**Good morning, Universe!**

It’s a clear day at NG Kids Space HQ and preparations are just about complete for your mission: to explore our solar system! Are you ready, cosmic cadets?

5... 4... 3... 2... 1... We have lift off!

**1. Mercury**
- **First stop is the planet Mercury**, the smallest of all the planets. It's covered with craters - the largest is 1,300km wide - and the planet's surface has extreme temperatures.
- **Cosmic fact**: It would be difficult to pack for a holiday on Mercury. During the day, temperatures can reach around 450°C, but at night they can drop to -170°C, making it one of the coldest planets in the solar system!

**2. Venus**
- **Your next stop? The brightest object in the sky apart from the Moon... Venus.** You see a thick layer of poisonous sulphuric acid clouds, which means there may be acid rain storms on the planet - ugh! But you’re amazed by the planet volcanoes and deep valleys covering its surface.
- **Cosmic fact**: Venus spins in the opposite direction to the other planets, except Uranus. Its surface temperature is around 480°C and is hot enough to melt lead! Did you know? Comets are made from ice and dust. Sometimes you can see their blazing tails streaking across the night sky.

**3. Earth**
- Did you know it takes a whole year for Earth to travel round the Sun, 149,600,000km away? Water covers most of the Earth’s surface - that’s why it looks blue from up here. Earth is the only planet where living things have been found... so far!
- **Cosmic fact**: Our Moon orbits Earth every 27 1/2 days and is our nearest neighbour in space!

**4. Mars**
- **Here you are at the red planet.** Looking at Mars you see blazing sandstorms and colossal craters. Mars has the largest volcano in our solar system - Olympus Mons, which is 27km high - three times the size of Mount Everest. What's that flying football outside your window? Check out the comet!
- **Cosmic fact**: The surface of Mars is red because of the iron oxide dust (like rust) that covers its surface.

**5. Ceres**
- It’s time to visit your first dwarf planet, Ceres. Why isn’t it known just as a planet, like the others? Because it doesn’t ‘clear’ the area around its orbit, although it still orbits the Sun and is almost round in shape. It would be great to visit, but it’s time to move on!

**6. Jupiter**
- **Wow! Look at the size of that planet.** It’s Jupiter – the largest of all the planets. It’s so big that more than 1,300 Earths could fit inside it! As you go past, you spot its 16 moons – the four largest were discovered by the astronomer Galileo in 1610.
- **Cosmic fact**: Jupiter’s famous Great Red Spot is a storm on the planet that started 340 years ago!

**7. Saturn**
- **You’re over Saturn now, the second largest of the planets.** You’re so close to its famous rings that you notice they’re made of rock and ice. This planet is visible to the naked eye for around 10 months of the year. Suddenly there’s a blinding light. You duck down and close your eyes. It must be a supernova – an exploding star!
- **Cosmic fact**: Saturn is 855 times bigger than Earth!

**8. Uranus**
- **Next on your journey you see a planet that seems to have been knocked over – it’s Uranus!** Scientists think a giant space rock may have pushed it on its side. Uranus takes 84 years to orbit the Sun, and its four seasons each last for 21 years!
- **Cosmic fact**: The planet has lots going on! Huge storms are going by at speeds of 1,200kmph! Some of the storms last for 21 years, then fade away. There are six known rings and 13 moons around Neptune. This planet has lots going on!

**9. Neptune**
- **You race on to Neptune – Triton, and spouting geysers on its surface throw up dark material 8km into the air – better watch out!**
- **Did you know? Some of the storms last for a few years, then fade away. There are six known rings and 13 moons around Neptune. This planet has lots going on!**

**10. Pluto**
- **You’ve arrived at Pluto, which used to be known as a planet, but not now.** Because its orbit overlapped with Neptune’s, poor Pluto was stripped of its title. It’s the second largest dwarf planet in our solar system. It’s now known as a dwarf planet, along with Ceres and Eris (Xena). It’s also the snowiest planet we know!
- **Cosmic fact**: Pluto has five known moons - Charon, Styx, Nix, Kerberos and Hydra.

**11. Eris (Xena)**
- **You leave Pluto behind and zoom on to your last destination, Eris – the largest dwarf planet in our solar system.** Eris is the most distant known object from the Sun. It has taken a while to get here, but the journey was worth it, wasn’t it?

Planets are not shown to scale.

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"Here’s a new way of remembering the names of all the planets, and the dwarf planets, too!"

**MY VERY EDUCATED MOTHER CLEARLY JUST SHOWED US NEW PLANETS – EXCELLENT!**