



Childsplay's  
360° Theatre Resources for Schools

# SUPER COWGIRL AND MIGHTY MIRACLE

By José Cruz González



Directed by Dwayne Hartford

Scenic Design by Douglas Clark

Costume Design by Kish Finnegan

Lighting Design by Joel Thompson

Sound Design by Joey Trahan

Stage Manager: Ellen Beckett

### The Cast

Grandma Autumn. . . . . Chanel Bragg  
Cory. . . . . Osiris Cuen  
Miracle. . . . . Jon Gentry or Carlos A. Lara

January 27-May 23, 2014  
School Tour

March 22 - March 30, 2014  
Field Trips, Tempe Center for the Arts Studio

Recommended for Ages 5 and up

This production is sponsored in part by:



### Themes/Curricular Ties:

generations \* grandparents raising grandchildren \*  
pets \* economy \* different types of families \*  
honesty \* 6 pillars of character \* cultural  
differences \* millinery \* reading together \*  
community \* neighborhoods \* loss \* family ties \* power  
of love \* home

About *Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle*  
and Your Theatre Experience

BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
**U-S AIRWAYS**  
WHERE EDUCATION AND IMAGINATION  
TAKE FLIGHT

### *The Story:*

*Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle* is the story of a young girl of mixed race named Cory, her African-American grandmother, Autumn, and a stray dog who helps to bridge the gap between the two. Cory and her father have been struggling financially and living out of a truck. In desperation, her father leaves Cory with his estranged mother-in-law, Autumn. Autumn is struggling to keep her own house and only begrudgingly accepts Cory into her home. Autumn's whole neighborhood has been hit hard by the Great Recession, and her street has many deserted homes. Dogs, left behind by their owners, roam the street terrorizing the remaining residents.

Grandmother and granddaughter are strangers to each other. Cory is imaginative and rambunctious. She embraces the idea that, as the daughter of a Latino rodeo performer, she is a super cowgirl. Autumn is overwhelmed with her recent financial troubles, and is further bothered by a hurting tooth that she cannot afford to fix. The church is an important part of Autumn's world, while it is a strange mysterious place to Cory. Cory dislikes the food that Autumn prepares for her. Autumn must swallow her pride and use the local food pantry to get that food. When Cory befriends a stray dog, Autumn only reluctantly allows the girl to play with him. Cory sneaks the dog into the house at night, where the dog destroys Autumn's favorite church hat while playing.

With Cory and Autumn's differences and disagreements, the success of their living arrangement becomes more and more in doubt. Adding to the stress, is the delayed return of Cory's father, and a letter from Autumn's bank threatening foreclosure on her home. When the dog saves Cory from harm, Autumn finally realizes what is truly important in life. And that is love and family. The play ends with good news from Cory's father, as the dog, now named Miracle, becomes a part of the family, and Cory and Autumn are excited with a plan for a future together.



### About Childsplay:

Childsplay is a professional non-profit theatre company of adult actors, performing for young audiences and families.

**Our Mission** is to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, those hallmarks of childhood that are the keys to the future.

### What We Do:

In addition to our weekend public performances, we also offer three theatre experiences for our school audiences: Field Trips, School Tours and Artist in Residence Programs. Field trip performances, where students come to the theater and see a production, can be booked by contacting Beth Olson at 480-921-5757. School Tour Performances, where we come to your school or other location and perform, can be booked by contacting Jaime Fox at 480-921-5751. Artist in Residence Programs, where students do theatre activities in the classroom, can be individually designed to meet the needs of your school or can be based on one of our many existing formats (page to stage, creating original work, use of drama to teach curriculum, professional development for teachers), can be booked by contacting Korbi Adams at 480-921-5745.



### Our Home:

The Sybil B. Harrington Campus of Imagination and Wonder at Mitchell Park (formerly Mitchell School) is where you'll find our administrative offices, costume shop, prop shop, rehearsal spaces, and Academy classrooms. We love to hear from our audiences. Send your letters and reviews to:

**Address:** 900 S. Mitchell, Tempe, AZ 85281

**Phone:** 480-921-5700

**Email:** [info@childsplayaz.org](mailto:info@childsplayaz.org) **Web:** [www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/childsplayaz](http://www.facebook.com/childsplayaz)

To help enrich and extend your theatre experience, check out the 360° Theatre Resource Center on our website!

We perform at the Tempe Center for the Arts  
700 W. Rio Salado Parkway  
Tempe, AZ 85281

### Theater Etiquette:

It's helpful to review the rules of theater etiquette before seeing a show, especially since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students. Please take a moment to discuss the following pointers prior to seeing the performance:

- Use the restroom before seeing the show as we do not have intermission during our school performances.
- Stay seated during the performance.
- Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance. Remember, the actors can see and hear the audience just like the audience can see and hear them.
- Appropriate responses such as applause or laughter are always welcome.
- Food, candy, gum and beverages will not be allowed in the theater/during the performance.
- Use of cell phones (including text messaging), cameras or any other recording device is not allowed in the theatre/during the performance at any time.
- Following the performance (time permitting) there will be a brief question/answer session where audience members will have an opportunity to ask the actors questions about the production.





Playwright Jose Cruz Gonzales wrote *Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle* during the great recession that started in 2008. As he was observing his neighbors lose their jobs and was seeing their houses fall into disrepair, he wondered how the recession was affecting the families living inside those houses. Director Dwayne Hartford said “*Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle* is really about what makes a home and what makes a family. It’s about three characters who are near to being homeless and how they rescue each other.”

Scenic design rendering by Douglas Clark



Costume design renderings by Kish Finnegan



Grandma Autumn



Cory



Stray Dog



## A sneak peek at Childsplay's production of:

# SUPER COWGIRL AND MIGHTY MIRACLE

By José Cruz González



Field Trips: March 20, 2014 - March 28, 2014  
Tempe Center for the Arts, Studio Theatre  
School Tour: January 27, 2014 - May 23, 2014

### The Story:

When a stray dog appears on the doorstep, it's love at first sight for 6-year-old Cory, and the last straw for Grandma Autumn. Life hasn't been easy lately for either of these two, facing absent parents and lost homes. But in a delightfully surprising story filled with humor and heart, *Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle* reminds us love makes almost anything possible, even in hard times.

### Themes/Curricular Ties:

generations \* grandparents raising grandchildren \*  
pets \* economy \* different types of families \*  
honesty \* 6 pillars of character \* cultural  
differences \* millinery \* reading together \*  
community \* neighborhoods \* loss \* family ties \*  
power of love \* home

### Questions to ask before seeing the production:

- 1) How are grandparents different from parents?
- 2) There are lots of different types of families. Some young people are being raised by one parent, a grandparent, or two sets of parents. What is your family like?
- 3) What is your neighborhood like?
- 4) The following are theatre jobs: director, actor, scene designer, and sound designer. What do these jobs include and how are they different from one another?

### Questions to ask after seeing the production:

- 1) Why does Cory go to live with her Grandma? How do they both feel about it?
- 2) Grandma has a special church hat. What is something you have that you like to wear on special occasions?
- 3) At first, Grandma wants nothing to do with the dog. Why is that? What happens that changes her mind?

### Interesting Internet Links:

<http://loveyourdog.com/>  
-dog care for kids  
<http://safekidssafedogs.com/>  
-about dog safety for kids  
<http://duetaz.org/index.php/services/grandparents-raising-grandchildren/>  
-resources for grandparents raising grandkids

### Books to Check Out:

-*Sometimes Its Grandmas and Grandpas: Not Mommies and Daddies* by Gayle Byrne  
-*How to Speak Dog: A Guide to Decoding Dog Language* by Aline Alexander Newman  
-*Cow Girl Kate and Cocoa* by Erica Silverman

### \*Activities Connected to Arizona Common Core Standards\*

**15**

**Minute Activity**

Use your voice, body and imagination to create a dog character. Think about and then explore how a

dog moves and what kinds of habits they have. Working in your own space, explore how your dog walks, runs, talks, eats, sleeps, wakes up, interacts with other dogs, and interacts with people. Does your dog do any tricks? *Theatre: S1: C2: PO 101, 201, 301*  
*RL.3, RL.6*

**30**

**Minute Activity**

What do you think will happen next to Grandma Autumn and Cory? A tableau is a frozen picture that communicates something to an audience. In

pairs, brainstorm three frozen pictures or tableaux that communicate a moment that might happen next in their lives. Decide on a short action that happens prior to the moment. Pantomime the action and then freeze into a tableau (for example, selling hats or teaching miracle a trick). Share with the rest of the class. *AZ RL.3, RL.5, RI.7*

**45**

**Minute Activity**

What is your home like? Take a photo or draw a picture of your home. What symbols (or things) do you associate with

your home? Draw these symbols or find them online or in a magazine. What adjectives would you use to describe your home? Write them down or print them out. Using poster board and glue or tape, create a collage using all of the images and words. *Visual Arts: S1: C4: PO 101, 001, 201*

\*For more extensive resources go to [www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)\*





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Childsplay's  
360° Theatre Resources  
Printables for Kids

## SUPER COWGIRL AND MIGHTY MIRACLE

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January 27-May 23, 2014  
School Tour

March 22 - March 30, 2014  
Presented in the Studio

This production is sponsored in part by:



Here are some things to think about and some activities to do now that you've seen *Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle*, performed by Childsplay:

- Which character did you identify with mostly and why? If you could play any of the characters in the play, which one would you want to play? Why? What was your favorite part of the play?
- Think about the costumes, scenery, props, music and sound effects that were used in the production. What was something about the scenery that you liked? If you were a scenic or costume designer, what would you have done differently? How did the music and sound effects contribute to the production?
- What was the big problem in the play? How was the problem solved?

Use these questions as prompts for writing in your journal:

- ~ What is the difference between a house and a home?
- ~ What does family mean to you?
- ~ Cory doesn't like soup and spinach. What foods do you not like? If you could eat anything you wanted, anytime you wanted, what would your dream breakfast, lunch and dinner menu look like?



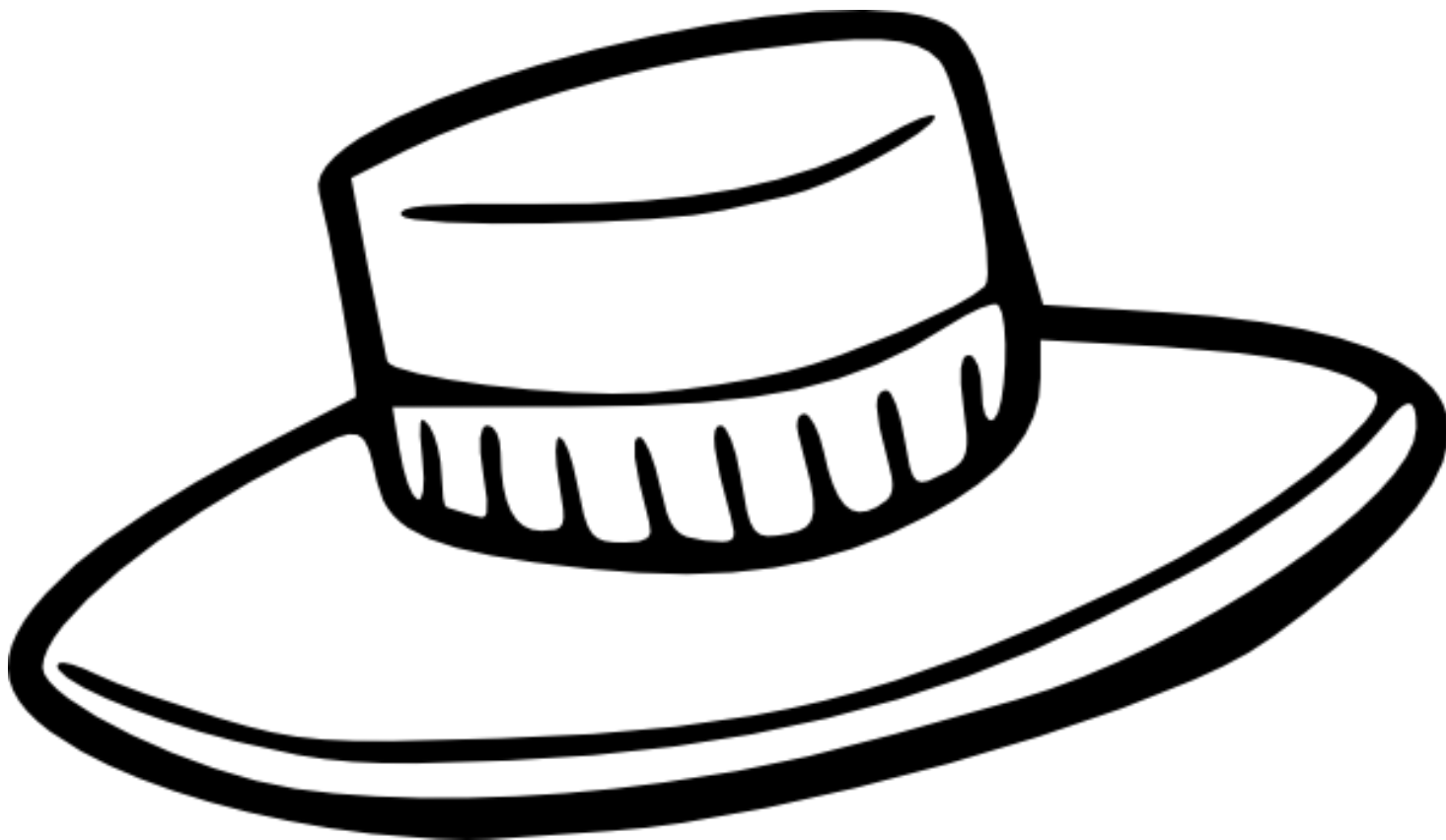
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Or you can email us: [info@childsplayaz.org](mailto:info@childsplayaz.org)

For more information about Childsplay including information on our Academy classes for students, go to our website: [www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)

If you could use anything to decorate a hat, what would it look like? Color the hat below to make it your own!



**Character Traits:**

Think about the many words you could use to describe the characters in the play. Choose three adjectives that describe each of these characters. Challenge yourself by not repeating any of the adjectives.

**Grandma Autumn**

**Cory**

**Miracle**

1)

2)

3)



## 15 Minute Activities:

- 1) Use your voice, body and imagination to create a dog character. Think about and then explore how a dog moves and what kinds of habits they have. Working in your own space, explore how your dog walks, runs, talks, eats, sleeps, wakes up, interacts with other dogs, and interacts with people. Does your dog do any tricks? *Theatre: S1: C2: PO 101, 201, 301; RL.3, RL.6*
- 2) One of the games that Cory plays with the dog is "Jump, Jump Jumping Bean." What are the other games that Cory and the dog play? Divide into pairs and try out her games.
- 3) Who are the people in your family? Is there anyone that you are not related to that you consider to be a part of your family? Write a paragraph or two about the people (or pets) that make up your family. Writing: K, 1, 2-W.1, 3, 4, 5-W.2

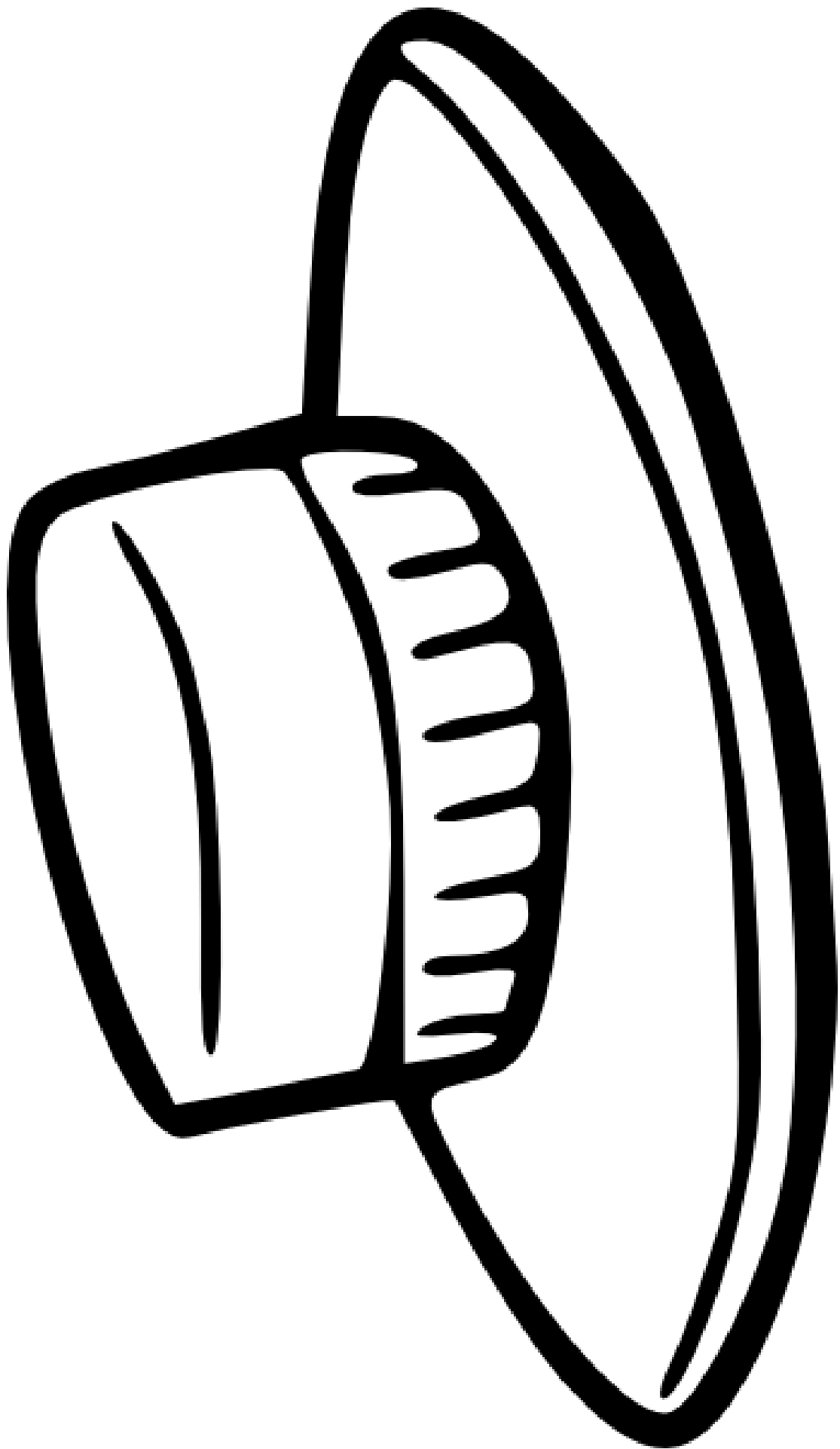
## 30 Minute Activities:

- 1) What do you think will happen next to Grandma Autumn and Cory? A tableau is a frozen picture that communicates something to an audience. In pairs, brainstorm three frozen pictures or tableaux that communicate a moment that might happen next in their lives. Decide on a short action that happens prior to the moment. Pantomime the action and then freeze into a tableau (for example, selling hats or teaching miracle a trick). Share with the rest of the class. *AZ RL.3, RL.5, RI.7*
- 2) Having a pet is a big responsibility. Choose a pet that you have or would like to have. Using the internet, research information about what you need to do to care for that pet and the costs involved (food, grooming, vet, etc.). Write out a daily care schedule for the pet as well as a monthly budget. Writing: W4
- 3) Who is in your family tree? Using one of the many family tree templates that can be found on the internet, write down the people in your immediate and extended family. Ask your parents for help. Writing: W4

## 45 Minute Activities:

- 1) What is your home like? Take a photo or draw a picture of your home. What symbols (or things) do you associate with your home? Draw these symbols or find them online or in a magazine. What adjectives would you use to describe your home? Write them down or print them out. Using poster board and glue or tape, create a collage using all of the images and words. *Visual Arts: S1: C4: PO 101, 001, 201*
- 2) Cory and Miracle use an array of items to create a unique hat. Draw a hat that you can decorate (or use the attached template). Think about the types of things you would want to put on your hat and add them to the hat using colored pencils or crayons or use a real hat that you can decorate with found objects. *Theatre: S1, PO 101, 201, 301*
- 3) Use the attached questions to interview a grandparent (or an older relative or friend if you don't have a grandparent). You can write down the answers immediately or you can record the interview and then transcribe the answers later. Writing: W7





***Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle  
Grandparent Interview***

*Interviewer:*

*Being Interviewed:*

*Relationship to Interviewer:*

1. Where were you born? In what year were you born?
2. How many people were in your family?
3. What did you do for fun when you were my age?
4. Can you remember the cost of the following things when you were very young?
  - a gallon of gas
  - a McDonald's hamburger
  - a stamp
  - a movie ticket
5. What music or songs did you listen to?
6. What TV shows did you like?
7. What jobs have you had?
8. Did you have a pet when you were growing up? If yes, what was it?
9. Did you get an allowance? How much?
10. What were your favorite games or sports to play?
11. What chores did you have to do at home?
12. What was your favorite subject in school?
13. How old were you when you got married?
14. When you were my age, what did you think you wanted to be when you grew up?
15. Do you have any advice for me?



Childsplay's 360° Theatre Resources for Schools  
Pre and Post Show Discussion Questions for *Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle*  
2013-2014 Season  
[www.childsplayaz.org](http://www.childsplayaz.org)

**Questions to Ask Before Seeing the Production:**

- 1) The title of the play you're going to see is *Super Cowgirl and Mighty Miracle*. What do you think the play will be about?
- 2) The following are theatre jobs: director, actor, scene designer, and sound designer. What do these jobs include and how are they different from one another?
- 3) There are lots of different types of families. Some young people are being raised by one parent, a grandparent, or two sets of parents. What is your family like?
- 4) Does your family go to church? What is it like?
- 5) What are ways that people who are facing financial hardships can get support?
- 6) What is your neighborhood like? Who are your neighbors?
- 7) How are grandparents different from parents? How are they similar?
- 8) What is the difference between a house and a home?
- 9) What does ethnic culture mean? What are some things that define certain ethnic cultures? What makes your ethnic culture different than another ethnic culture?

**Questions to Ask After Seeing the Production:**

- 1) Who were the characters in the play? Did you see all of the characters? Where did the play take place? What was the main problem in the play?
- 2) What did the director and designer do to suggest different locations in the play?
- 3) Why is Grandma Autumn so cranky?
- 4) What does Cory do when Grandma gives her soup? Other food? How does Grandma respond to Cory's behavior?
- 5) What does Grandma mean when she says "they're going to take my house?"
- 6) Why do you think Grandma doesn't have a job?
- 7) Why does Cory's dad leave her with Grandma?
- 8) What happened to Cory's mom?
- 9) Why do you think the dog is a stray and has no home or family? How did he end up that way? What similarities are there between the dog and Grandma and Cory?
- 10) Grandma has a special church hat. What is something you have that you like to wear on special occasions?
- 11) Why won't Grandma let Cory wear her cowboy hat to church?
- 12) At first, Grandma wants nothing to do with the dog. Why is that? What happens that changes her mind?
- 13) What does the dog bring to Cory? Why does he bring her things? What ends up happening to the objects he brings her?
- 14) What do you think will happen to Cory and her Grandma Autumn? Will Grandma be able to keep her house? Will Cory ever live with her father again? Will Grandma and Cory get along with each other?
- 15) Does Grandma always tell the truth? If not, give an example of her not telling the truth. Is it ever acceptable to not tell the truth? If yes, when would it be acceptable?
- 16) What does Grandma do for income at the end of the play?
- 17) What are Cory's jobs and responsibilities? Is she always responsible in performing her jobs? How do her actions cause a problem in the play?
- 18) Why does Cory choose to call the dog "Mighty Miracle?"





**generations**

**Younger Readers**

*Sophie* by Mem Fox  
*Gifts of the Heart* by Patricia Polacco  
*How to Babysit a Grandpa* by Jeanne Reagan  
*Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say

**Older Readers**

*The R(evolution) of Evelyn Serrano* by Sonia Manzano  
*Pearl Verses the World* by Sally Murphy  
*A Year Down Yonder* by Richard Peck

**grandparents raising grandchildren**

**Younger Readers**

*Sometimes it's Grandpas and Grandmas, Not Mommies and Daddies* by Gayle Byrne  
*Abuela* by Arthur Dorros  
*Kele's Secret* by Tololwa Mollel

**Older Readers**

*Well Wished* by Franny Billingsley  
*Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech  
*Belle Prater's Boy* by Ruth White  
*The Magic Paintbrush* by Laurence Yep

**pets**

**Younger Readers**

*Not Norman: A Goldfish Story* by Kelly Bennet  
*Bark, George!* by Jules Feiffer  
*Silly Chicken* by Rhuksana Khan  
*The New Girl...and Me* by Jacqui Robbins  
*The Great Gracie Chase* by Cynthia Rylant  
*Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters from Obedience School* by Mark Teague

**Older Readers**

*Love That Dog* by Sharon Creech  
*Because of Winn Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo  
*Pinky Pye* by Eleanor Estes  
*A Dog's Life* by Ann M. Martin

**different types of families**

**Younger Readers**

*It's Ok to Be Different* by Todd Parr  
*The Family Book* by Todd Parr  
*I Love Saturdays y Domingos* by Alma Flor Ada  
*We Had a Picnic, This Saturday Past* by Jacqueline Woodson

**Older Readers**

*The Higher Power of Lucky* by Susan Patron  
*Turtle in Paradise* by Jennifer Holm

**economy**

**Younger Readers**

*Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting  
*Tight Times* by Barbara Shook Hadzen

**Older Readers**

*The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes  
*The Year of Shadows* by Claire Legrand

## community and neighborhoods

### Younger Readers

*A Rose for Abby* by Donna Guthrie  
*Grandpa's Corner Store* by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan  
*Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed* by Emily Pearson  
*Something Beautiful* by Sharon Dennis Wyeth

### Older Readers

*The Secret Tree* by Natalie Standiford  
*Last Summer with Maizon* by Jacqueline Woodson

## honesty

### Younger Readers

*The Empty Pot* by Demi  
*The Honest to Goodness Truth* by Patricia McKissack  
*A Bad Case of the Stripes* by David Shannon  
*Too Many Tamales* by Gary Soto

### Older Readers

*Lost and Found* by Andrew Clements  
*Rules* by Cynthia Lord  
*Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli

## cultural differences

### Younger Readers

*Two Mrs. Gibsons* by Toyomo Igus  
*Hope* by Isabelle Monk  
*Bonjour Lonnie* by Faith Ringgold  
*Jalapeno Bagels* by Natasha Wing

### Older Readers

*The Whole Story of Half a Girl* by Veera Hiranandan  
*Camo Girl* by Kekla Magoon  
*Monsoon Summer* by Mitali Perkins  
*What the Moon Saw* by Laura Resau

## loss

### Younger Readers

*Remembering Mrs. Rossi* by Amy Hest  
*The Purple Balloon* by Chris Raschka  
*City Dog, Country Frog* by Mo Willems

### Older Readers

*Bird* by Zetta Elliot  
*Leo and the Lesser Lion* by Sandra Forrester  
*Kira-Kira* by Cynthia Kadohata  
*Locomotion* by Jacqueline Woodson

## Interesting Internet Links

### **About Church Hats:**

<http://content.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1874131,00.html>

[http://www.ehow.com/about\\_5374431\\_history-women-wearing-hats-church.html](http://www.ehow.com/about_5374431_history-women-wearing-hats-church.html)

### **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren:**

<http://duetaz.org/index.php/services/grandparents-raising-grandchildren/>

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/supporting/resources/grandparents.cfm>

### **Dogs:**

<http://loveyourdog.com/>

<http://safekidssafedogs.com/>

### **Cultural Differences:**

<http://www.exploreandmore.org/world/default.htm>

<http://www.kidactivities.net/category/DiversityMulti-Cultural.aspx>

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/tolerance.html>

