



Detail: Mudfish



Detail: Faces

*Pendant Mask: lyoba*,  
16th century; Nigeria Edo Peoples, Court  
of Benin; Ivory, iron, copper (?); The  
Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial  
Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller,  
1972 (1978.412.323), Photo courtesy of  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



## *Honoring the King's Mother* *Exploring an African Mask from the Metropolitan Museum of Art*

### **Look Closely and Discuss:**

- Can you imitate the expression on her face?
- This is a mask made to honor the king's mother. Can you find her headdress?
- Find the fishlike creatures on the mask. They are mudfish, which live on both land and in water. Mudfish were a symbol for the king, who was thought to live in both the earthly and spiritual realms.
- Can you find the carvings of faces around the edge of the mask? They are faces of the people who sailed down the coast of Africa to trade with the people of Benin. Have you ever traded something with a friend?



### **Did you know?**

- ✓ The artist created this beautiful mask by carving ivory.
- ✓ An *Oba*, or king, in Benin, Nigeria would have worn the mask as a pendant around his neck, or on his hip.
- ✓ The face on the mask is the king's mother, or *lyoba*.

### **Explore further:**

#### **Masks and Masquerades**

With your child, recall a time that he or she has worn a mask or costume. Ask: When did you wear it? Why? How did it feel to wear the mask?

#### **Act It Out**

Encourage your child to role-play: Have your child imagine that he or she is a king or queen wearing this mask.

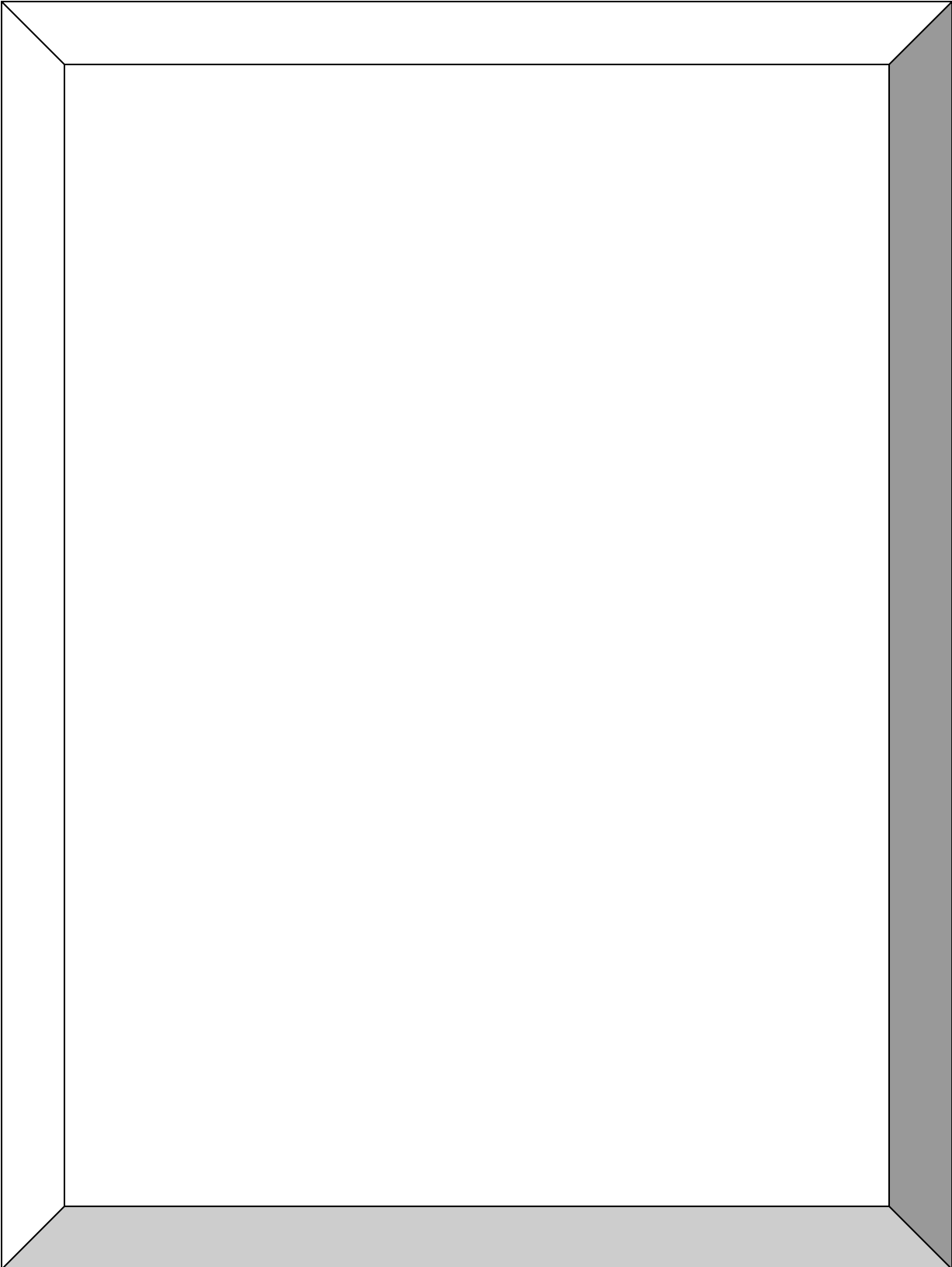
#### **Visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art with your Cool Culture Family Pass**

1000 Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street

(212) 535-7710 [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art offers a look at many different art forms from many different places. View ancient Egyptian mummies, Greek statues, African masks and much more. Children can wander through time and across the globe without ever leaving the city!

Who is special to you? Draw the face of one of your relatives or friends!



Why is that person special to you? Tell a story about him or her.