This informational guide has been prepared to serve as a resource to help you navigate meaningful conversations with your children around topics presented in Young Festival Stage’s production of *Leonardo and the Flying Machine*. We’ve designed it for you both; we hope this provides for a richer experience for you and yours!

**PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS**

- What do you already know about Leonardo da Vinci?

- Do you think someone can be both artistic and scientific?

- When you imagine, what do you think of?

- What do you know about the Renaissance?
WHO'S WHO?

Theatre is collaborative, meaning it takes a group of people working together to make it happen. Let’s take a look at who all is involved in making a work of theatre.

PLAYWRIGHT
Writes a script that conveys the story. Includes words, characters, and ideas.

DIRECTOR
Determines the way a performance looks & works by working closely with both actors & designers.

STAGE MANAGER
Advocate for the actors & head of the crew. They cue all of the technical elements during a performance.

DESIGNERS (COSTUME, SET, PUPPETS, PROPS, LIGHTING, & SOUND)
Plans and designs technical elements to help bring the show to life.

CREW
Theatre’s offstage heroes. They build and operate scenery, costumes, props, lights, and sounds during a performance.

CAST
Includes any performers that tell the story from onstage.

PUPPETEER
People who operate the puppets, are familiar with their mechanisms, and make the performance come to life.

THE AUDIENCE
That’s right! Theatre wouldn’t be theatre without you. Something neat about theatre is that it only exists in a specific moment between the performers, crew, and people in the audience. You are one of our collaborators!
THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

• **Give the story your eyes! It needs you to see it.**
• As the audience, you are an important character in the play!
• Be kind to the performers. *How would you feel if you were on stage?*
• The more you pay attention the more entertaining it will be.
• It’s ok to laugh and clap throughout the play.
• No whispering to people around you.
• NO food or gum.
• Don’t distract the actors and puppeteers – they are focused on a task.

Q: **When do you applaud?**
A: Clap at the end because of the hard work that everyone put in the show.

Q: **When do you stand up?**
A: At the bows at the end of the show, if you would like.

Q: **When do you talk or yell?**
A: Wait until after the show to talk to your friends about your excitement. If you don’t talk during the performance you win! Bonus points if you remember a line.
As you may have noticed, Leonardo da Vinci was a real person who lived in Italy during the Renaissance. If Leonardo was real, does that make this story true?

Our main story, as you can tell from the title, focuses on Leonardo’s flying machine. This story was based on legend, and there is no evidence that Leonardo actually attempted to fly with his machine. This means our story is not fact. In this case, we should not confuse Leonardo and the Flying Machine with a historical account like a textbook or biography. However, even in fiction, there can still be truth told through the story, it just may be a different type of truth.

For instance, in the story of The Tortoise and Hare, a race happening between a tortoise and a hare did not actually happen, nor do animals talk in real life. The truth is in the themes, in the idea that patience is a good quality to have and that treating your competitors with respect can also help you “win the race” of life.

When you come to see the play, we encourage you to look for some of the facts about Leonardo’s life; for example, he was a painter, many of these characters were real people, and he did like to invent things. We also want you to keep in mind that not everything is factual, such as flying the flying machine. Our story is set in an important era of history but uses modern imaginations. With all of that in mind, see if you can point out other types of truth in our story.

1. What kinds of things are true about your favorite book?
2. What themes do you find are true in the story of Leonardo?
3. Can you learn anything about what it means to imagine or be creative from the story’s fictional parts?
Mona Lisa
Portrait of a Musician
The Last Supper

Saint John the Baptist
Lady with an Ermin
The Baptism of Christ
What is the Renaissance?

The era from the 14th century to the 17th century is called the Renaissance. The word Renaissance means “rebirth.” During the Middle Ages, the time right before the Renaissance, information was lost and forgotten, so the spark to return to learning and growth is why the name stands for rebirth. During this time people made discoveries in art, science, math, theatre, and much more. It is important to note that during this time, Church and State were intertwined. This means that the Church was connected to the government, often through the monarch, meaning it was attached to a lot of power at the time.

The Renaissance began in Florence, Italy. There were many wealthy families in Italy that would help fund research or commission paintings; people who funded artistic endeavors were called patrons (a term we now use to call people who attend theatres). Artists and scholars would not have been able to do their work without this funding from patrons. Once other countries took notice of what was happening in Italy, they wanted to become patrons so they could compete with Italy. One such competitive country who also became prominent for its contributions to the Renaissance is France. In fact, the king of France himself, Francis I, was a patron of the arts.

Contributions made to art during the Renaissance sometimes were in painting and sculpting. Art in the Renaissance focused on the style of realism. This means that artists paid greater attention to their art more accurately looking like real life. More detail was added so you could see a person's muscles, or the different folds in a piece of cloth. This attention to detail was also aided by advancements in science. Many artists were also very knowledgeable in math and science and studied the human body and its movements and proportions. Artists also focused on depth and perspective. These elements add space between objects by changing their size so there is a noticeable amount of distance on the flat surface. With these techniques artists could paint realistic landscapes and people so art could truly reflect real life.
**Leonardo Da Vinci:** Da Vinci was an Italian Renaissance artist. He is best known for his beautiful paintings, but he was also a scientist, musician, engineer, and mathematician.

**Duke Ludovico of Milan:** He was known as “Ludovico il Moro”. He was an Italian Renaissance nobleman who ruled as the Duke of Milan from 1494-1499.

**Michelangelo Buonarroti:** Michelangelo was also an Italian Renaissance sculptor, painter, architect, and poet. He was a rival of Leonardo da Vinci, and one of his best-known sculptures is David.

**Ser Piero:** Leonardo Da Vinci’s father. Ser Piero arranged Leonardo’s work with Verrochio which was a huge launching point for Da Vinci’s career as an artist.

**Andrea del Verrocchio:** Head of one of Florence’s most important workshops where all kinds of artwork commissions were made. His shop became a sort of training ground for Da Vinci.

**Francesco of the House of Sforza:** He ruled Milan as the duke from 1450-1466.

**Pope Nicholas V:** He was the head of the Catholic Church from March 6, 1447 until his death on March 24, 1455. He was very influential in the Roman Renaissance. He wanted Rome to be the home of literature and art, and he ordered the design plans for what would become the Basilica of St. Peter.

**Santa Maria dell Grazis:** A church and convent in Milan. This church contains the mural of *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci.
PUPPETS!!!

A puppet is an inanimate figure brought to life or moved by human effort before an audience.

In the show, you will get to witness puppets operated before your very eyes! For Da Vinci’s sake, we wanted to give you a briefing on puppetry before you come.

**TYPES OF PUPPETS:**

**FLAT FIGURE/SHADOW PLAY PUPPETS**

**MARIONETTE OR STRING PUPPETS**

**HAND/GLOVE PUPPETS**

**ROD PUPPETS**

What type of puppet do you think you’ll see in Leonardo? Why?
Can you think of any other types of puppets?
• What do we see in our everyday lives that was contributed by Leonardo?

• How do we work with others best?

• How did an artist make a living in the Renaissance?

• What in the play was fact and what was fiction?

• What is another good topic about humans for the birds to study in their class?

• Why do you think a bird was the narrator?

• How did the puppets help tell the story?

• What did the set remind you of?