



Youth by James Ijames
Education Guide

Villanova Theatre
February 5th-17th, 2019
Adrena Williams, Dramaturg

Synopsis

Youth revolves around the members of a small church youth group led by Pastor Dave as they welcome a new member, Wyatt. While the members of the group are challenged and changed by Wyatt's arrival, Pastor Dave struggles to reconcile his own faith with what he sees. Meanwhile, Wyatt tries to make a connection with Reggie, a member of the youth group who was recently disabled in a car accident.



Playwright

James Ijames

James Ijames is a Philadelphia-based playwright, director and actor. Originally from North Carolina, Ijames earned a B.A. in Drama from Morehouse College (Atlanta, GA), and an M.F.A. in Acting from Temple University (Philadelphia, PA). Many of his plays have been developed and produced in the Philadelphia region, including *Kill Move Paradise* in 2018 and *White* in 2017. In 2018, Ijames was chosen as the winner of the [Kesselring Prize](#) and named one of [32 “Black Male Writers for Our Time”](#) by the *New York Times*. Ijames has performed with companies all over Philadelphia. Most recently, he was in *Completeness* by Itamar Moses at Theatre Exile. Ijames is currently an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Villanova University, where he teaches several courses including Playwriting and Acting.

Characters

Pastor Dave

Dave is Youth Pastor at Community Covenant Church. He is kind and caring toward everyone, but lonely.

Maurice

Maurice is a high school student. He is athletic and genuine. He is probably an introvert trapped in the body of an extrovert.

Jennifer

Jennifer is a high school student. She is shy and *deeply* empathetic, a peacemaker. She often feels overlooked.

Leila

Leila is a high school student and daughter of the Head Pastor. She is popular and intelligent. Leila may seem a bit devious, but ultimately she only wants to help others.

Reggie

Reggie is a high school student. He is confined to a wheelchair, following a car accident. Reggie wants to be a preacher when he is probably a prophet.

Wyatt

Wyatt is a high school student, new to the youth group. Wyatt does not know yet what he believes, but he remains open. He is not sure what to do with his body and his thoughts.



Discussion Questions

Before Seeing the Play:

1. Which character description speaks to you the most? Why? When seeing the play, follow your character. How do the choices that character makes reflect that description?

After Seeing the Play:

2. What individual journeys do you see the characters taking through the course of the play? Which journey do you feel is the most important?
3. Why do you think Wyatt is able to perform miracles? What purpose do they serve?
4. What is the source of the tension between Pastor Dave and Wyatt?
5. If you had Wyatt's abilities, how would you use them?
6. If you were in Reggie's position, would you want to be healed? Why or why not?

