

Milo Imagines the World

Audience Guide



Milo

Imagines the World

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



Summary.....	p.3
Content Advisories.....	p.4
Behind the Scenes.....	p.5
ACTIVITY Your Favorite Day.....	p.7
ACTIVITY Milo Imagines a Crossword Puzzle.....	p.8
ACTIVITY Double Sided.....	p.9
ACTIVITY Affirmation Power-Up!.....	p.10
ACTIVITY Performance Detective Challenge.....	p.12
Heading to CTC.....	p.13

At CTC, our mission is to create extraordinary theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire young people and their communities. This Audience Guide is just one of the ways in which we aim to enhance your experience and further your engagement with the shows on stage.

It includes a synopsis, context, fun facts, and activities plus details that can help you decide what's right for your kids.

If you have any further questions, please contact our friendly Ticket Office Associates at 612.874.0400 during their regular business hours or email them at tickets@childrenstheatre.org.



Summary

The musical *Milo Imagines the World* centers on a young boy, Milo, who uses his vivid imagination and artistic talent to navigate the challenges of his life. Alongside his teenage sister Adrienne, Milo embarks on a typical Sunday morning routine filled with sibling banter, bustling city scenes, and moments of personal reflection.

Key Plot Points:

- 1. Setting and Milo's Imagination:** The story begins in Plainsville, a bland, fictionalized setting Milo invents. His drawings bring his imagination to life, transforming mundane situations into fantastical ones—giant dinosaurs, heroic Superwoman rescues, and whimsical characters all come alive in his artistic world.
- 2. Sibling Dynamic:** Milo and Adrienne's relationship drives much of the emotional core. Adrienne takes care of Milo but often grows frustrated with his daydreaming, while Milo feels unappreciated. Their interactions blend humor and tension, capturing a realistic sibling relationship.
- 3. The Sunday Routine:** As Milo and Adrienne ride the subway to an unspecified destination, Milo observes the people around him and creates imagined backstories for them. He draws characters like Superwoman to help solve their problems, showcasing his creativity as a tool for understanding others.
- 4. Milo's Inner Journey:** Through his art, Milo explores themes of identity and self-worth. He envies the lives of others, particularly a well-dressed boy on the train who appears to have a perfect life and wonders why his own life feels less significant.
- 5. Conflict and Resolution:** Milo's desire for acknowledgment and Adrienne's stress lead to an emotional conflict. Milo feels dismissed and runs away, leaving Adrienne panicked. This sequence highlights their deep bond, as Adrienne's frantic search for Milo underscores her care for him.
- 6. Reflections and Growth:** The play culminates in Milo's realization that his art is a way to connect with others and express himself. Adrienne, too, recognizes the importance of Milo's creativity and their relationship deepens as they reconcile.

Milo Imagines the World combines humor, music, and heartfelt moments to create a compelling story about family, imagination, and the transformative power of art.





Language: 2 out of 5 stars ★★☆☆☆

Milo and his sister argue, exchanging hurtful names, and Milo shouts, “I hate you!” at her.

Themes and Situations: 1 out of 5 stars ★☆☆☆☆

Milo and his sister are on their way to visit their mom who is incarcerated. This is revealed towards the end of the story. Their mom is very kind and loving, and we learn the siblings visit her in prison every Sunday.

Violence and Scariness: 2 out of 5 stars ★★☆☆☆

There are several moments of cartoon-style action between creatures and characters in Milo’s imagination. A character’s pet bird dies. The subway that Milo and Adrienne ride goes through the “Scary tunnel,” which is dark and has strange sounds.

Sensory Advisories: 1 out of 5 stars ★☆☆☆☆

Musical numbers can be loud and some sound effects are jarring. Milo’s imagination and feelings are portrayed through stage magic. Lighting moves quickly from dark to bright and some stage effects such as fog, dry ice, and haze may be used. CTC offers sensory friendly performances for each production. [Click here for the dates.](#)

Potentially Anxious Moments: 3 out of 5 stars ★★★☆☆

Milo’s mom is incarcerated. Milo’s big sister Adrienne can sometimes get frustrated and impatient with him, but they always make up. At one point, Milo gets so frustrated with Adrienne that he runs away and is by himself in the train station; Adrienne finds him.

Please contact our ticket office with any questions at tickets@childrenstheatre.org or 612.874.0400.





The Team Bringing *Milo Imagines the World* to the Stage

“I fell in love with *Milo Imagines the World* from the second I read it, and I can’t wait to bring this incredible (and vital) story of resilience and love to CTC audiences.”

- Terry Guest, *Milo Imagines the World* bookwriter



“I can’t express enough now much I’ve enjoyed this creative process with a team that cares so deeply about the integrity of one boy’s story and imagination. All I can say is,

What if there was a show that could make you feel all the greatest emotions possible? What if I told you, there are mysteries and adventures and fantastical things to be expected from *Milo Imagines the World*! ”

-Christian Albright, *Milo Imagines the World* songwriter

“I’m so excited to bring this story to life on stage. There are many children who live a life similar to Milo’s, and we look forward to giving them the opportunity to see themselves in him—and to truly appreciate the power of their own imagination.”

- Christian Magby, *Milo Imagines the World* songwriter





A Rolling World Premiere Production

Milo Imagines the World at Children’s Theatre Company is a rolling world premiere production. Co-commissioned with Chicago Children’s Theatre and The Rose Theater, the musical is an adaptation of the 2021 picture book by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson. The picture book is a 2015 recipient of the Stonewall Book Award for Books in Children’s and Young Adult Literature.

In a “rolling” world premiere several theatres agree to each produce a new work with the opportunity for the creators to make revisions between each one. The Chicago Children’s Theatre was the first to produce *Milo Imagines the World* in October and November of 2024. CTC will be the second, and The Rose Theater in Nebraska’s production will open just a couple weeks after CTC’s closes.

New York City Subway

Milo Imagines the World takes place mostly on the New York City subway. Think about what you might see, smell, or feel if you were riding the subway and transferring in a busy station. Consider watching the first three minutes or so of this video before attending the show: [New York City Subway—Sounds and People](#). What are your observations? How would traveling through the subway system make you feel? Excited? Nervous? Adventurous? Scared?



Your Favorite Day

In *Milo Imagines the World*, Sunday is Milo's favorite day because he gets to spend it with his mom and sister, sharing special moments like eating ice cream together.

Now, it's your turn to imagine your favorite day!

1. Close your eyes and picture it—what's happening?
2. Who's there with you? Family, friends, maybe even a pet?
3. What are you all doing? Is there a special activity or a treat that makes the day even better?
4. Think about your feelings:
 - How do you feel before this day begins? Excited, happy, or maybe curious?
 - How do you feel during this favorite moment? Warm, joyful, or peaceful?

Once you've imagined it, you can write about it, draw it, or even share it with someone! Just like Milo uses his imagination to see and understand the world, you can use yours to celebrate the moments that mean the most to you.

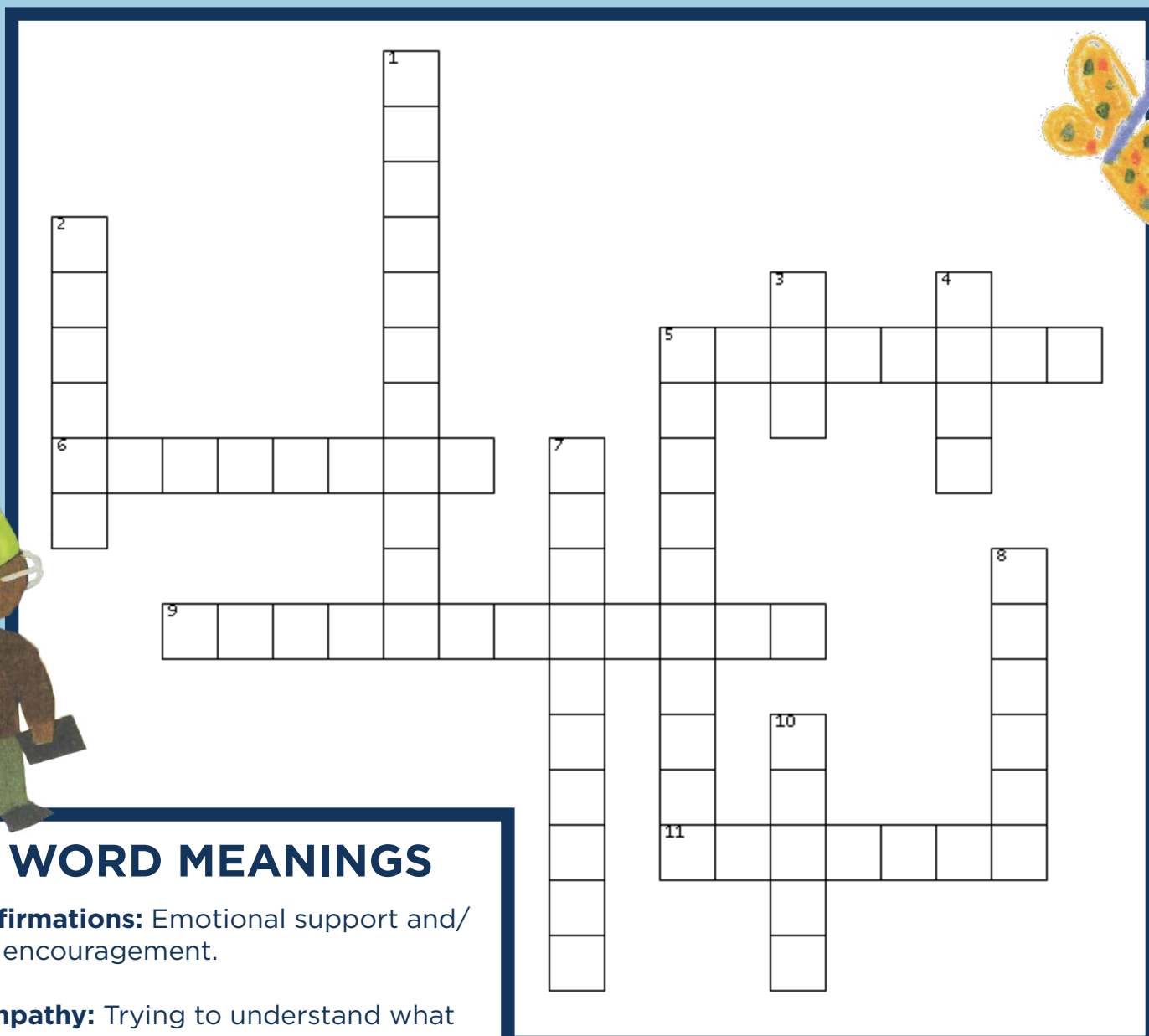
**Share your thoughts
or a drawing!**



ACTIVITY

Milo Imagines a Crossword Puzzle

Step into Milo's world of creativity and imagination! Choose from among the words below to complete the crossword puzzle (not all words will be used), fitting them together just like Milo pieces together his thoughts and sketches to make sense of the world.



WORD MEANINGS

Affirmations: Emotional support and/or encouragement.

Empathy: Trying to understand what someone feels or is going through from their personal point of view and taking action to help.

Soothing: A gentle and calming effect.

Stereotype: A simple idea that many people believe about a large group of people that is not true for everyone in that group.

Tepid: Showing little enthusiasm.

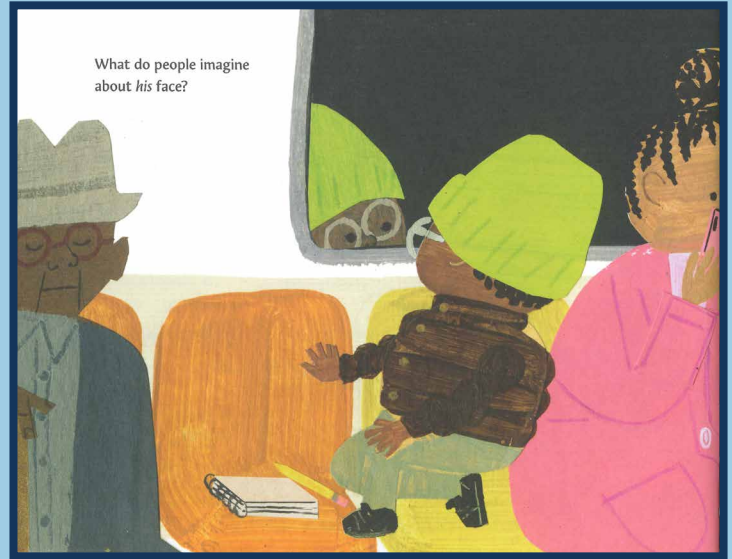
WORD LIST

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| ADRIENNE | SKETCHBOOK |
| AFFIRMATIONS | SOOTHING |
| BREAKDANCER | STEREOTYPE |
| EMPATHY | SUBWAY |
| MILO | SUNDAY |
| MOM | TEPID |

Milo gazes at his reflection in the subway window and begins to wonder. What do people imagine when they see his face? Can they tell that he loves to dance, cook, and sing? Do they have any idea how he's feeling inside?

Part I

1. Take a sheet of paper and, on the front, draw a self-portrait—what others see when they look at you. This is how you appear on the outside.
2. Now, flip the paper over. On the back, draw or write about the things people might not see just by looking at you:
 - What are your favorite things to do?
 - What makes you happy or excited?
 - What might be affecting your mood or how you're feeling inside?



Think of this as showing two sides of who you are—what's on the outside and the deeper story within!

Part II

As you go through the day, try to imagine what might be going on in someone else's life beyond what you see on the outside. Maybe a classmate who seems grumpy didn't sleep well, or someone who's quiet might be feeling shy, not unfriendly.

1. Pick three people you see today—a friend, a classmate, or even someone you don't know very well.
2. Think about:
 - How might they be feeling.
 - What might have happened earlier in their day.
 - What could make them smile or feel better.

The goal is to practice kindness and remind yourself that everyone has their own story—just like you!

Affirmation Power-Up!

In *Milo Imagines the World*, Milo's big sister Adrienne is often stressed and overwhelmed due to the amount of responsibility she has while taking care of her little brother Milo. She refers to something called **affirmations**, which are phrases or words that she tells herself to provide support and motivation.

Imagine the kind words you'd say to yourself to feel calm, strong, and ready to take on anything—especially when you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed. You may even want to brainstorm with a friend or supportive adult.

Examples include I am a good friend, I am kind, I am loved, I know it's okay to make mistakes, I always do my best.

Now, it's your turn to create your own lasting affirmation poster!

Write or draw your very own affirmations—positive phrases that remind you how amazing you are—on the next page or on your own paper.

Hang it up somewhere you'll see it often, like your bedroom mirror, your school locker, or even your desk. Whenever you need a little boost or motivation, read your affirmations out loud.



Affirmation Poster

I AM _____

I AM _____

I AM _____

I AM _____



Get ready to become a Performance Detective! During the show, keep your eyes and ears open for the following clues:

3 Things to Look and Listen for During the Performance

Look for...

1. A green beanie. Can you spot who's wearing it?
2. A superhero. Is the superhero real or imaginary? What do you imagine yourself as?
3. Drawings coming to life. Do you love to draw? What might your drawings come to life as?



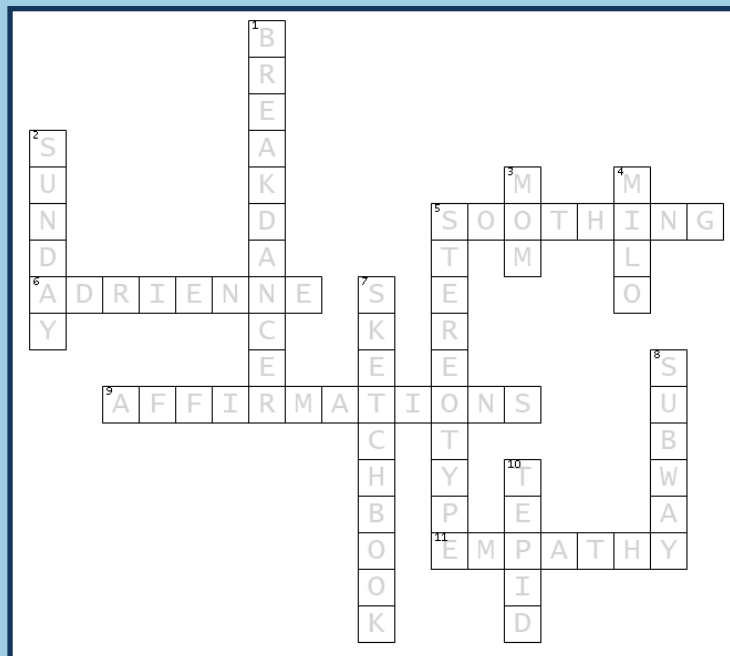
Listen for...

1. The sounds of a subway train. Have you ever been on a subway? Where did it take you?
2. Someone dramatically crying. Why do you think they are crying?
3. Different genres of music. How does the music change to match different characters or moments?



Take note of everything you discover! You're the detective, so pay close attention—there's a lot to uncover!

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWER KEY



- ACROSS**
5. SOOTHING
 6. ADRIENNE
 9. AFFIRMATIONS
 11. EMPATHY

- DOWN**
1. BREAKDANCER
 2. SUNDAY
 3. MOM
 4. MILO
 5. STEREOTYPE
 7. SKETCHBOOK
 8. SUBWAY
 10. TEPID



CTC Theatre Etiquette

At CTC, we encourage audiences to engage with the live theatre experience and react freely. It's ok to laugh if something is funny, exclaim if something is surprising, gasp if something is scary, and maybe even dance along in your seats if the music inspires you. We value the real-time, honest reactions of our audiences.

We do, however, thank you for your partnership in making sure that any reactions from your kids are kind and respectful towards the actors onstage and towards all of the people who worked so hard to make the show possible.

Accessibility

Mobility Accessibility

The Red Lobby and UnitedHealth Group Stage are on the 2nd floor. At the building entrance, turn right and head through the Mia (Minneapolis Institute of Art) entrance. Then turn left just inside the entrance and go up the flight of 28 stairs to get to the lobby. Or you can use the elevator to the LEFT of the entrance doors. The balcony is accessed by going up another flight of 18 stairs. There is no elevator access to the balcony level.

An Accessible/All-Gender restroom is located next to the elevator on the 2nd floor in the Red Lobby. Additional restrooms are located down one floor near the entrance to the theatre.

Quiet Room/Sensory Sensitivities

The Quiet Room is located at the rear left side of the main floor of the UnitedHealth Group Stage. There are 3 stairs to get to the seating in the Quiet Room. The Quiet Room is separated from the audience by a glass window, so patrons can verbalize freely. Those utilizing the Quiet Room can still see and hear the performance. The performance is also live streamed in the lobby. Please feel free to come and go from the Quiet Room as you need to throughout the show.

Please let an usher know if someone in your group would benefit from a fidget, ear plugs, noise canceling headphones, or coloring/activity sheets during your visit.

Assistive Listening Devices

Please let an usher know if you would like to use an assistive listening device. These devices come equipped with an over-the-ear earpiece. This earpiece can be unplugged, and other devices, such as cochlear implants, can be plugged into the receiver using the 1/8" jack. If you will be plugging in your own device, please bring the appropriate cord as CTC does not have these on hand.

Sign Interpretation and Audio Description

Each CTC production has a sign interpreted and/or audio described performance for each production. These performances are noted in the [list of performance dates](#).

Prayer/Private Nursing Space

During your visit, please ask a member of our staff to use our private space for nursing, pumping, prayer, or other needs.