

The Yellow Boat by David Saar

About the Show

The story of *The Yellow Boat* is a glorious affirmation of a child's life and the strength and courage of all children. This dramatization is based on the true story of David and Sonja Saar's son, Benjamin, who was born with congenital hemophilia and died in 1987 at the age of 8 of AIDS-related complications. A uniquely gifted visual artist, Benjamin's buoyant imagination transformed his physical and emotional pain into a blaze of colors and shapes in his fanciful drawings and paintings. A Scandinavian folksong tells of three little boats: "One was blue, one was red, and one was yellow as the sun. They sailed far out to sea.

The blue one returned to the harbor. The red one sailed home, too. But the yellow boat sailed up to the sun." Benjamin always concluded his bedtime ritual by saying, "Mom, you can be the red boat or the blue boat, but I am the yellow boat." Benjamin's remarkable voyage continues to touch audiences around the world.

(Synopsis provided by Dramatic Publishing)



Recommended for Audiences of the age 8 (with parental supervision) and older

About the Playwright



David Saar holds a B.A. in speech and drama from Valparaiso University, a B.S. in English and theatre education from the University of Minnesota, and an M.A. in child drama from Arizona State University. He is the founder of Childsplay, a theatre company that began in 1977 in Tempe, Arizona. Since founding the company, he has overseen and directed several new plays in development. Before he founded Childsplay, he worked for the Mesa School district as a drama curriculum specialist. Saar served on the roster of the Arts-In-Education program for nine years and has been an adjunct faculty member of the department of theatre at Arizona State University.

Saar has received many accolades for his work as artistic director of Childsplay, including the prestigious Senator's Cultural Award by the East Valley Cultural Alliance of Arizona, which in 1988, recognized Childsplay's valuable contribution to the audience of today and tomorrow, and the 1989 Arizona Governor's Arts Award. In 1991, he won three important honors: the national Winifred Ward "Dare to Dream" Fellowship; an invitation to participate in the Kennedy Center's New Visions/New voices Program; and a Distinguished achievement Award from the ASU College of Fine Arts. The phoenix Futures forum "Dream Weavers" vision awards was his in 1992. Saar continues to achieve more throughout his artistic journey.

Words to Discuss

Blood Transfusion: A transfusion that provides the part or parts of the blood you need with red blood cells being the most commonly transfused.

Epidemic: a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time.

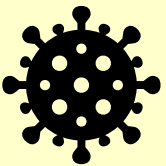
HIV/AIDS: HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that attacks cells that help the body fight against infections. Due to the body not being able to fight infections, it makes the body more vulnerable to infections and diseases. It can be spread through certain bodily fluids or a person with HIV or through sharing injection drug treatment. If HIV is left untreated, then it can lead to the disease AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). AIDS is the last stage of the virus and occurs when the body's immune system is badly damaged because of the virus.

Hemophilia: A medical condition in which the ability of the blood to clot is severely reduced, causing the sufferer to bleed severely from even a slight injury.

History of HIV/AIDS

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system.

If the virus is not treated adequately, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). Unfortunately, there is no effective cure for the virus. Once an individual has contracted HIV, they have it for life. Although, the virus can be controlled with lifelong treatments that can allow the individual to live a long and healthy life. Additionally, protecting their partners.



The HIV infection in humans came from a type of chimpanzee in Central Africa. The chimpanzee version of the virus (SIV, simian immunodeficiency virus) was probably passed to humans when humans hunted these chimpanzees for meat and encountered their infected blood. Studies show that HIV may have been transmitted from chimpanzees as far back as the 1800s. Over decades, HIV slowly spread across Africa and later into other parts of the world. We know that the virus has existed in the US since at least the mid to late 1970s.



For Additional Information on HIV/AIDS [Click Here](#)

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

PLEASE DISCUSS THESE THEATRE RULES WITH YOUR CHILDREN.



RESPECT OTHERS

Turn off all screens or beeping noises. It really bugs the actors and other people in the audience.

Do your best to not rattle your candy wrapper or drink bottle.

Please put all your garbage in the trash located in the lobby or restrooms.

Keep feet off railings on the front row of the stage.

Visit the restroom before the performance or during the intermission.

If you need to talk during the show, please whisper.

Do not put your feet on the seat in front of you.

RESPECT THE THEATRE

DO NOT ENTER THE STAGE AREA.

This space is reserved for actors only.

NO outside food or drinks.

No pictures or video during the show.



Figure 1 Utah Children's Theatre Audience

Applicable Topics in Relation to Standards:

ELA:

- Analyzing plot structure, characters, settings, topics, in a literary text
- Writing text in a format of a letter
- Being able to verbally communicate interest and dislikes

Science:

- Understanding the biology of X and Y chromosomes
- Understanding why diseases and viruses exist in an ecosystem

Math:

- Analyzing charts to interpret the information that is being presented

Pre-Show Discussion(s):

Show Topics: This show will cover topics of life, death, HIV/AIDS, sickness, fear, compassion, and hemophilia. Please be prepared to discuss these topics with your students before the production in this Pre - Show Discussion.

Elementary

- Please discuss with students that *The Yellow Boat* is a true story about the playwright's son, Benjamin.
- Introduce the vocabulary words with the students and discuss any of the questions that arise from the introduction of words.
- Allow the students to ask questions about the history of HIV/AIDs and ways that it can be contracted
- Discuss with students about losing a loved one and how it feels. Additionally, allow students to discuss losing a loved one from a disease or virus that is uncontrollable.
- After the discussion, allow the students to debrief and digress from the discussion. Have them play a game, write, stretch, or anything that you see fit for the students in your classroom.

Middle School

- Please discuss with students *The Yellow Boat* is a true story about the playwright's son, Benjamin.
- Introduce the vocabulary words and ask students if they are not familiar with some of the words. If so, allow the students to ask questions or spend the time to investigate(s) the word on a deeper level
- Spend time discussing the history of HIV/AIDs with students
- Discuss the ways you can and cannot contract HIV/AIDS
- Discuss with students the importance of safe sex (if you feel this is applicable for your class)
- Discuss with students about losing a loved one and how it feels. Additionally, allow students to discuss losing a loved one from a disease or virus that is uncontrollable.
- After the discussion, allow the students to debrief and digress from the discussion. Have them play a game, write, stretch, or anything that you see fit for the students in your classroom.

High School

- Please discuss with students *The Yellow Boat* is a true story about the playwright's son, Benjamin.
- Introduce the vocabulary words and ask students if they are not familiar with some of the words. If so, allow the students to ask questions or spend the time to investigate(s) the word on a deeper level

The Yellow Boat Study Guide

- Spend time discussing the history of HIV/AIDs with students
- Discuss the ways you can and cannot contract HIV/AIDS
- Discuss with students about losing a loved one and how it feels. Additionally, allow students to discuss losing a loved one from a disease or virus that is uncontrollable.
- After the discussion, allow the students to debrief and digress from the discussion. Have them play a game, write, stretch, or anything that you see fit for the students in your classroom.

Post Show Activity/Discussions

Elementary School

Sample Discussion Questions:

- After the show take time to discuss with students what they liked, disliked, and are curious about in the show?
- Did they learn something new?
- What message did you receive from seeing this show?
- Were there any characters that you related to in the show? If so, why?

Post Show Activity

In legacy of Benjamin, each student should color the boat picture yellow provided or they can draw their own. However, as Benjamin loved to draw, allow students to draw in the background. The students are welcome to draw a realistic background or a background that is more symbolic. Once the students have completed their drawing, have display the drawings for others to see Benjamin's legacy.

[The Yellow Boat Coloring Sheet](#)

Middle School

Sample Discussion Questions:

- After the show take time to discuss with students what they liked, disliked, and are curious about in the show? How did it make you feel?
- Did they learn something new?
- What message did you receive from seeing this show?
- Were there any characters that you related to in the show? If so, why?
- What are some ways that you could help spread awareness for HIV/AIDS?

Post Show Activity

Write a letter to Benjamin. If you were able to speak with Benjamin before he passed away what would you say to him? He was a dreamer and loved to colors and drawing. Write at least a paragraph to Benjamin, but also consider drawing him something as well. If the students have lost someone unexpectedly allow them to write to write to

them instead, if they wish, however, continuing to keep the component of written and drawn work in the letter.

High School

Sample Discussion Questions:

- After the show take time to discuss with students what they liked, disliked, and are curious about in the show? How did it make you feel?
- Did they learn something new?
- What message did you receive from seeing this show?
- Were there any characters that you related to in the show? If so, why?
- What are some ways that you could help spread awareness for HIV/AIDS?

Post Show Activity

Activity #1: Benjamin left a legacy behind in his art through his struggle for life. Think about the legacy that you would like to leave after graduating high school. Write a letter to yourself for 10 years from now about the legacy that you hope to leave at your high school. What would you like to be known for at your graduation reunion? What would you like not to be known for? What impact or difference do you hope to have accomplished before graduating? Lastly, think about Benjamin and thank him for his legacy that he left and how you will strive to achieve such a memory for yourself.

OR

Activity #2: Create an awareness presentation either visual or performing that brings awareness to HIV/AIDs and the legacy of Benjamin, in *The Yellow Boat*.