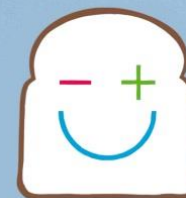


The  
Value  
of  
Zero



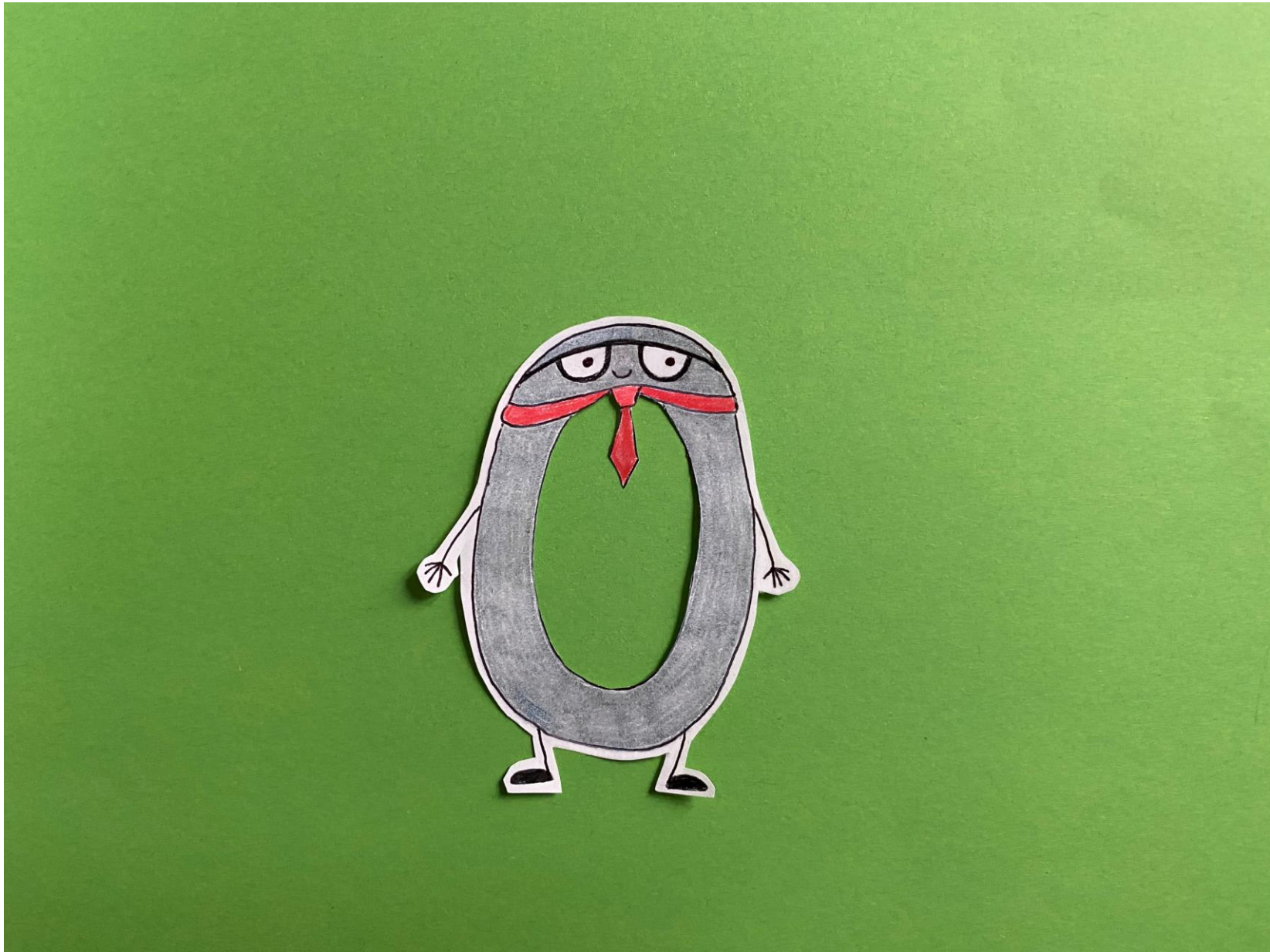
maths on toast  
the family maths charity



This is Number 1, Number Street... and Number 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.



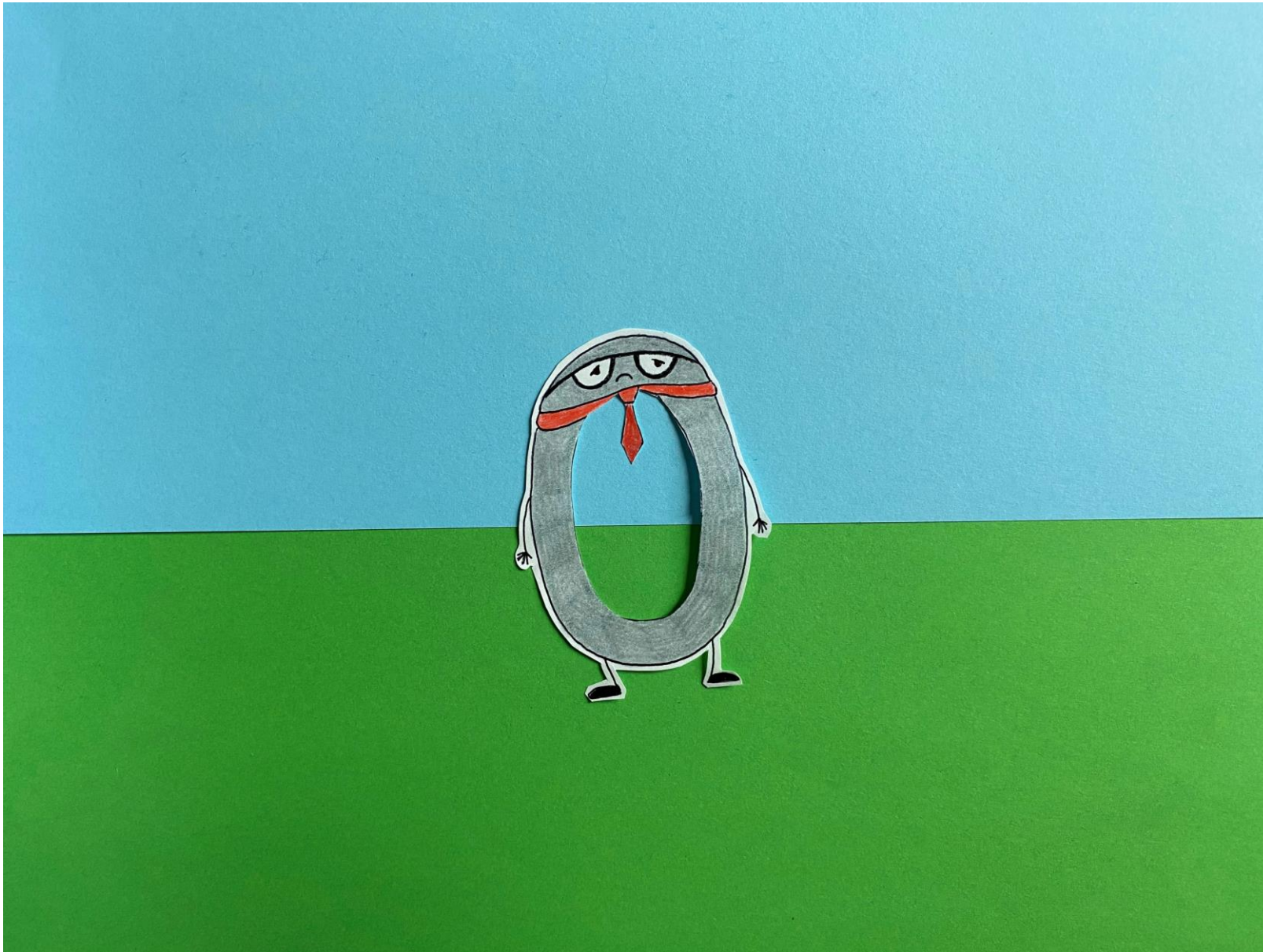
And here are the numbers that live there.



There is another number... Zero. But Zero never used to live on Number Street.

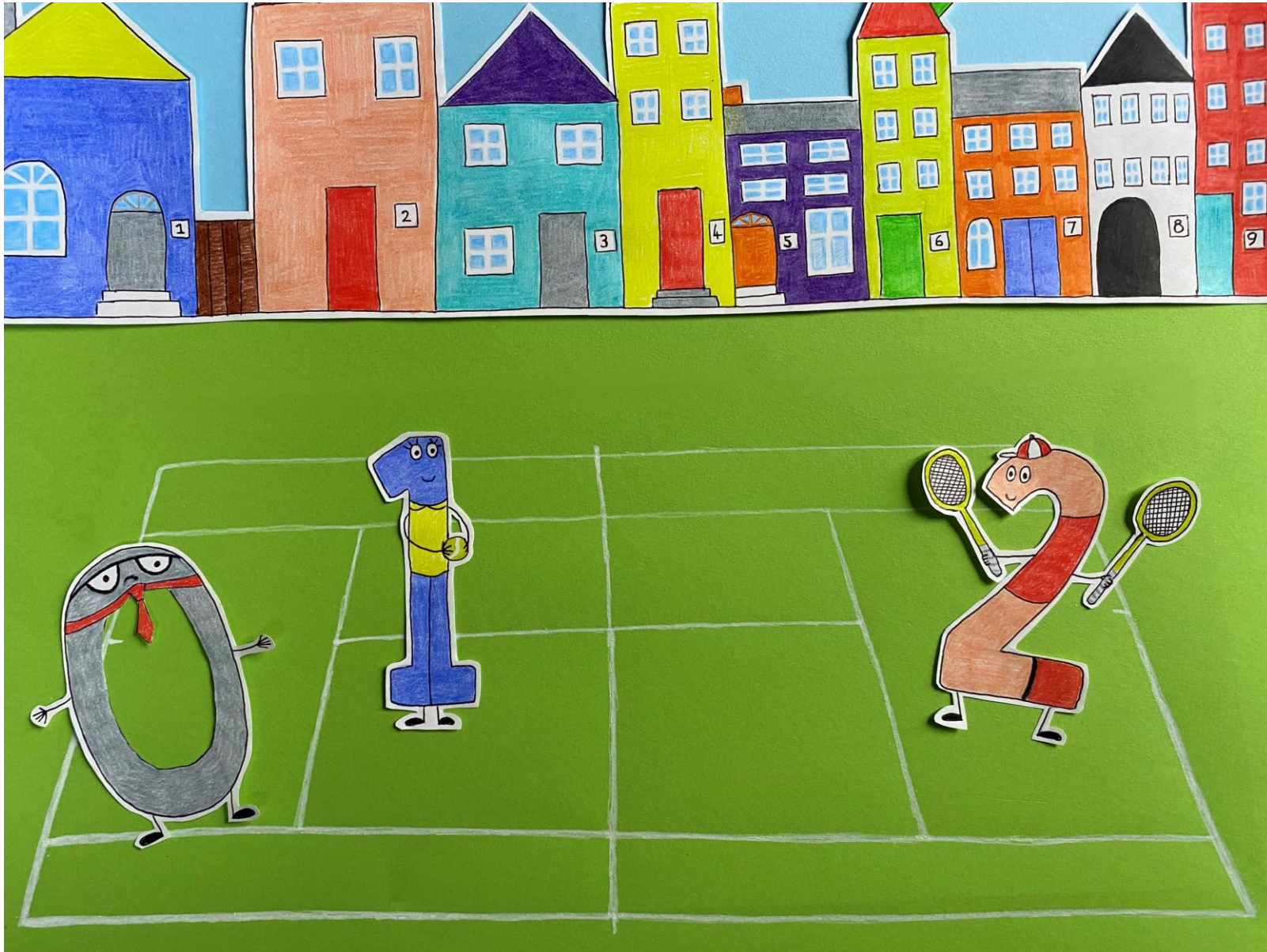


You see, zero is not a counting number – if there is nothing to count, how do you count it? So, there was just an empty space where his house should be.



Poor Zero may as well have been invisible. Zero had zero friends.

The other numbers wouldn't let Zero play with them. Zero added nothing to games.



Number 1 brought one ball, Number 2 brought two rackets, but Zero brought nothing.



Number 3 brought three hockey sticks, Number 6 brought six ice skates, Number 1 brought one puck but Zero brought nothing. So, Zero was not allowed to join in.

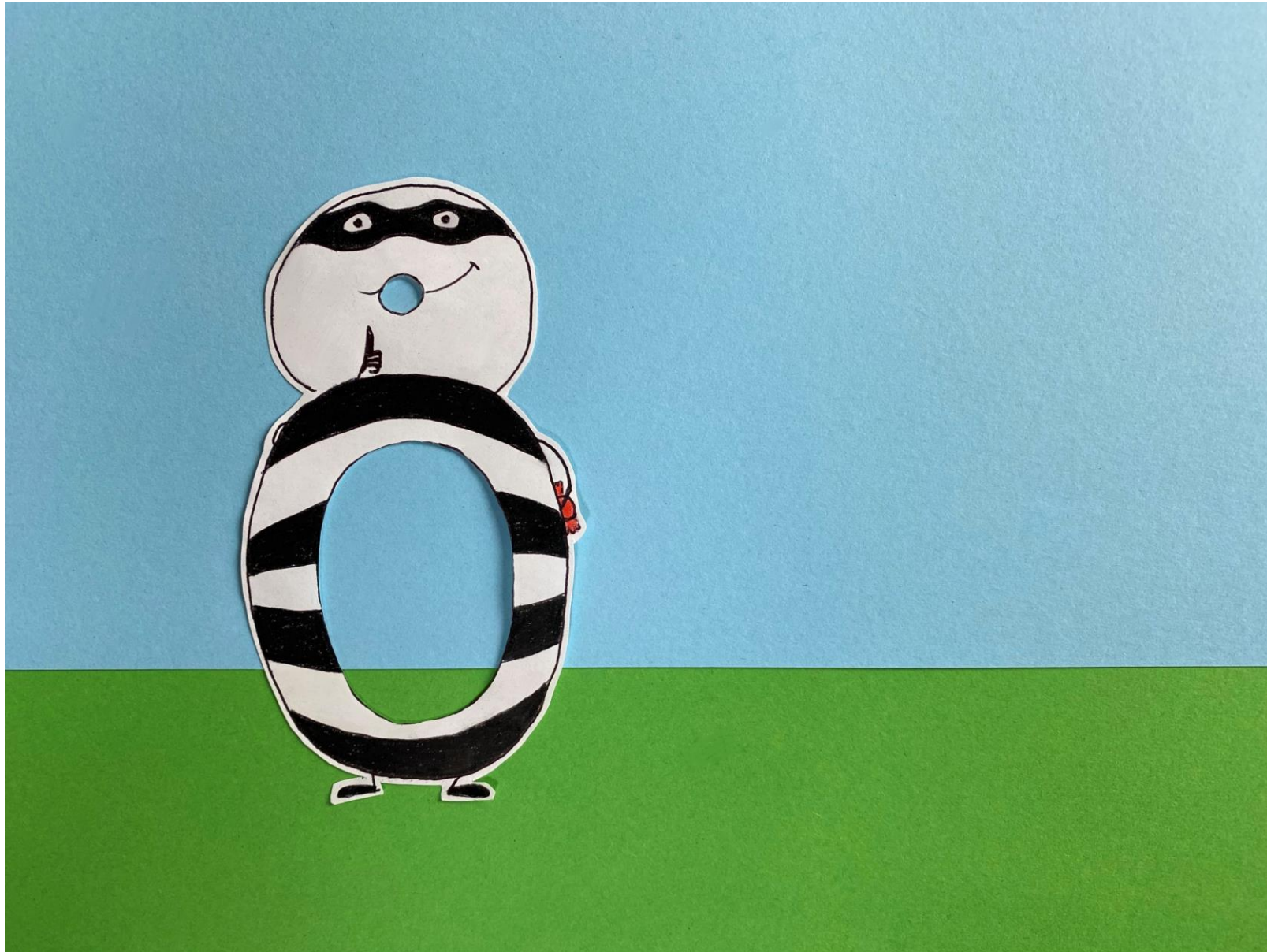




One sunny day the numbers decided to have a picnic. Of course Zero was not invited because he had nothing to bring.



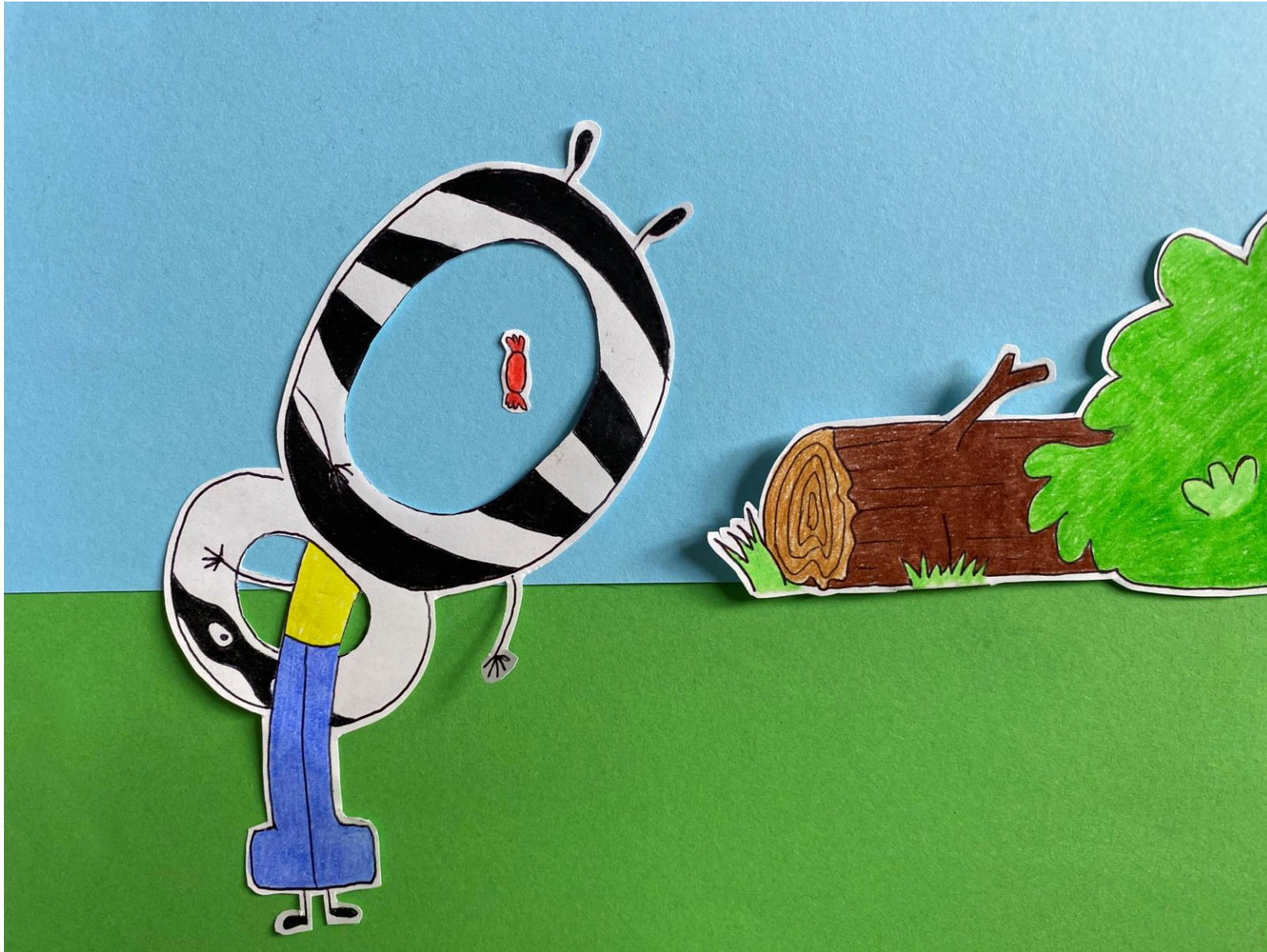
Poor Zero felt worthless as he watched the other numbers enjoying their picnic lunch together. They ate cheese sandwiches, crisps and apples, washed down with orange juice and were looking forward to number 8's sweets. But there were nine numbers and only eight sweets. Number 8 wasn't usually a kind number, he was rather mean and very greedy! In fact, he often ate everything in sight! The other numbers were surprised that he hadn't kept all of the sweets to himself but they could never have imagined what would happen next!



Number 8 suggested a game of hide and seek. He would hide the sweets for the other numbers to find and eat. One by one he hid the sweets and the other numbers began searching.



Number 1 was the first to find a sweet, but just as she was about to pick it up, Number 8 jumped out from behind a bush and guess what?

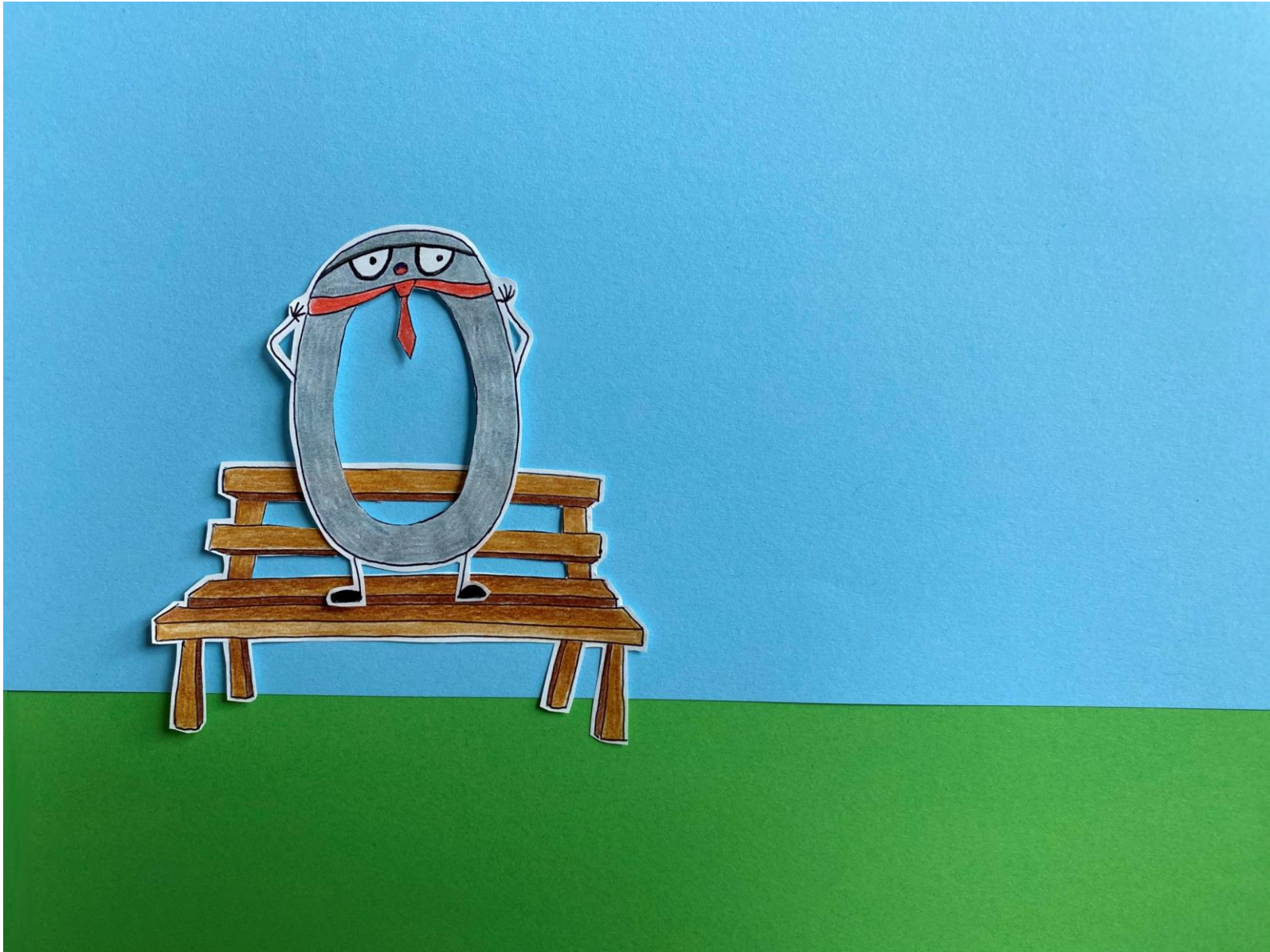


He pinched the sweet and gobbled it up.

And then..... He gobbled up Number 1!



He swallowed Number 2, gulped down Number 3, devoured Number 4, consumed Number 5, feasted on Number 6, munched Number 7 and was feeling very full indeed but managed to squeeze in Number 9.



Zero had been watching from a distance and knew he must do something to help. He ran over and shouted, "Greedy Number 8, let those numbers out now!"



Number 8 laughed, "What will you do about it? You are a nobody. There is nothing you can do!"





Zero thought for a moment. "I may not be worth anything on my own but I can change the value of other numbers!"



So as Number 8 was laughing, Zero jumped into his tummy and reached for Number 9's hand, turning her from 9 to 90 – a much larger number! A number far too big for Number 8 to swallow!



His tummy began to ache as it grew bigger and bigger until it was so enormous...



... it popped! And out flew all the numbers.

Zero was a hero!



The other numbers were so happy to be free but felt terrible for not letting Zero join in with their games so they thanked Zero by organising a special number party. The numbers learned a very important lesson that day, they learned that everybody is unique and nobody should be made to feel worthless.

And they all recognise the value of Zero.



Now Zero lives on Number Street...



... with all of his number friends.



Well, except for Number 8.



The end