

MATT MURPHY PRODUCTIONS  
presents

# Virtually Me!



a cyber-musical

## Study Guide

Dear Teacher,

Welcome to Wi-Fi High! My name is Zeke, the star of *Virtually Me!*, and I have put together this totally awesome study guide to help you and your students get the most out of *Virtually Me!* Our super rockin' study guide provides pre- and post-production discussion topics, as well as individual and class activities related to the themes and topics found in our show. These are just suggestions from yours truly, the Zekester, so please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. But check it: there is one activity I really want every class to participate in: the Fresh Face Photo Shoot. It is something you can all do together as a class, and then you can share it with other classes from all over the country by posting your photo on our blog, [www.virtuallyme.org/blog](http://www.virtuallyme.org/blog). See below on page 11 for more details.

I hope you and your class enjoy *Virtually Me!*

--Zeke

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TO DOWNLOAD SONGS, SEE OTHER FRESH FACE PHOTOS, READ UPDATES FROM  
THE CAST DURING THEIR TOUR, AND MORE, VISIT

[WWW.VIRTUALLYME.ORG](http://WWW.VIRTUALLYME.ORG)

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO ADD YOUR OWN COMMENTS TO THE BLOG.

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## The Characters:

**Zeke** – That’s me! Ezekiel Hutchins, but my buds call me Zeke. I was a major compu-dork in middle school, but now that I’m a freshman at Wi-Fi High, I’ve started this great website called Zekebook.com, and my cool factor has hit the roof!

**Jasper** – Jasper’s the new kid in town. He’s pretty lame when you first meet him, but he’s a cool dude. At least *now* he is since his Zekebook profile has been virtually cool-ified. Even though half the stuff that he said on his profile isn’t true, he’s still a good, honest person. Right?

**Lindsay** – Lindsay is our freshman class’s very-own fashionatti-hottie. She’s obsessed with clothes and fashion and always wants to be in-the-know about the newest fashion trends.

**Chloe** – Chloe is addicted to her cell phone. She’s a texting-machine. She’s in, like, a million clubs and runs them all through the hundreds of texts she send every day. Chloe and Lindsay are best friends.

**Principal Wiggins** – P-Wiggs, as I like to call him, is our principal, and he’s always talking about using pen and paper instead of the Internet to communicate, talking face-to-face, and using technology responsibly. Sometimes he sounds like he’s straight out of the Stone Age, but occasionally his words of wisdom are worth listening to.



## The Story:

Welcome to Willard Fillmore High School – or “Wi-Fi High” as us technology-minded students call it (“Go, Killer Apps!”). Three freshman friends are already fitting in nicely: Zeke, online king of Wi-Fi High, with his popular “Zekebook” site; Lindsay, the school expert on fashion and cute boys; and Chloe, who is both a hip virtual geek AND a good student! Their greatest joy: their cell phones and laptops. Their greatest fear: “the Internet going down!”



All three are already on familiar terms (perhaps too familiar) with Principal Wiggins (or as Zeke calls him, “P-Wiggs”), a man whose hipness quotient expired a few decades ago but who truly cares for his students. At the beginning of the musical, Principal Wiggins announces the school’s new brochure in which one student will be elected to be the new “*Fresh Face*” of Wi-Fi High, and the prize will be an Official Photo Shoot. Lindsay, of course, is already thinking of what she’ll wear for the shoot (despite her 2% poll ratings), and she just may have a chance of winning with Chloe as her campaign manager, who instantly begins texting her contacts to come up with a platform and a slogan.

In the midst of the Fresh Face excitement, we meet their new friend, Jasper. Jasper is a sweet guy but a bit innocent – a tough mix in high school. Jasper has an instant crush on Lindsay, who can't even remember his name. So Zeke helps Jasper get a virtual upgrade: Zeke will totally change Jasper's lame online Zekebook.com profile, promising Jasper that he will be "Cooler Than You Are" – even cool enough to make Lindsay notice him. The only problem is, in order to make Jasper cooler online, Zeke adds a lot of stuff to Jasper's profile that isn't true. Now Lindsay thinks Jasper can play guitar and is best friends with Lady Gaga.

As Jasper desperately tries to keep Lindsay from finding out who he really is, Chloe is busy running Lindsay's *Fresh Face* campaign and sending a dozen texts before class. She can't seem to find the time to stop texting and start studying for her Spanish Test in "Can't Put It Down". And when she gets caught texting in class (!!), Principal Wiggins takes her phone away for a week! Meanwhile, Zeke is having trouble staying on top of the online world with Zekebook.com when another school website starts up and gains its popularity with its special "Scandal Scoop" column.

As the kids try their hardest "Keeping Up with the 2010s," things spiral out of control when Chloe finds something embarrassing on Lindsay's phone, Jasper adds something to it, and Zeke posts it on Zekebook! He takes it down after only a few minutes, but the damage has been done. Students start making cruel comments and reposting it all over the Internet ("All in Good Fun"). When Lindsay doesn't show up to the official Fresh Face campaign the next day, Principal Wiggins explains that she didn't come to school, and no one knows where she is ("A Thousand Million People"). After Principal Wiggins reprimands them for their carelessness, Zeke, Chloe, and Jasper figure out a way to put the tools of technology to good use, mobilizing the entire school to help them search for Lindsay. Realizing that her friends never intended for any of this to happen, Lindsay finds it in her heart to forgive Zeke, Chloe, and Jasper, but not before suggesting that they all strive towards finding a better balance between the virtual world and the real world ("Virtually Me").

Touching on several key issues, such as friendship, honesty, personal responsibility, and cyberbullying, *Virtually Me!* is a funny and extremely cool musical with serious and timely underpinnings that will be sure to trigger lively and thoughtful discussions among your students as they – like Zeke, Lindsay, Chloe, and Jasper – try to balance the wonders of technology and humanity in their own lives.



# Pre-Performance Activities and Discussion Topics:

## 1) Vocabulary Building

In today's world, we gotta keep things quick and TTP (To The Point!). That is why the Zekester and all my pals use loads of abbreviations, or even made-up words, to communicate with each other. Since not everyone may be familiar with this lingo, ask your students to study some of these new or challenging words that will be heard in the show. If you are anything like P-Wiggs, my guess is these words might be more challenging for you than for your students! But hey, that's cool; sometimes the students can educate the teachers, too! ;) A key with the answers can be found at the end of the study guide.

### ***Real World:***

AU REVOIR  
 AVALANCHE  
 BULLYING  
 CARTOGRAPHY  
 DOMAIN  
 HACK  
 HEINOUS  
 HIJINK  
 HUB  
 SCANDAL  
 SCOOP  
 SLOGAN  
 SPIRAL  
 TSUNAMI  
 TWEAK  
 VIRTUAL

### ***Virtual World:***

BFF  
 BLOG  
 CYBERBULLYING  
 DOMAIN  
 FRIENDING  
 INSTA-POLL  
 LOL  
 OMG  
 QWERTY  
 SKYPE  
 STREAMING  
 SYNC  
 TAG  
 TWEET  
 TWITTER  
 URL  
 VIRAL

## 2) Preparing Students for the Performance

Discuss the following with your students:

A. Some important terms to know about a play or a musical:

- **Setting** (where and when does the story take place?)
- **Characters** (who are the people?)
- **Plot** (what happens?)
- **Theme** (what is the Big Idea?)
- **Structure: Acts and Scenes** (how is the play "built"?)
- **Style** (how again: - realistic? comedic? fantastical? – etc.)

B. Some important people who make a play happen:

- The **playwright** writes the dialogue
- The **composer/lyricist** writes the music and lyrics
- **Actors** bring the dialogue and music to life
- The **designers** create the visual world of the musical. Often times there are several designers for a musical:

- **set**
- **costumes**
- **lighting**
- **projections**
- The **choreographer** creates the dance and staging during the songs
- The **director** brings all of these elements together to create the best show possible!

C. Some ways to be a great audience member:

Great audiences can make good shows even better. Here's how:

- Remember, this is a live performance, not a pre-recorded TV show. Please don't talk, eat, or drink the show.
- Listen, really listen!
- Laugh if it's funny, cry if it's sad – but please don't talk (the actors can hear you)!
- Eat your candy bar before or after the performance.
- Turn off cell phones and pagers! No photography or filming!

### 3) Insta-Poll Time – Technology and You

In *Virtually Me!*, you will see the characters attempting to balance their lives with technology. Much of the musical's plot is about “*Keepin' Up with the Twenty-Tens.*” In the blink of an eye, modern technology has changed our personal lives. *Virtually Me!* reveals what can happen when you get caught up with technology and the consequences of abusing it.



According to statistics found on <http://www.cmch.tv/mentors/hottopic.asp?id=70>, the percentage of kids with cell phones is as follows:

- 60% of tweens (ages 10-14)
- 84% of teens (ages 15-18)

According to statistics found on <http://www.frankwbaker.com/mediause.htm>:

- 15% of teens ages 12-17 send more than 200 text messages a day
- The typical American teen sends and receives 50 or more texts a day
- One quarter of text messages sent are sent during class
- 65% of high school students use their cell phones in school
- 32% of girls ages 12-14 blog
- 18% of boys ages 15-17 blog
- 29% of kids ages 8-18 own a laptop
- 55% of teens have a profile on a social networking site like MySpace or Facebook
- 51% check their sites more than once a day
- 22% check their sites more than 10 times a day
- 39% have posted something they later regretted
- 37% have used the sites to make fun of other students
- 25% have created a profile with a false identity
- 24% have hacked into someone else's social networking account

How has technology affected your life?

- a) Let's determine the statistics of your class! What percentage of students in your class...
- have cell phones?
  - have texting plans?
  - have Facebook accounts?
  - have a blog?

How do you compare? Are you above or below average?

- b) How many electronic devices do you know how to use?  
 c) How many hours a day do you spend using these devices?  
 d) What is your preferred way of communicating with a friend – Face-to-face? Cell phone? Email? Texting? And why?

#### 4) Cyberbullying and You

Do you know about cyberbullying? What have you heard about it? As the world progresses and technology develops faster and faster (email, IM, texting, blogs, social networking), it also increases the opportunities for bullying. Bullying is no longer just happening at recess on the playground or in the classroom. Now bullying has forced its way into people's homes and lives outside of school through modern technology. Using the Internet, phones, and other electronic devices, cyberbullying involves repeated, intentional, hostile behavior by any one person or group that is meant to harm others. In *Virtually Me!*, along with the characters struggling to keep up with technology, you will ALSO see how one character gets cyberbullied by her best friends and the rest of the school. See below for several exercises related to cyberbullying.



## Post-Performance Activities and Discussion Topics:

Now that your students have seen the play, it's time to further enrich their experience with the following activities. Feel free to pick and choose what you feel is most appropriate for your students or try them all!

### 1) Character Breakdown

Divide into groups of four or more, and discuss the following topics. After a few minutes, share your group's thoughts to the class.

- a) Chloe
  - Was it unfair of Principal Wiggins to take Chloe's phone away?
  - How much is too much texting?
- b) Jasper
  - Is Jasper a bad person for misrepresenting himself online?
- c) Zeke
  - Why do you think that Zeke cares so much about Zekebook.com?
  - Is Zeke selfish? Why or why not?
- d) Lindsay
  - Is what happened to Lindsay cyberbullying? Why or why not?
  - Did Lindsay deserve what happened to her? Does anyone deserve to be cyberbullied?
  - What forms of "punishment" would you suggest for Zeke, Chloe, and Jasper? Should Zeke be more punished than the others? Or are they all equally responsible?
  - Do you think that Chloe, Zeke, and Jasper really meant to hurt Lindsay? Why or why not?
  - What does bullying look like? List the different ways someone might be cyberbullied and how someone may be bullied on the playground.
  - What if Zeke hadn't found Lindsay at the mall? What should she have done for help instead of hiding out at the mall? Below are some possible answers:
    - Tell an adult or someone you trust
    - Block the sender
    - Don't meet the bully in person
    - Save the messages to show authority
    - Tell a teacher
    - Leave the website(s), log off

### 2) Relating the Play to You

- a) If you could play any character in the play, who would it be and why?
- b) Which character do you think is most similar to you and how?
- c) Have you ever been cyberbullied?
- d) Do you know anyone who has been cyberbullied?

### 3) Can You Hear Me Now? Cell Phones and You.

a) According to this website, <http://bensoncheng.wordpress.com/2010/05/07/teens-cell-phones-and-texting-statistics/>, here are a few statistics of what teenagers are doing with their cell phones. What is the breakdown for your class?

- 83% use their phones to take pictures
- 64% share pictures with others
- 60% play music on their phones
- 46% play games on their phones
- 32% exchange videos on their phones
- 31% exchange instant messages on their phones
- 27% go online for general purposes on their phones
- 23% access social network sites on their phones
- 21% use email on their phones
- 11% purchase things via their phones



b) Are you a textaholic?

- a. Do you text more than 20 times a day?
- b. When you get a text, do you interrupt whatever you are doing to read it?
- c. Do you keep your phone on all the time, even while sleeping, so you don't miss a text?
- d. What do you use your phone for more: talking or texting?
- e. Can you text while doing other tasks?
- f. Do you sometimes text in class?
- g. Can you text without even looking at your phone?

### 4) Cell Phone Brainstorm Session!

a) Name some positive uses of having a cell phone (possible answers below):

- Safety or use in an emergency
- Convenience, being able to reach your mom or dad right away
- Staying in touch with friends
- Calendar and other apps
- Find out about fun events and meet-ups with your friends

b) Name some negative uses (possible answers below):

- Costs
- Distraction
- Cyberbullying through texting
- Lack of sleep
- Lack of privacy
- Lack of studying time
- Becomes a substitute for face-to-face conversation

## 5) Learning about Cyberbullying

- 42% of kids have been bullied while online. 1 in 4 has had it happen more than once.
- 35% of kids have been threatened online. Nearly 1 in 5 has had it happen more than once.
- 58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online.
- 53% of kids admit having said something mean or hurtful to another person online. More than 1 in 3 has done it more than once.
- 58% have not told their parents or an adult about something mean or hurtful that happened to them online.

*Based on 2004 i-SAFE survey of 1,500 students grades 4-8*

- Teens who share their identities and thoughts on social networking sites, such as MySpace and Facebook, are more likely to be targets than are those who do not use social networking sites (39% have been cyberbullied in some way, compared with 22% of online teens who do not use social networks).

*National phone survey of 935 teenagers by Pew Internet and American Life, Nov 2006*



## 6) Cyberbullying is a Crime!

States across the country are continuing to reevaluate the legislation regarding cyberbullying. Many have amended their laws to allow school officials to punish students for harassment even if it happens off school grounds. Other schools are now obligated to create task forces or anti-cyberbullying policies to promote awareness. Punishment itself can range from suspension from school, paying a fine, going to court, and even time in jail. To find out more about laws related to cyberbullying in your state, please visit this website, <http://www.cyberbullyalert.com/blog/2008/10/cyber-bullying-state-laws-and-policies/>. What are the laws in your state? What kind of laws do you think there should be? Create a campaign!

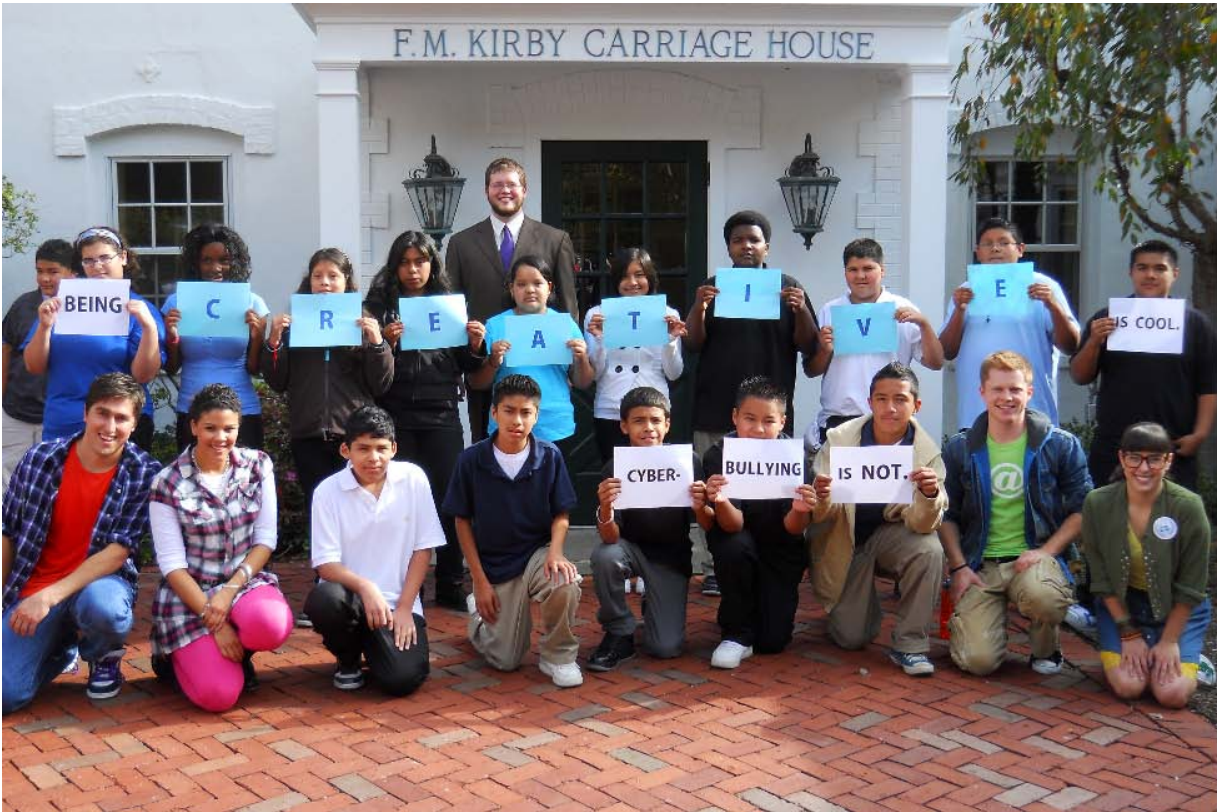
### 7) Is It Cyberbullying? Pop Quiz!

How do you know when you are the victim of cyberbullying? With a partner or small group, go through the scenarios below, and circle "Yes" if you believe it is an example of cyberbullying and "No" if it is not. An answer key can be found at the end of the study guide. When you're done with this quiz, have your students come up with their own scenarios.

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 1) A friend IMs you the following, "I can't play with you at lunch tomorrow."                     | YES | NO |
| 2) A student emails your friends a really mean, hateful message about you.                        | YES | NO |
| 3) Almost everyone in your class gets an invite to Tad's party except you.                        | YES | NO |
| 4) Someone posts a picture of you on Facebook doing a cannonball into the school's swimming pool. | YES | NO |
| 5) Someone posts a picture on a blog of you crying with "Crybaby" written across your face.       | YES | NO |
| 6) You get an anonymous email from someone who threatens to beat you up in school.                | YES | NO |







**Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, NJ**



**First Lutheran School in St. Petersburg, FL**

### 9) Being Balanced and Socially Conscious

By the end of *Virtually Me!*, we are left with the sense that with the power of our electronic tools we carry a huge responsibility. How can we learn to both “celebrate” and “separate” the online and the real? How can we become good citizens of both worlds? Lindsay suggests to her friends that they take a kind of vacation from logging on. How do you feel now about her idea? Brainstorm in small groups or with the class about other ways to become balanced in your own lives.

Cyberbullying has become a frequent, and sometimes tragic, occurrence among young people. Brainstorm about how you and your classmates can actively create a climate in your school in which cyberbullying will not thrive. Look closely and honestly at your school in terms of student interaction: what are the strengths that can be reinforced? What areas could be improved? Most important, how can you help in the ways that you deal with other students?

### 10) Creative Writing

Ask your students to think about (perhaps discuss) and write:

- I. The Pros and Cons of a Slow World versus a Fast World
- II. The Ethics of the Virtual World
- IV. Keeping Up with the Twenty-Tens
- V. Who Is in Control: the Tech or You?
- VI. Write an essay describing what the theme of *Virtually Me* is.
- VII. Is this statement true or false: It’s always best to tell the truth. Why or why not?
- VIII. Send an apology letter to someone you have cyberbullied.
- IX. Send a forgiveness letter if you have ever been the victim of cyberbullying.

### 11) Being Drama Critics

While it’s still fresh in your minds, discuss *Virtually Me!*.

- a) Discuss the **main characters** and the actors who portrayed them. What specific lines or actions did actors use to help you understand these characters as embodying real teenagers? To what extent did they resemble people, or types of people, you know? If you were directing the musical, would you add or change anything about the characters?
- b) How did the **songs** change or add to your understanding of the characters or the themes of the show? Which songs did you particularly enjoy and why?
- c) Discuss the **designs**. For example, how did the **set** help you to imagine the world of *Virtually Me!*? How did the **costumes** inform you about the characters? If you were directing the musical, would you add or change anything about the set or costume design?
- d) Discuss the emotional storylines at the center of the musical. Were you able to follow the characters’ stories clearly? Did you care for the characters? Which storylines or characters did you care about most and why?

## 12) Going Viral Activity

This activity demonstrates how quickly gossip can travel simply by word of mouth. Imagine how much faster news can spread when it goes viral on the Internet, whether it's a photo, article, tweet, video, etc. When would information traveling this fast be a good thing? What about a bad thing?

1. With the exception of one student, put the class in groups of 3 or 4.
2. Then the teacher whispers what s/he thinks was on Lindsay's phone to the one student who is not in a group.
3. The student whispers what the teacher said to one of the groups. Then that group splits up and each student whispers the information to separate groups. This repeats until the information has been shared with all of the groups.
4. The teacher can time this whole process and see how long it took for everyone to hear.

How quickly did the information get passed on? Did it change? Would it spread faster and change more if it was on the Internet?



## Vocabulary Building Answer Key

### *Real World:*

**Au Revoir** – goodbye in French

**Avalanche** – a large mass of snow, ice, etc. detached from a mountain slope and sliding or falling suddenly downward

**Bullying** – Teasing, harassing, or intimidating an individual

**Cartography** – the art or practice of drawing maps or charts

**Domain** – a realm of personal knowledge, responsibility, etc.

**Hack** – to devise or modify a computer program

**Heinous** – hateful, abominable

**Hijinks** – boisterous celebration or merrymaking, unrestrained fun

**Hub** – a center around which other things revolve; a focus of activity

**Scandal** – a disgraceful action, circumstance, etc., damage to reputation, public disgrace

**Scoop** – informal news, information obtained from experience or an immediate source

**Slogan** – a distinctive phrase, or motto of any party or person, catchword or catch phrase

**Spiral** – to advance or increase steadily

**Tsunami** – an unusually large sea wave produced by a seaquake

**Tweak** – to make a minor adjustment

**Virtual** – temporarily simulated or extended by computer software

### *Virtual World:*

**BFF** – best friends forever

**Blog** – journal written online and accessible to other Internet users

**Cyberbullying** – harassing someone through use of cell phones, Internet, etc.

**Domain** – website name for group of devices on a network, administered under same protocol

**Friending** – the act of requesting someone to be your friend on Facebook

**Insta-Poll** – online survey

**LOL** – an abbreviation for “laugh out loud”

**OMG** – an abbreviation for “oh my god”

**Qwerty** – of or pertaining to a keyboard having the keys in traditional typewriter arrangement

**Skype** – program that permits free online chat using computers or phones

**Streaming** – transferring data so it can be received and processed in a steady stream

**Sync** – to set two things to the same time or to update a database shared by two devices

**Tag** – to link someone’s profile on Facebook to a video, photo, status, etc., or key words used to describe a post so it can be found in a search

**Tweet** – a post on Twitter

**Twitter** – Online social networking site.

**URL** – Uniform Resource Locator, a system for specifying addresses on the Internet

**Viral** – information, campaign, video, etc. spread via the Internet rapidly and at large rate

## Is It Cyberbullying? Pop Quiz! Answer Key

- 1) No
- 2) Yes
- 3) No
- 4) No
- 5) Yes
- 6) Yes

**BEING**

**IS COOL.**

**CYBER-**

**BULLYING**

**IS NOT.**