- slow to finish their work – taking their time to do things?
- not easily stimulated?
- enjoying eating – sometimes over-eating?
- moving slowly and deliberately?
- heavy in their body-build, or putting on weight?
- slow to respond to new situations, or answering questions?
- thinking things over carefully and quietly?
- not easily stressed or agitated?
- inwardly calm?
- working steadily and thoroughly?
- preferring to sit down and rest?

These are characteristics of the **phlegmatic** temperament.

Is the child...

- quiet and withdrawn, seeming to be in their own world?
- preferring their own company – solitary, self-occupied?
- saddened by situations – looking on the negative side?
- complaining that no-one likes them, that no-one really understands them?
- resentful?
- hesitating to join in with others?
- taking a long time to finish something, or not seeing the purpose of it at all?
- disinterested?
- readily absorbing sad stories or sad news?
- quietly and inwardly responding to hearing about something sad or tragic?
- sometimes gazing out of the window, or into the distance as though they would rather be somewhere else?
- drooping in their posture? Looking downwards when they sit or move?
- enjoying reading and often quietly reading a book?
- enjoying sweet food? (which they actually need)

These are the tendencies of the **melancholic** temperament.

It is important to remember that the temperament cannot be changed entirely. It is part of a child's personality and constitution, and as such is deeply entrenched. However, it can be modified and balanced in order to bring about a more-rounded, well-adjusted personality and approach to life.

## PART THREE

# Form-Drawing Exercises and Lessons



### Key Principle for the Choleric's Forms

The centre is strong and dominant and clearly defined.  
The outer form surrounds it harmoniously and contains it.

The choleric forms relate to the choleric temperament in the following ways:

- they contain a strong, intensive, central point or central area;
- the strong centre has an active quality which has an explosive, out-raying gesture;
- the colouring is active, lively and warm. All shades of red, orange, yellowish-orange and warm reddish violet are used. The colour red is active and comes towards us in colour perspective. Orange is warming and energetic;
- the dynamically active inner gestures become contained and quietened by the surrounding lines which are gentle and more flowing;
- the strong, potentially explosive inner form is pacified and held by the surrounding form.

Choleric children will feel that the strength and energy in these inner forms could 'burst its banks' and explode itself outwards from the centre, just as they can when they are angry, annoyed or frustrated. They will enjoy drawing the compacted centres, which are full of energy. They will probably draw them in an intensive and vigorous way with expressive, dynamic gestures and strong colouring.

### What they need to do

Choleric children can be encouraged to observe their drawings to see that the inner form is really contained and held by the outer. There needs to be an outer surrounding gesture strong enough to control and to stabilise the inner. It might take two or three outer gestures to do this, each one becoming a little more quiet and calm.

The *transforming principles* are:

- sharpness or pointedness becomes more rounded;
- aggressive becomes passive;
- bursting outwards becomes self-contained and held.

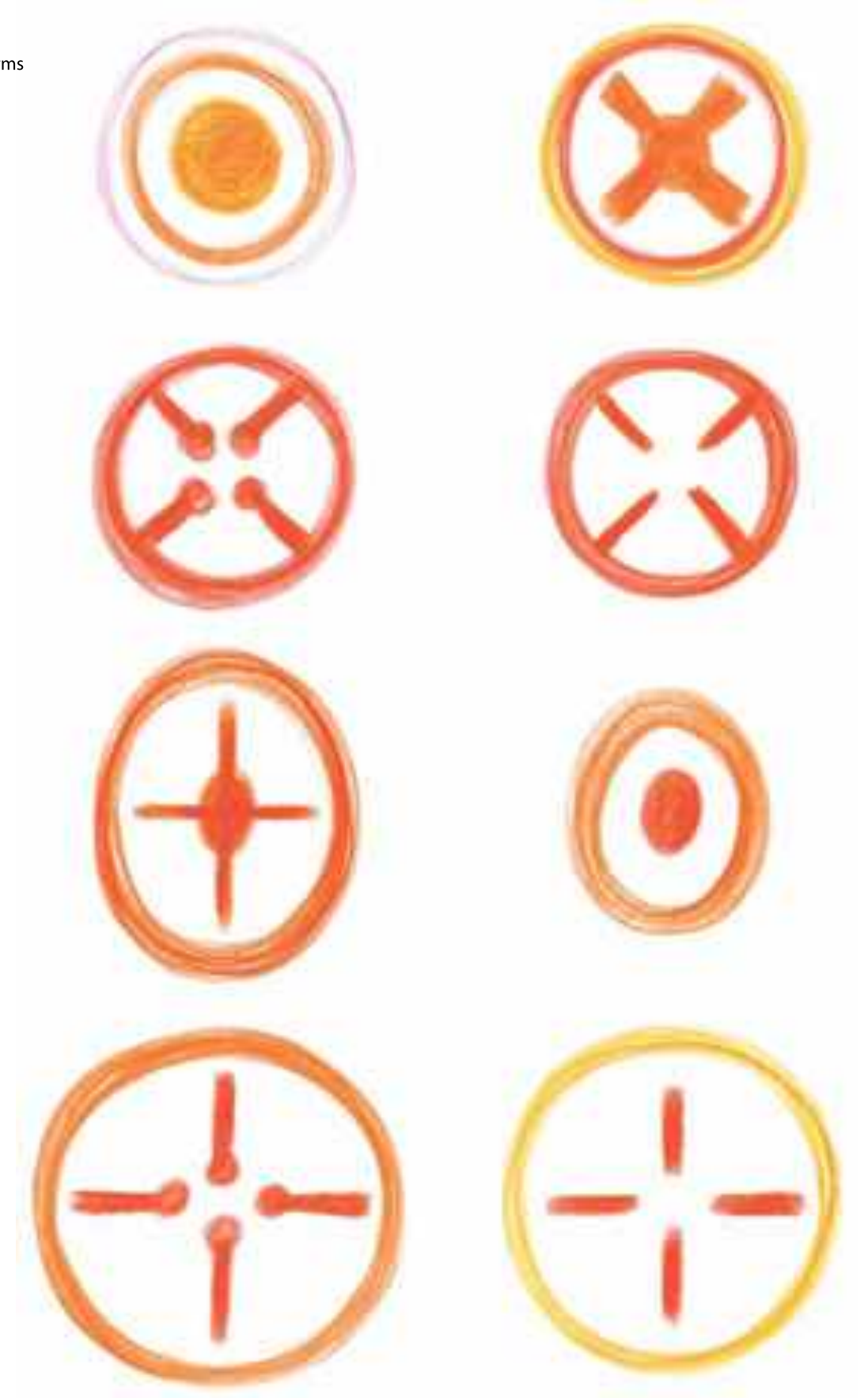
Cholerics will inwardly experience the step-by-step changes in their forms and will see the relationships between inner and outer quite easily.

The drawings will be very satisfying to them. Remember that the choleric children need to be challenged. If they finish their drawings too quickly, or find them too simple, then provide them with more difficult exercises so that they must work harder, make more effort, and accomplish something which will be more meaningful because it is more challenging. In being very focussed, they will learn self-control. Their work needs to be of a high standard and carefully drawn so that they themselves are fulfilled, satisfied and pleased with their own results.

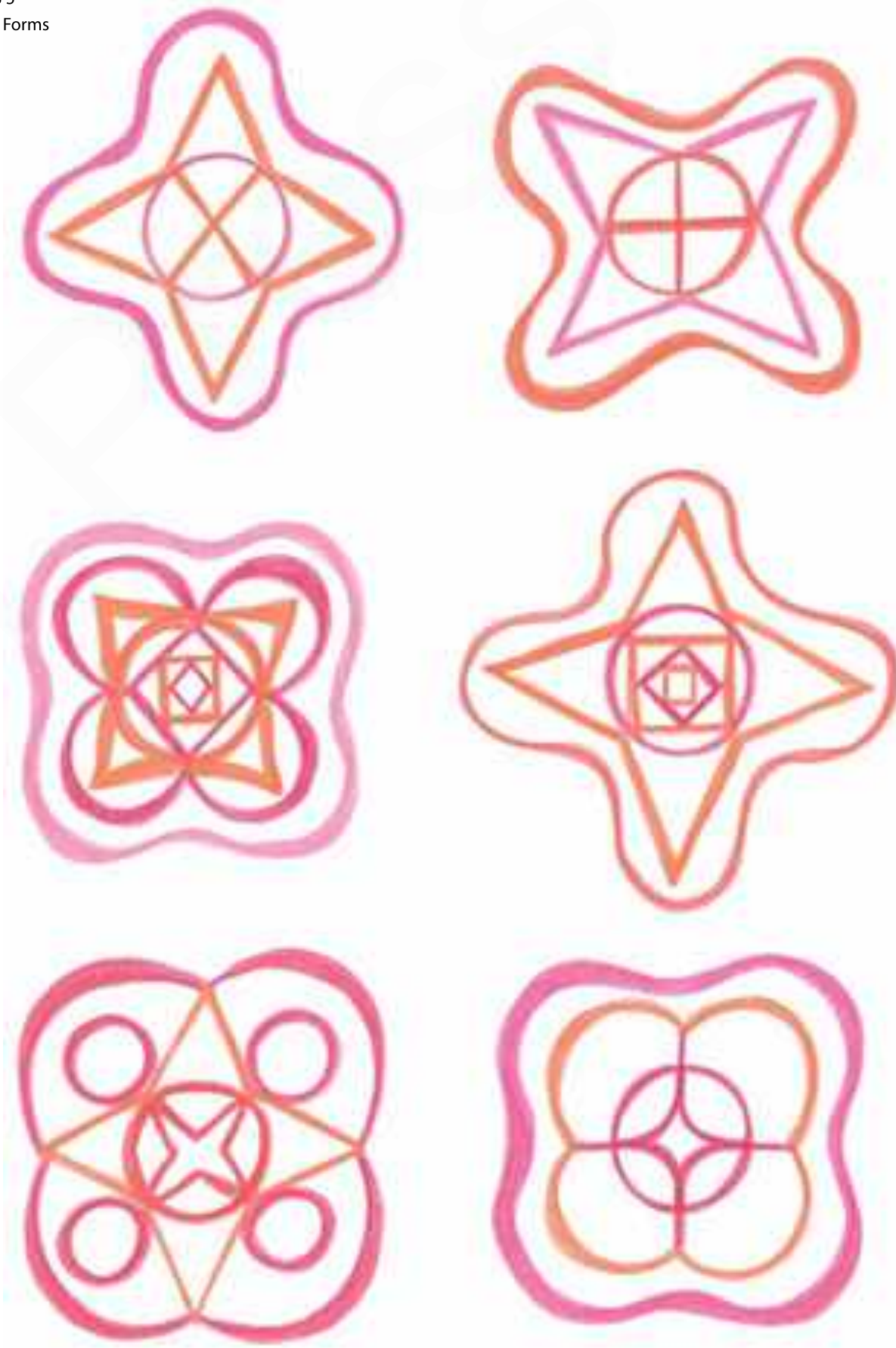
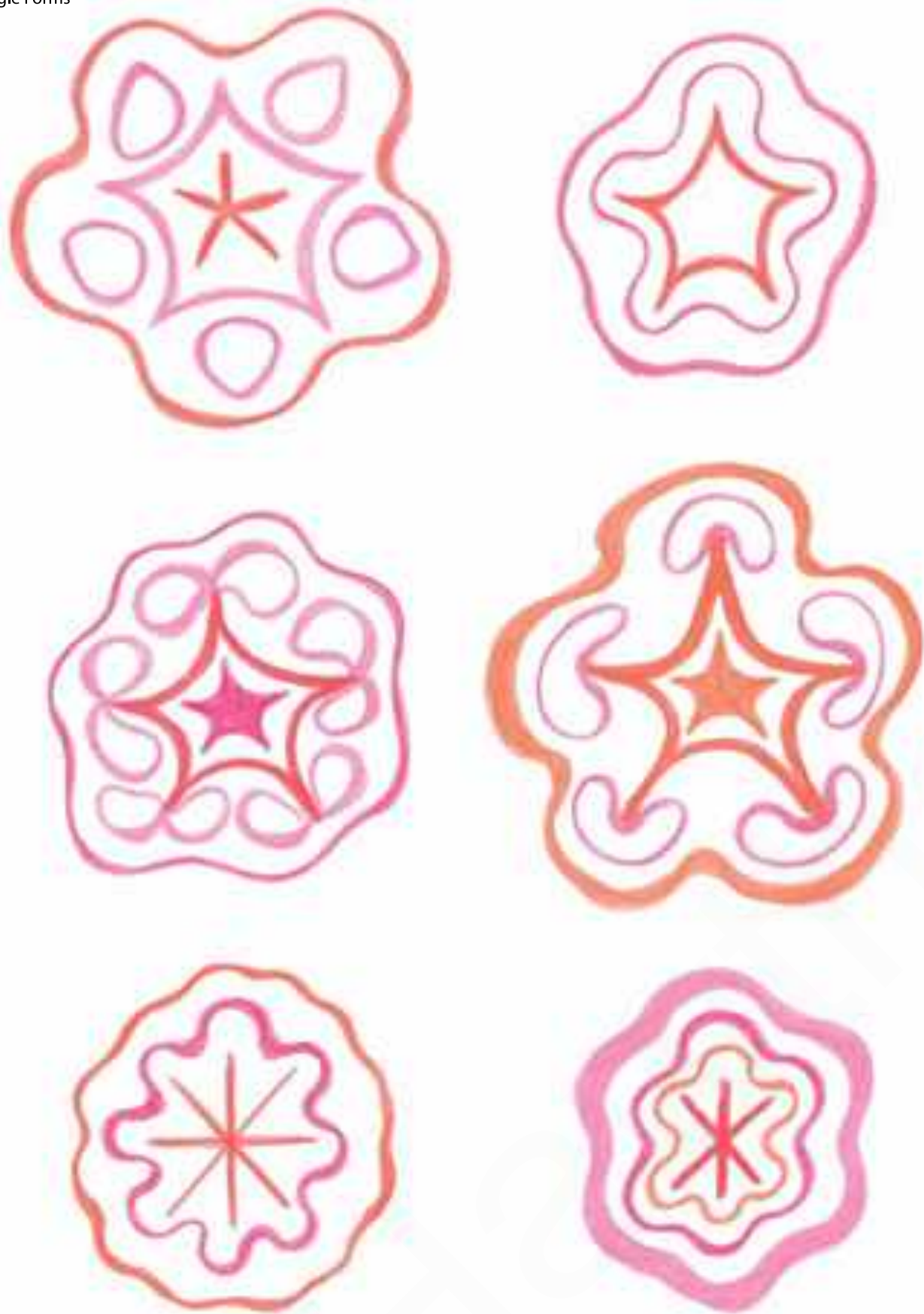
## Form Drawings for the Choleric Children

CLASS 1

Single Forms

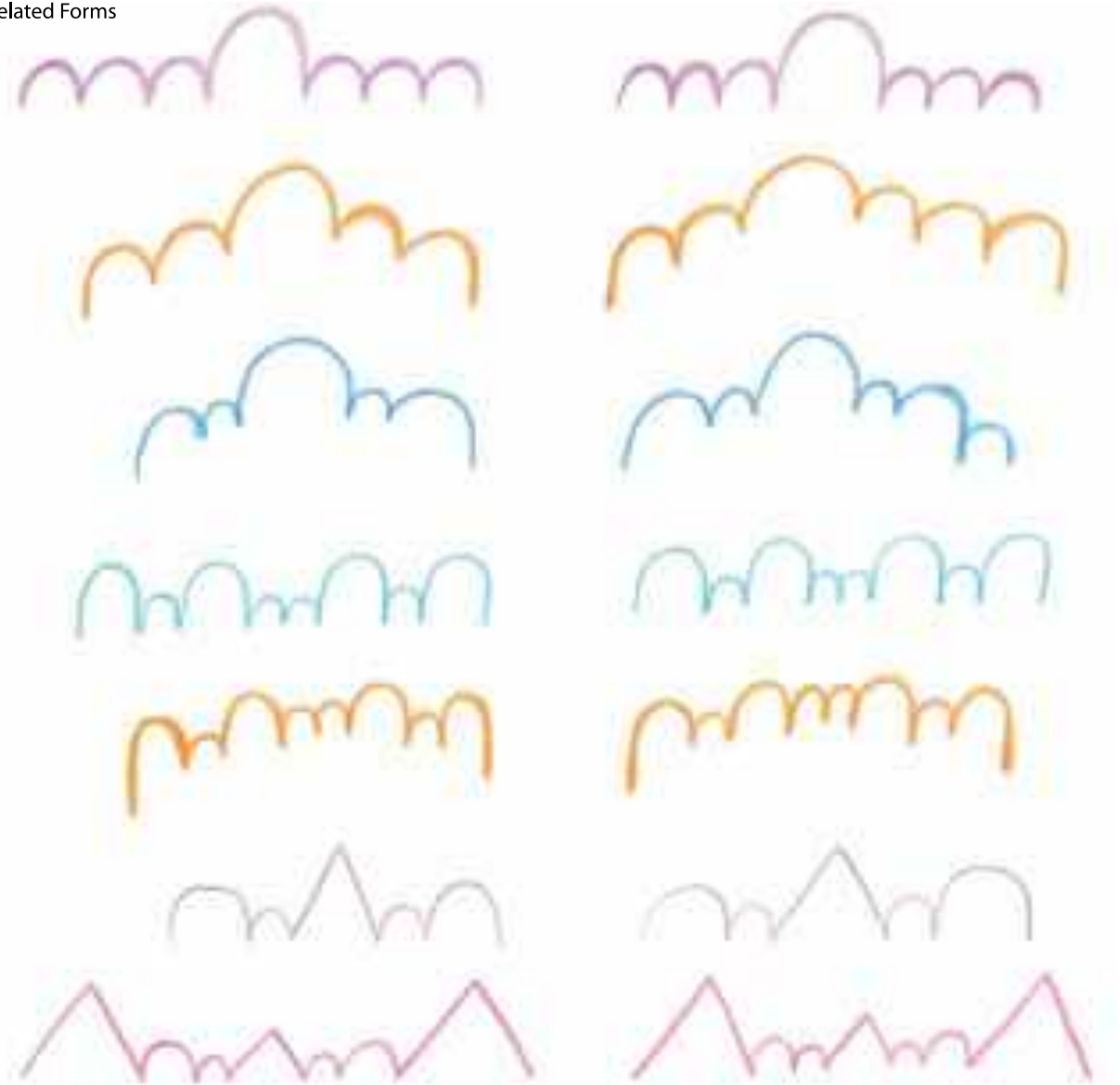






Form Drawings for the Sanguine Children

CLASS 1  
7 Pairs of Related Forms



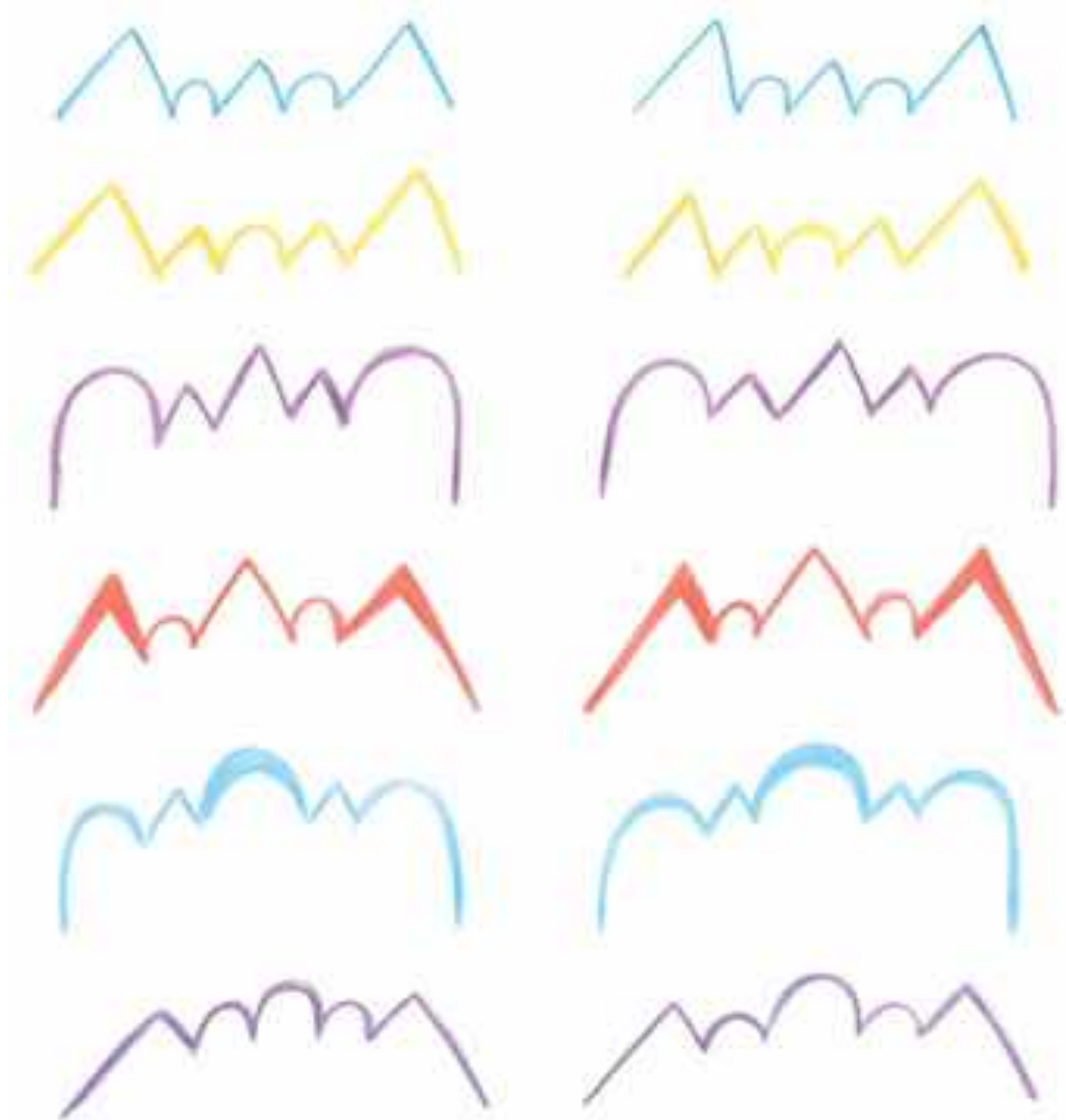
CLASS 1  
1 Sequence of 3 Forms



CLASS 1  
1 Sequence of 5 Forms



CLASS 1  
6 Pairs of Related Forms



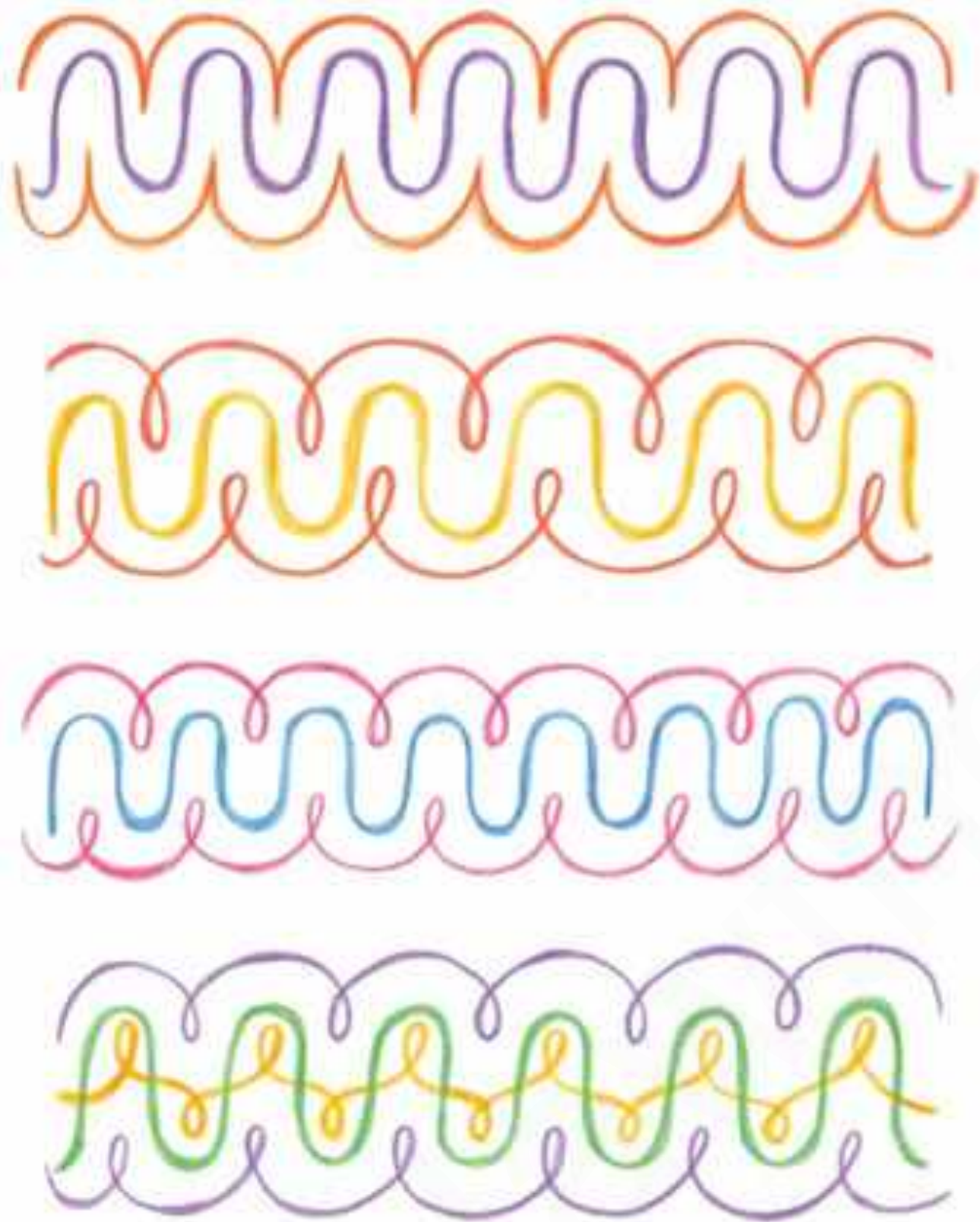
CLASS 1  
1 Sequence of 3 Forms





CLASS 4

Start all 4 forms with the central wavy line



CLASS 4

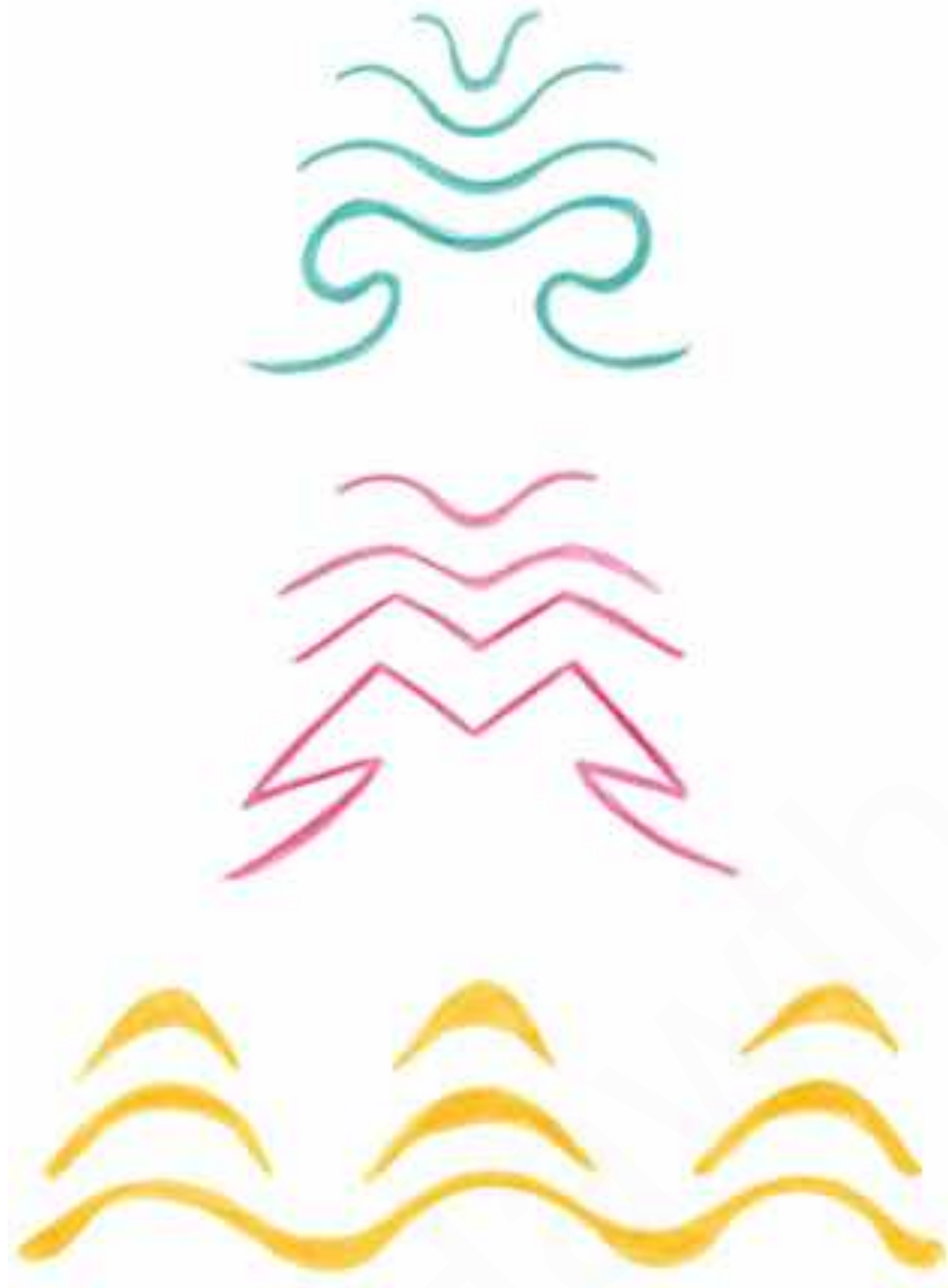
Start all 5 forms with the central wavy line





## CLASS 5

These forms can be drawn in two directions, from above to below, or from below to above. Try both ways!



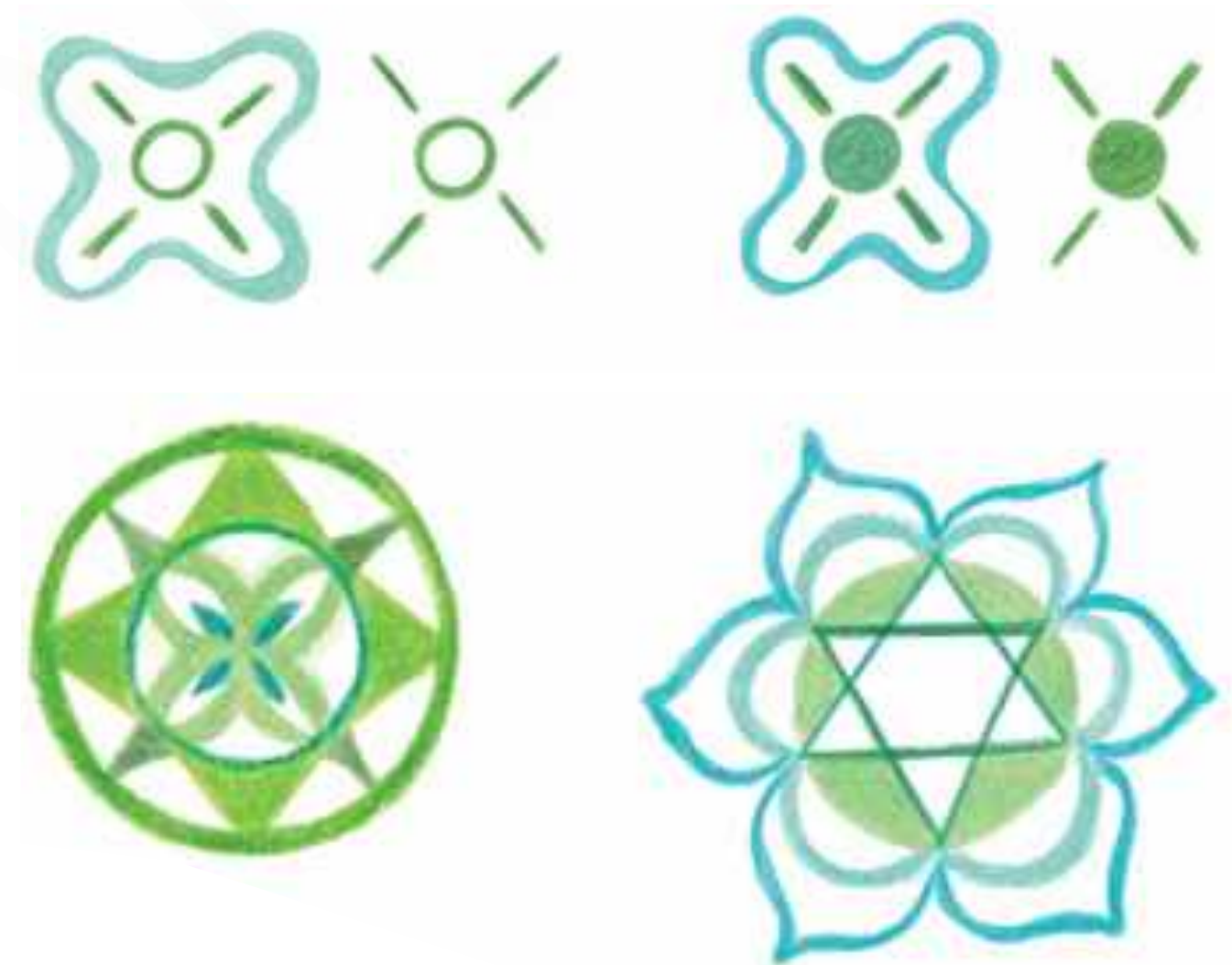
## Forms for Phlegmatic Children

These forms have an initial form surrounded by another. The form is drawn a second time without the surrounding structure so that the inner part of the form stands independently. The form then appears smaller and more compact. Phlegmatic children can be very comfortably contained within themselves, and feel that they don't really need to make an effort to do things.

They rely on their surroundings to support them, letting the quicker children do any tasks. In these forms the outer supports are removed so that the inner form needs to become more active and more awake. It no longer has its 'outer padding' and doesn't sit comfortably inside the large protective surrounding form. The inner form can appear to be vulnerable or exposed, so it needs to develop strength for itself.

### Key Principle for the Phlegmatics' Forms

The outer form disappears, leaving the inner form to stand independently and actively with its own strength.





Forms for the phlegmatic children relate to this temperament in the following way:

- a form is supported by its surroundings; when it is drawn again, it stands on its own;
- a form can seem comfortable and at rest, then it becomes awake and active when it is drawn alone;
- all shades of green are used, which gives a harmonious, restful atmosphere. Green is a passive colour but also stable and supporting;
- some of the forms are small inside, and have very large outer surroundings. In a series of two or three drawings, the surroundings diminish until the central form is exposed;
- the forms are balanced, restful and self-contained;
- the forms have a placid quality.

The phlegmatic children will enjoy spending a long time drawing and colouring their forms. They need to feel as though the surroundings support the centre at first, but in the second (or third) form, the centre stands independently. The phlegmatic children are easily carried by the whole class. They will prefer to sit back unobtrusively and let others ‘get on with it’. They are usually easy going and contented; however, they do need to develop inner strength and independence and not to rely too much on everyone else.

What they need to do

Phlegmatic children should spend a long time drawing and colouring their first forms, so that they become very involved in the surroundings. The contrast with the second or third form can be startling, and should be awakening for them. They might feel exposed within themselves as they identify with the exposed inner form having to ‘stand on its own’. As the forms become more complex, they must complete the whole exercise so that the therapeutic aspect is realised and revealed in the final form. Their drawings might be quite large, so they will need to plan beforehand how everything will fit on to the page.

The transforming principles are:

- appreciating harmony and balance in the surroundings but being able to stand independently;
- an awakening process is taking place as a form is simplified;
- an expansive, all-encompassing form seems to shrink and contract. It is no longer spreading itself out;
- the compact smaller form is condensed and has an actively independent quality.

Form Drawings for the Phlegmatic Children

CLASS 1

These forms are drawn in sequence. Always begin with the form on the left.

