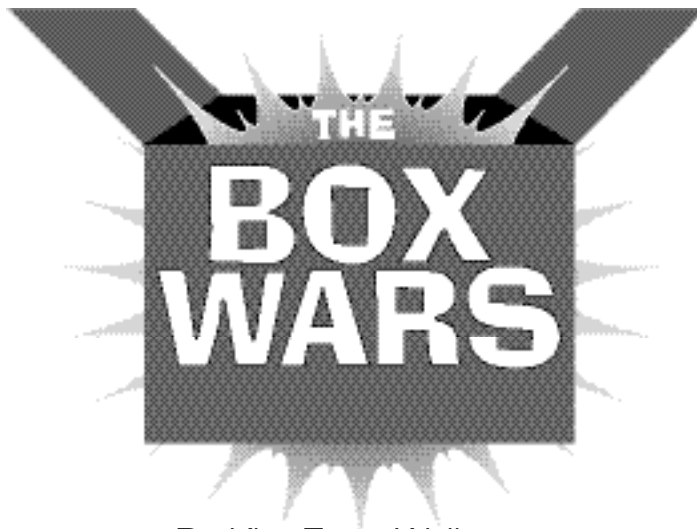


By Kim Esop Wylie
Music by Neal Richardson
Directed by Kat Singleton

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By Kim Esop Wylie
Music by Neal Richardson

Directed by Kat Singleton

Music Direction
Neal Richardson

Scenic Design
Dorothy Marshall Englis

Costume Design
Dorothy Marshall Englis

Stage Manager
Brian Peters

Director of Education
Marsha Coplon

Artistic Supervisor
Jeffery Matthews

The Company

(in speaking order)

Milly / **Meghan Brown**

Ben / **Jason Contini**

Sven; Mrs. Svenson / **Alan Knoll**

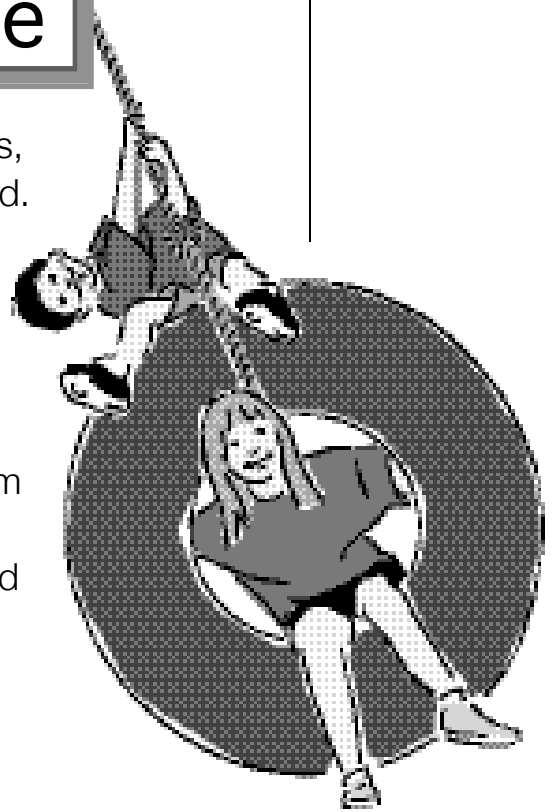
Silvia; Mother / **Anna Blair**

Support for this production was given by Union Pacific Foundation.

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Setting the Scene

The Box Wars is set in a very familiar space for most of us, the back yard—or specifically, Milly and Ben’s back yard. On one side, we can see the Svenson’s perfect fence, and on the other is Mr. Bruhunger’s not-so-perfect fence. Our back yards are special, private places where we can be ourselves with friends and family, but the fences that we share with our neighbors also provide a link to other people who may be different from us. Playwright Kim Esop Wylie helps remind us how important those connections can be by putting Ben and Milly in between two fences (and families) who don’t understand or even really know each other but have something to gain by “peeking over the fence.”



WHO'S WHO?

Ben is a sensitive and inquisitive young boy who likes to pretend that he is Captain Bill, the good pirate.

Milly is Ben’s older and she believes, wiser sister whose active imagination takes her and everyone around her on wild trips.

Sven Svenson is Milly and Ben’s next door neighbor and a *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* expert.

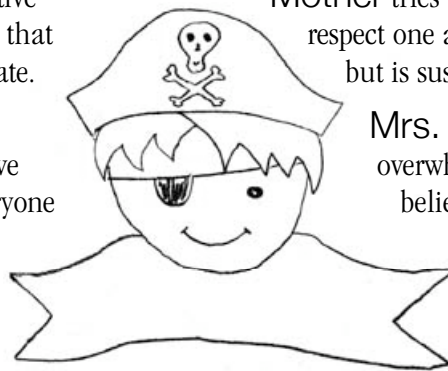
Silvia Svenson is Sven’s little sister who mimics everything that he says and does.

Mother tries to teach Milly and Ben to respect one another and other people but is suspicious of Mr. Bruhunger.

Mrs. Svenson is overwhelmed by motherhood and believes that anyone who acts or thinks differently than she does is dangerous.

Raymond Milton Bruhunger, Jr. also lives next to Ben

and Milly but they are warned not to speak to him because he is an artist.



WORDS to the WiSe



Pewlash—Milly invents this mean name for Ben to get even with him for ruining her flower.

St. Bernard—Milly claims that she would rather have one of these big, friendly rescue dogs than a brother.

Empty appliance casing—Milly likes to use big words for simple ideas. In this case, she is talking about a refrigerator box.

Sterilize—One of Ben's jobs as a nurse is to get rid of the germs on the doctor's tools, or sterilize them.

Anise sneezya—This is Milly's funny way of pronouncing anesthesia, medicine that doctors use to help patients rest during operations.

Hippocratic Oath—All doctors make this promise to always put their patients' needs first and never to do anything that would harm their patients.

Lame—Milly isn't trying to help people who aren't cool; instead she means that she will heal patients who can't walk.

Courageous—As Captain Bill, Ben is brave and does what is right even when it is difficult. This makes him courageous.

Cunning—Captain Bill is also smart, or cunning.

Amputate—Ben disagrees with Milly when she says that she may have to amputate, or cut off his foot when he stubs his toe.

Toxic—Milly pretends that an umbrella is a shield against a giant's toxic, or dangerous, earwax.

Profanity—Mrs. Svenson is upset because Ben says, "dumb", which she considers to be profanity, or a bad word.

Palpitations—Mrs. Svenson says that Mr. Bruhunger upsets her so much that it makes her heart beat funny, or gives her palpitations.

Pushing up clover—Milly and Ben use this as another way of saying that they will be "dead", or in serious trouble for sticking a fly swatter in Silvia's hair.

Alter egos—Captain Bill and P Daddy Benny are Ben's alter egos, or other people that he likes to pretend to be.



READ MORE ABOUT IT

We encourage you to examine these topics in-depth by exploring the following books and CDs.

Bulla, Clyde Robert. *Chalk Box Kid*. Random House Books for Young Readers, 1987.

Captain Bogg & Salty. *Bedtime Stories for Pirates*. Scabbydisc Music, 1999.

Fox, Mem. Illus. Julie Vivas. *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*. Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 1989.

McPhail, David. *Edward and the Pirates*. Little, Brown, 1997.

Perry, Sarah. *If. . .* J.Paul Getty Trust Publications, 1995.

Schachner, Judy. *Skippyjon Jones*. Dutton Juvenile, 2003.

Time-Life Books, ed. *Little People Big Book About Imagination*. 1990.

Vanzet, Gaston. Illus. Leeanne Brook. *The Great, Big, Enormous, Gigantic Cardboard Box*. SRA/McGraw-Hill, 1997.

What's the Story?

Ben and Milly are very much like a lot of brothers and sisters. Sometimes they play together, sometimes they fight together, and sometimes they get in trouble together. When a big cardboard box lands in their yard, they do all three at once. Milly decides right away that the box is an operating table, that she will be the doctor, and that Ben will be her nurse. Ben is not too thrilled with this idea, especially when his G.I. Joe action figure has to be Milly's first patient. When Joe's head winds up separate from his body, Ben runs off to tattle on Milly but runs into Sven and Silvia, the neighbors from next door instead. They have come to take back the box which they say is actually their spaceship that accidentally blew over the fence. This sets off a war between the two brother-sister sets for control of the box. Nobody wins because Silvia winds up with bugs in her hair, Sven gets called ugly names, and Milly and Ben wind up in trouble from both their mom and from Mrs. Svenson, Silvia and Sven's mom.

While everyone else is fighting, Ben keeps noticing that a strange thing is happening on the other side of the fence, where their neighbor, Raymond Milton Bruhunger, Jr. lives. Both Mrs. Svenson and Ben and Milly's mom agree that the children should leave Mr. Bruhunger alone because "he's just... he's not very nice", but the only thing that anyone really knows about Mr. Bruhunger is that he is an artist. As far as Mrs. Svenson is concerned, that means that he is different, and being different is the same as being bad. Ben wants to talk to him though because all day long, he has watched a giant plant on the other side of

Mr. Bruhunger's fence wilt and unwill itself. Ben figures out that when the children are fighting or insulting each other, the plant wilts, but when they are playing together or saying nice words, it unwill. He tries to explain this to Milly and his mom several times, but neither one of them is interested in what he has to say.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Svenson decides that the way to fix the box problem is to destroy the box. Silvia tells Ben that she doesn't really mind because she didn't want to play in a spaceship, anyway. What she really wants to be is a nurse. Ben gets excited because this means that he can finally be the doctor and someone else can be the nurse. As they play together, the plant over Mr. Bruhunger's fence gets bigger and bigger. Then boxes start dropping over the fence, one by one. Ben realizes that Mr. Bruhunger was moving the plant all along, helping Ben to see that words really can hurt (or help) other people. He runs over to tell Mr. Bruhunger thank you for the boxes, but Mr. Bruhunger tells him to keep their little secret and gives him a giant paper flower for Milly. When Milly asks where the flower came from, Ben tells her that Sven made it because he felt bad about the box. Milly decides that Sven and Silvia really aren't so bad after all and they go next door to share the boxes and their new friendship.



From the Playwright

Writing about a box is like playing with a box—the possibilities are endless.

A box can be just about anything you imagine. And when you write a play, the characters can be just about anything you imagine. The Milly and Ben characters are based loosely on two children I know: An older sister who understands a little more about the world and a younger brother who wants her attention. Both are good, decent kids whose imaginations sometimes get them in trouble.

The neighbor kids are complete figments of my imagination. They are the would-be playmates who are more often fight-mates. The interaction between

Sven and Silvia and Milly and Ben makes me wonder if kid fighting is just another form of play.

And just like in the real life, things in *The Box Wars* aren't always what you think they are. A grown-up who seems "nice" (like Mrs. Svenson) may not really be, and a person who has a reputation for not being nice (like Mr. Bruhunger) may in fact be a blessing.

I guess people are a lot like boxes. The possibilities really are endless.

Kim Wylie,
Playwright

P.S. The mother in the play? When she's not on stage, I'll bet she spends her time writing.



Boxed in

This puzzle is called a Sudoku. The object of Sudoku is to fill the empty boxes with numbers between 1 and 9 (one number only in each box without repeating) according to the following guidelines:

1. Number can appear only once on each row:
2. Number can appear only once on each column:
3. Number can appear only once on each region, a region being the nine-block areas defined by the heavier lines. (We've marked one in grey.)

						7	9	
2					7		6	
	1	9	8	5			2	
		8	1		4			
	2	3				9	1	
			7		3	8		
	3			7	9	2	5	
	5		4					6
	4	2						



HoWDY NEiGHBoR!

1. A friend with brown eyes _____
2. A friend without black hair _____
3. A friend with a great smile _____
4. A friend born in a country other than the USA _____
5. A friend born in the month of July _____
6. A friend who is older than you _____
7. A friend whose favorite subject is Science _____
8. A friend who likes the color purple _____
9. A friend who moved to your town from another place this year _____
10. A friend whose grandparents do not regularly speak the English language _____
11. A friend who likes to go camping _____
12. A friend who has earned several belts in one of the martial arts (for example Tae-Kwon-Do) _____
13. A friend who has at least one pet _____
14. A friend who can tapdance _____
15. A friend who likes to eat ice cream _____
16. A friend who has learned to crochet _____
17. A friend who likes soccer or basketball _____
18. A friend who likes volleyball or softball _____
19. A friend who can say the alphabet backwards _____
20. A friend who does not attend your school _____

Ben, Milly, and the Svensons all learn that the only way to really know people is to talk to them, not about them. This week, try to get to know new people at your school or in your neighborhood by completing the people scavenger hunt below. Try to find a different person to sign his or her name on each line. For extra fun, use a disposable camera to take your picture with each person, develop the pictures, and make a scrapbook with the photos of your new friends.

Opposites Attract

Ben discovers just how powerful words can be when he sees that kind words help the plant to grow and mean words cause it to wilt. Opposite word pairs like this are called *antonyms*. Practice finding opposites by matching each word in the left column with its antonym on the right. Draw a line to connect each pair.

Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your classroom needs and reproduce them for future use.

The activities in this guide address the following Missouri Show Me Standards and Illinois Learning Standards.

MO: CA1, CA2, CA4, CA5, CA6, CA7, FA1, FA2, FA4, SS6 IL: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 18, 26.

boy	big, large
speak	wrong, left
right	dirty
far	dark, heavy
black	empty
cool	end
buy	girl
clean	hot
small	listen
woman	long, tall
begin	man
full	near, close
fat	new, young
stand	sell
old	sit
short	soft, easy
hard	thin
cold	warm
light	white
sweet	wild
buy	back
front	quiet
lead	find
good	pretty
strong	follow
tame	sour
lose	rich
ugly	night
poor	bad
loud	sell
day	weak

Growing Ideas

Milly creates all kinds of crazy, fun, silly ideas for play by letting her imagination run wild. Sometimes this gets her into trouble, but it also helps her to have a lot of fun. Each idea that she gets leads her to a new idea, which leads to another idea, which leads to another idea. . . . This is called brainstorming. You can use brainstorming to help you organize your thoughts and plan how to write them. One easy way to brainstorm is to write your first thought in the center of a circle. Then as you get new ideas, you can add more circles to your Thought Tree, connecting them to the ideas that sparked them. When you have run out of ideas, you can review your Thought Tree, turn your starting circle into a topic sentence, and make each of your smaller circles into a supporting sentence for a paragraph. Practice with the Thought Trees below that are started for you.

Thought Tree 1:

If I could be anything
or anyone in the world
I would be....

Thought Tree 2:

If I could go anywhere
in the world
(or the universe)
I would go to...

Thought Tree 3:

My favorite kind
of art is....
because....

Heavyweight Boxing

Thanks to Mr. Bruhunger, Milly, Ben, Silvia, and Sven now have lots of boxes for play. Figure out how many different ways they can use their new gifts by solving the problems. Be sure to show your work.

1. If Mr. Bruhunger gives the children four large boxes, ten medium boxes, and 22 small boxes, how many boxes total do they have?

2. If Ben, Milly, Silvia, and Sven share the boxes equally, how many boxes would each person have?

3. Ben wants one medium and two small boxes to be a DJ and one large and three medium boxes to be a pirate. Sven needs one large and four small boxes for his spaceship, and Milly is using one large and ten small boxes for her operating room. How many and what size boxes are left for Silvia?

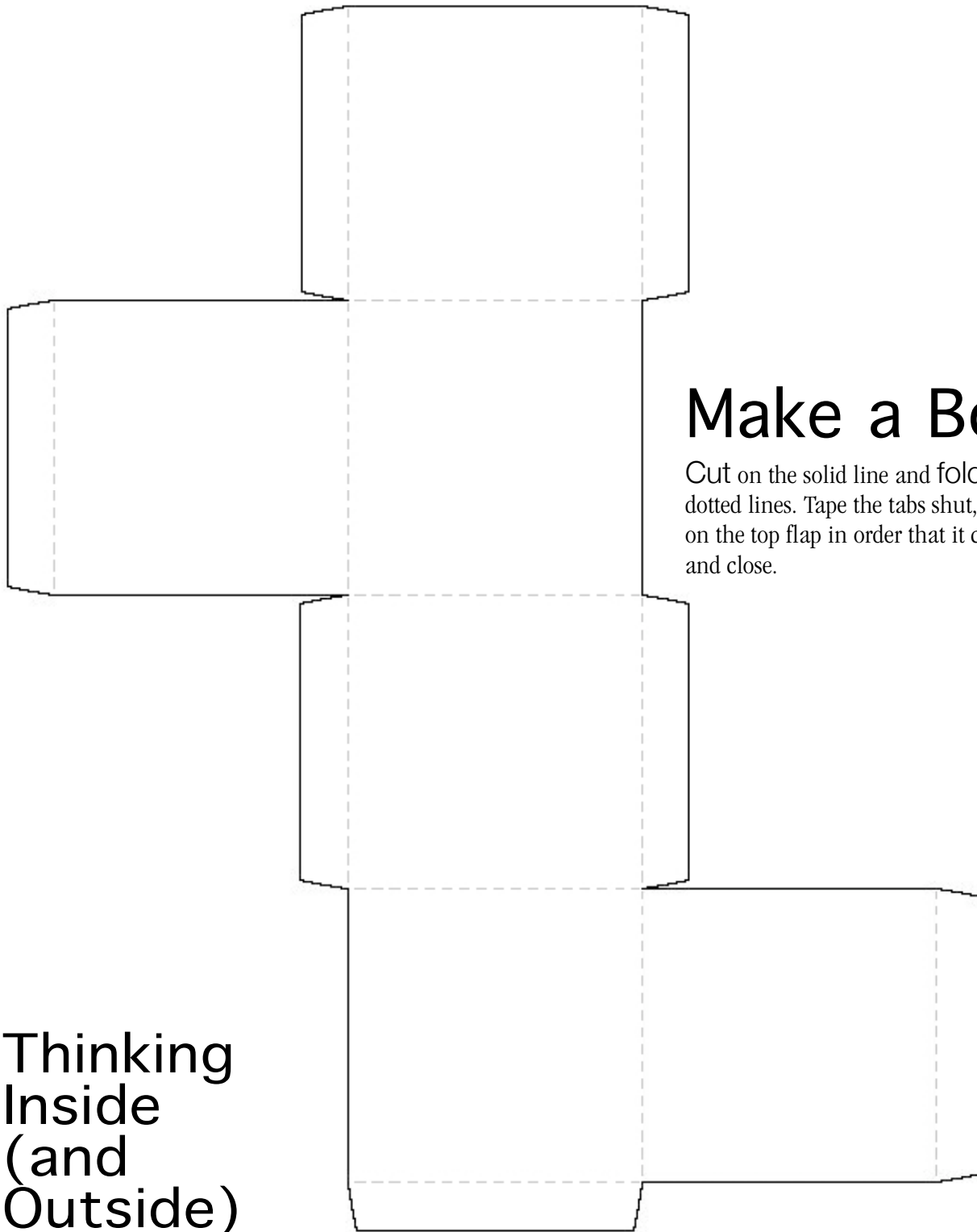
4. If Ben and Silvia play doctor and nurse every day for six days and treat five patients each day, how many patients do they see total?

5. The second week of play, Ben and Silvia play doctor on only Monday and Tuesday and treat half as many patients as the week before. How many patients do they have?

6. Sven builds a spaceship and plans to make two trips to each known planet in the first week. How many trips does he plan to make total?

7. The second week, Sven builds a larger spaceship that holds two astronauts. He takes each of the other children on one trip to each planet and takes Milly to Mars twice because the Martians needed an expert surgeon. How many trips does this make?

8. To thank Mr. Bruhunger for the boxes, the children build a special sculpture for him using $\frac{1}{2}$ the total number of large boxes, $\frac{1}{4}$ the total number of medium boxes, and $\frac{3}{4}$ the total number of small boxes. How many boxes of each size do they use to make the sculpture and how many of each size do they have left?



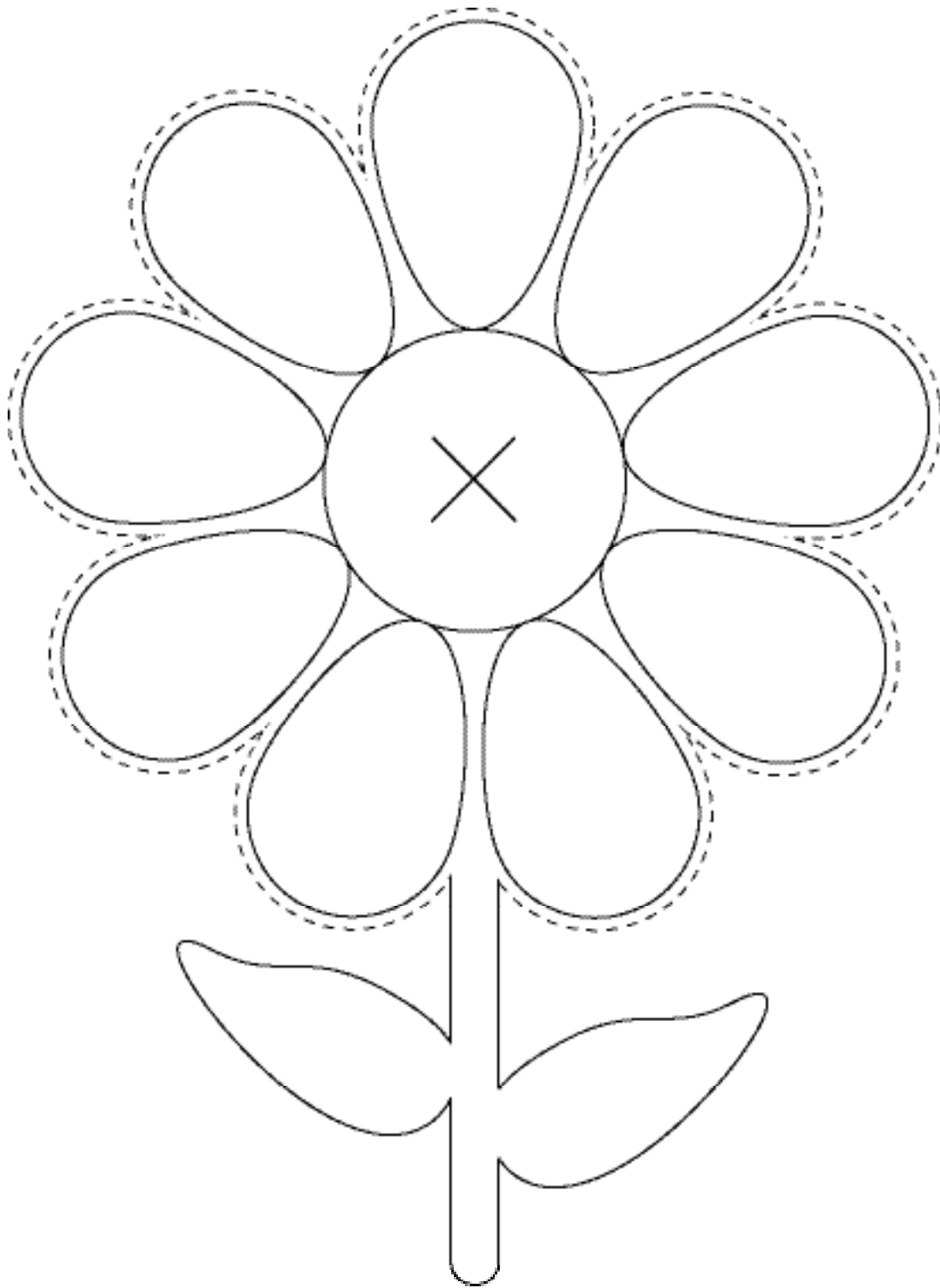
Make a Box

Cut on the solid line and fold on the dotted lines. Tape the tabs shut, except on the top flap in order that it can open and close.

Thinking Inside (and Outside) the Box

Help your class experiment with measuring, weight, and volume by having each student make the box shown above. Then provide students with equal weights of a bulky, but light substance, such as cotton balls, and a dense substance, such as M & Ms or pennies. Have them compare how much space in the box each substance fills. Use this comparison to illustrate the difference between weight and volume. Then have students measure and record each side of the box. If appropriate, you may have students figure the area of the box as well.

Friendship Flower



Materials:

Crayons or markers, glue or glue stick, 1 colored regular muffin cup liner

Directions:

Make a beautiful flower like Milly and Mr. Bruhunger by coloring the stem and petals above. Then glue a muffin cup liner on the X.

Now make a new friend by sharing your flower with someone else.