Teacher Guide
Ray Bradbury
“The Gift”

PREVIEW

Suggested Lesson Procedure (Total Time: ~110 Minutes)

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1. Before Reading (~15 Minutes)

Tell students they will be doing a pre-reading strategy called Story Impressions. (Story Impressions is a pre-reading strategy widely used in literacy instruction because it activates background knowledge and improves engagement, comprehension, and text structure awareness.)

Students will look at words from the story and use them to predict what might happen. Have students write a one-paragraph story using all the words in the order they’re listed. If time allows, ask a few volunteers to read their paragraph aloud.

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2. Read the Short Story (~10 Minutes)

Students will read the full text of "The Gift." You may choose to read aloud as a class (my preference) or allow independent silent reading depending on your class.

3. Comprehension Check (~25 Minutes)

Students will answer the Reading Comprehension and Literary Analysis questions. Give students time to complete the questions independently to encourage close reading and critical thinking. After students have had time to work, review the questions as a full class, clarifying reasoning, citing textual evidence, and addressing any misconceptions that arise.

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4. After Reading Project (~60 Minutes)

Assign the After Reading creative task. Students will design their own Christmas tree made from inanimate objects. They will draw, color, and explain their tree design, including why they selected their pieces and what their tree represents. Students may use one of the provided templates if they choose, or they may work on a blank piece of paper if they prefer more creative freedom. They can also choose their own original title or use “My Tree” to title their project.

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Hang up final projects in your classroom. :)

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Name: Date:

Before Reading
Story Impressions

Write a short story (one paragraph) using all of the words in the left-hand column, in order. If you aren't sure what the word means, try your best to use it anyway.

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Words To Use	My Story
rocket ↓ tree ↓ season ↓ rules ↓ siren ↓ abandoned ↓ promised ↓ dark ↓ hand ↓ window ↓ space ↓ carols ↓ burning	

Name: Date:

"The Gift"
Reading Questions

Part 1: Answer the following questions in 1–2 complete sentences.

1. Why were the boy's parents worried at the beginning of the story?

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2. What happened at customs that upset the mother and father?

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3. Why did the father tell the boy to wait before looking out the porthole?

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4. What does the boy see when he finally looks out the porthole?

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5. Why might the stars be considered "ten billion, billion white and lovely candles"?

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Part 2: Answer the following questions in 2-3 complete sentences.

6. What is the central message or theme of the story?

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7. How does being in space change the meaning of Christmas in the story?

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8. How do the parents try to protect their son's happiness?

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9. How would the story be different if it were from the boy's point of view? How would it change the mood and tone?

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10. What makes something a meaningful gift?

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Create Your Own Christmas Tree

In Ray Bradbury's "The Gift," the parents transform the stars and space into a magical Christmas tree. In this activity, you will design a Christmas tree from something that is NOT actually a tree that is meaningful to you.

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Student Directions:

1) Choose one or more inanimate objects to build your "tree."

Examples: A pile of books, musical instruments, sports equipment, makeup, food, seashells, clothing, nature, everyday items, hobbies…

Before you start, check that you can answer "yes" to these statements:
✔ I like or care about the item.
✔ It represents something meaningful or symbolic.
✔ It will be fun and interesting to draw.

2) Design and draw your transformed "tree." Your tree should take the shape of a Christmas tree (triangle form) and symbolize who you are or something meaningful in your life.

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3) Color your page/pictures!

4) Write a short explanation (3–5 sentences) describing which object(s) you used, why you chose them, and what they represent.

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Create Your Own Christmas Tree Project

Category	4 — Outstanding	3 — Proficient	2 — Developing	1 — Needs Work
Creativity	Original and surprising idea; clear transformation from object to tree; great imagination.	Creative idea; clear transformation; shows imagination.	Some creativity; transformation is limited or unclear.	Minimal creativity; little attempt to transform object.
Symbolism & Meaning	Symbolism very thoughtful and clearly explained.	Symbolism present and makes sense.	Weak symbolism; explanation not clearly connected.	No symbolism or explanation.
Artwork Quality & Effort	Detailed, neat, and visually expressive; strong effort shown.	Neat and complete; clear effort.	Rushed or lacking detail.	Little to no effort.
Explanation Paragraph	3–5 well-written sentences; clearly explains choices and meaning.	Meets length; explanation clear.	Too short or unclear.	Missing or incomplete.
Following Directions	All directions followed thoroughly.	Most directions followed.	Some directions missed.	Many directions missed.

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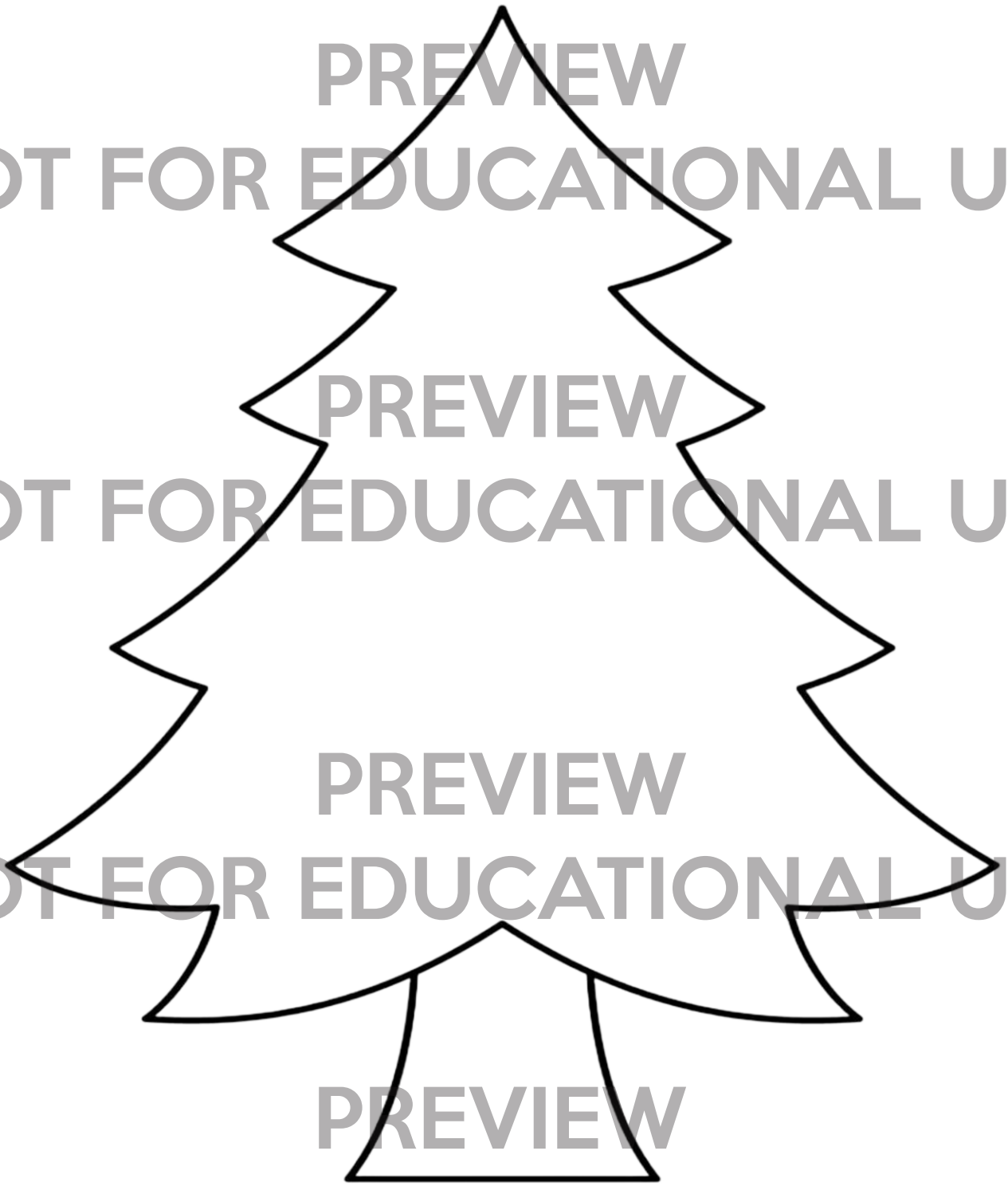

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My Tree

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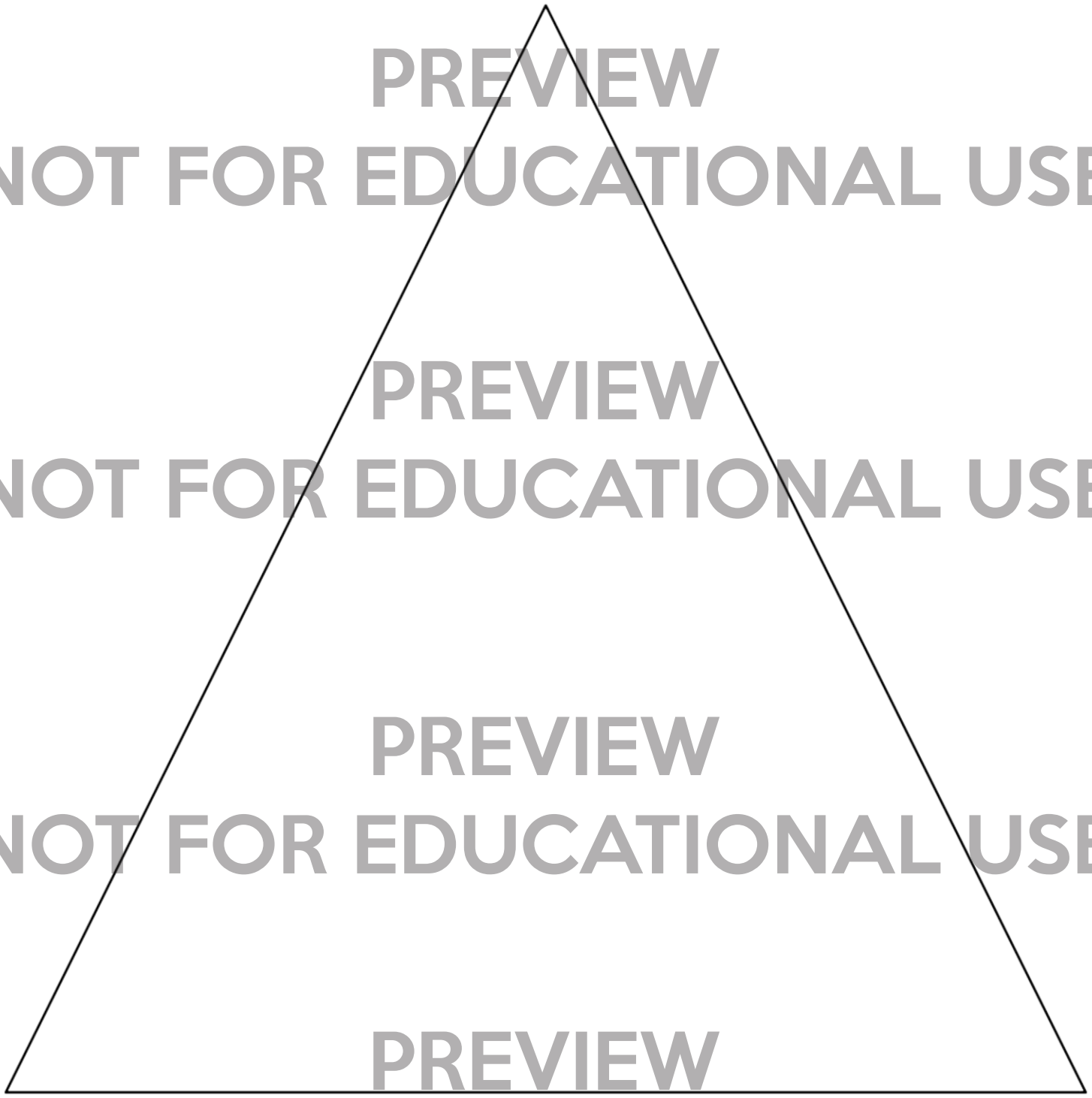

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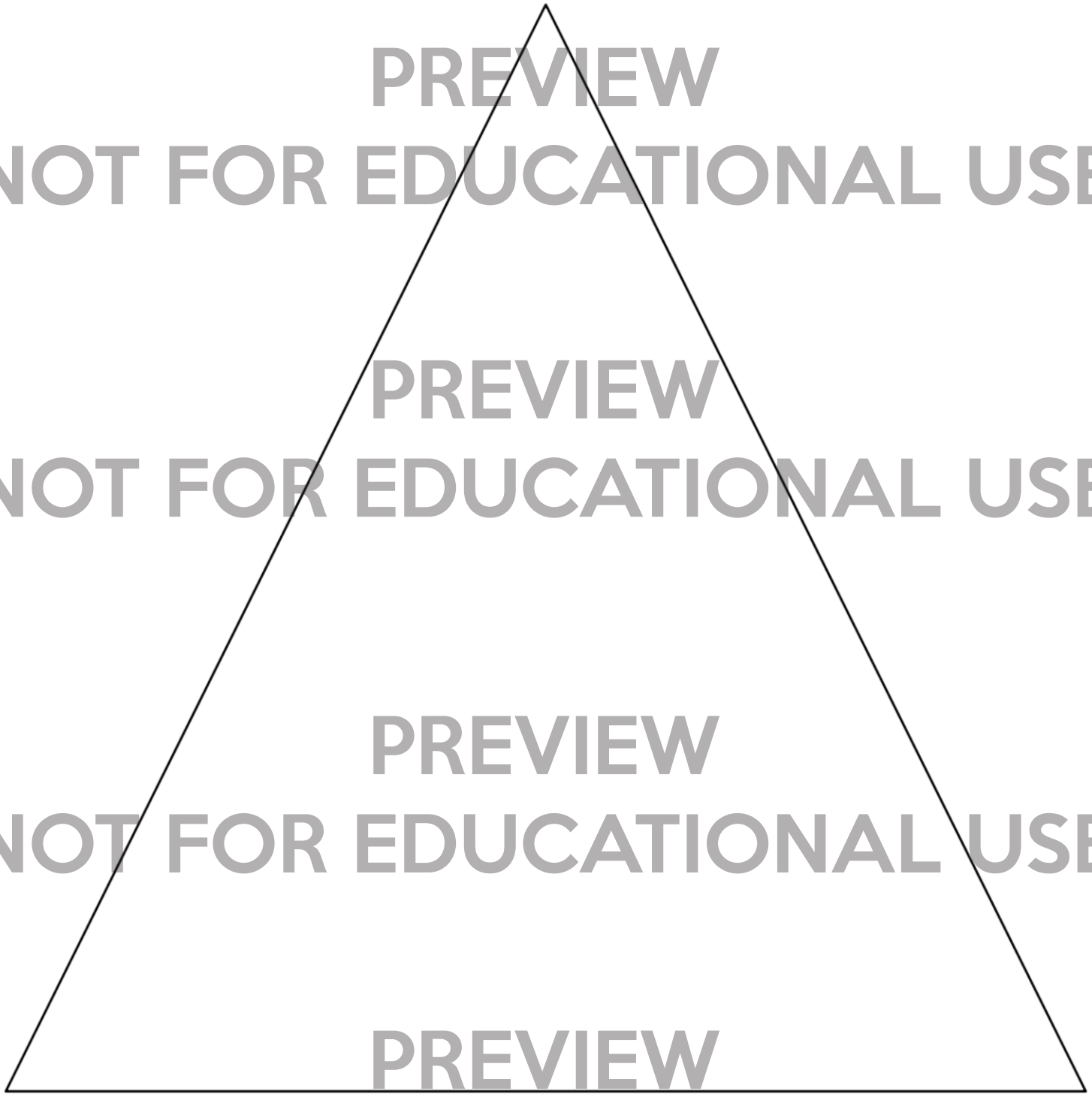

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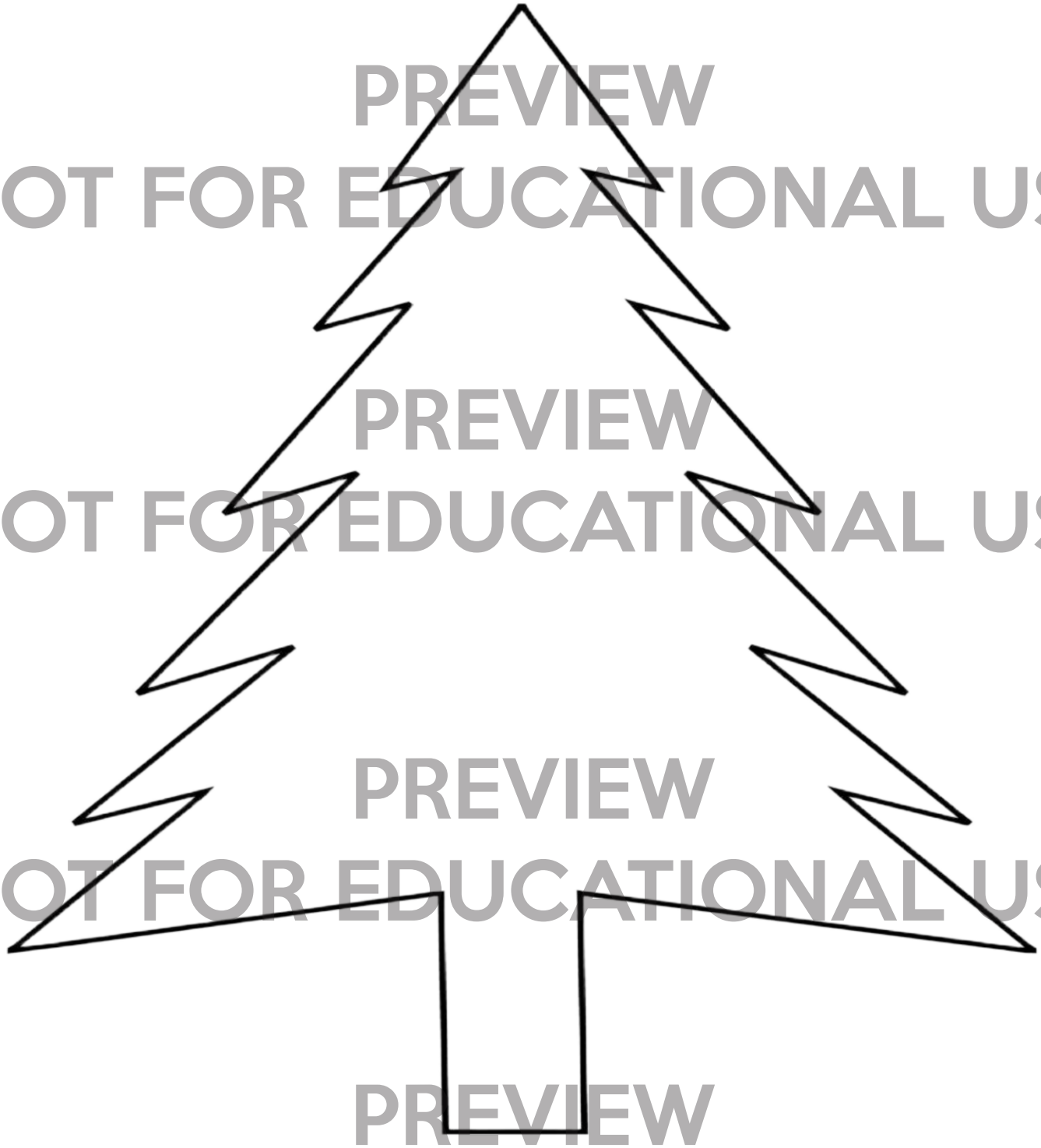

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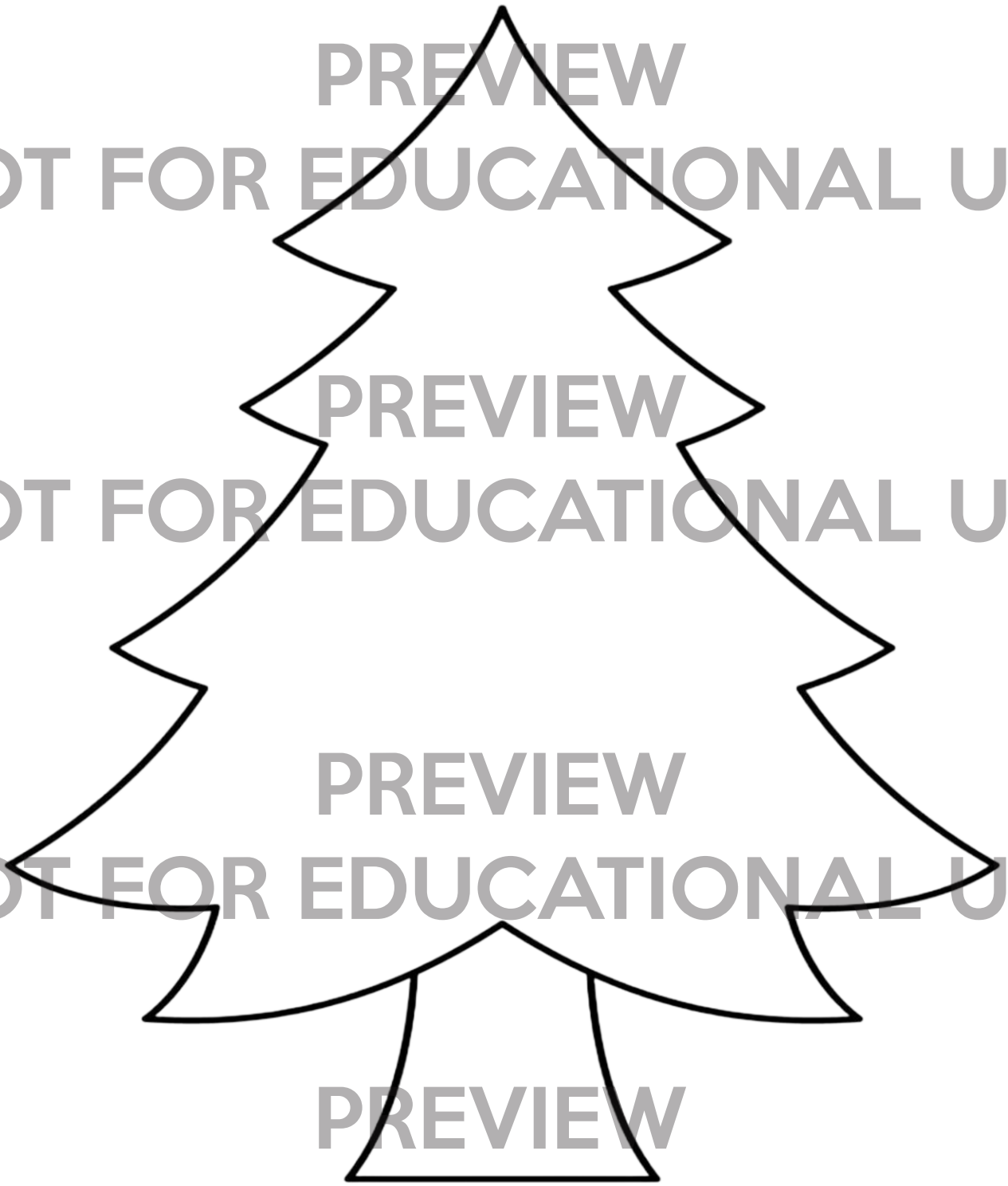

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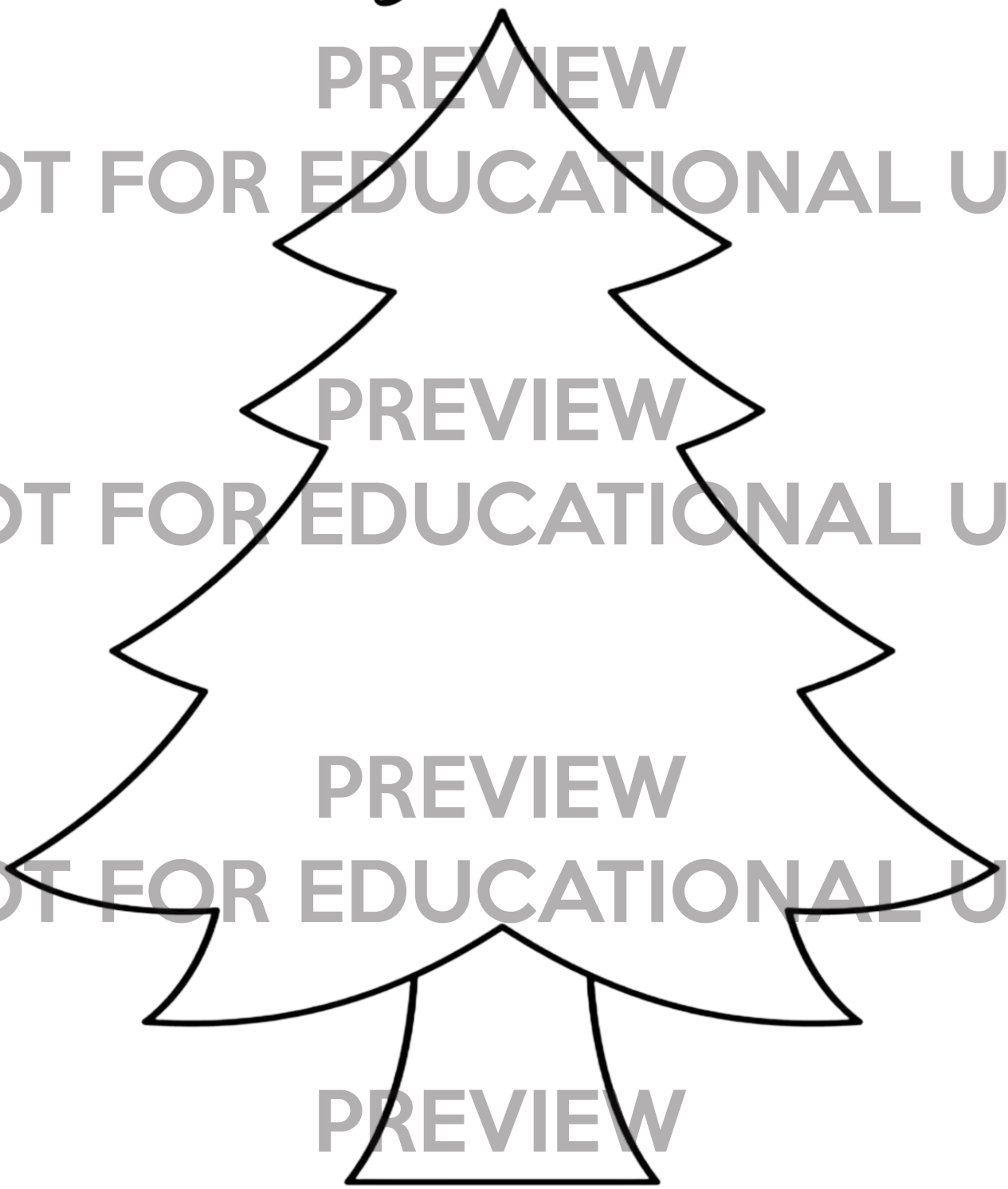

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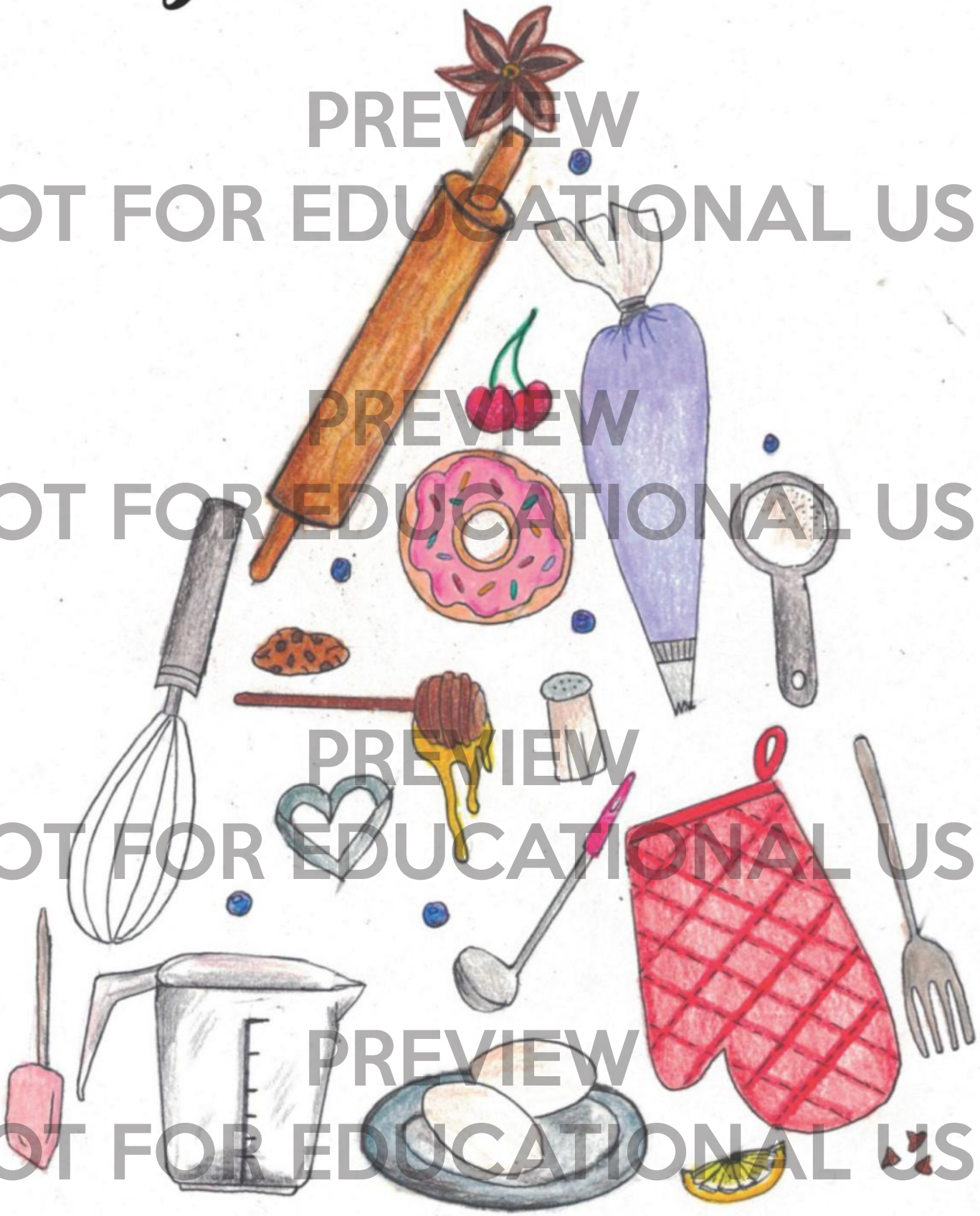
My Christmas Tree



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I chose baking items because I love to bake. Some items I included are: rolling pin piping bag, eggs, honey, and sugar. Baking desserts for my friends and family brings me joy. It's a hobby that helps me relax, and I can share with others.