

10 TIPS FOR EARLY CHILDREN BOOK WRITERS

Write what you know

God doesn't waste pain. He shapes us through our experiences, both positive and negative. Take some time and recall a specific memory or experience that shaped you, preferably as a child. Evoke the senses. Let us see it, smell it, taste it, etc. The best books are ones that we write from our experiences. Children relate to experiences that are things they have the possibility of going through as well (or wish they could go through.)

Establish Your Felt Need

You are writing a book. What is the book's purpose? To entertain or to inform? Once you have established your purpose, next establish your felt need. What is the problem you feel children have? How can your book solve it?

Research

What are your favorite children's books? Why are they your favorite? What vocabulary do they use? In a sense, children are the most difficult to write for since you have to communicate an entire message in a short amount of words and pages. Descriptions have to be shortened and less vivid than adult books because kids already use their imagination. Any words that are used that kids do not understand can jeopardize their comprehension of your material.

Know your competition

Be well-versed on what children's books are already out there that are similar to what you want to write about. What unique spin can you present about the topic you are writing about?

Be multi-layered

Some of the best-crafted stories are ones in which both the parent and child get something out of the story. Think about books like *The Giving Tree*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Ferdinand the Bull*. Kids love the animals and the children in the story. But parents grasp the overall themes of gentleness and giving to others. This is why these books have withstood the test of time after all these years.

Start with one scene

You have an idea, or a concept of what you want to write about. Think about one scene you want to include in the book. Map it out or outline it if it helps.

Evoke the senses

Take that one scene and play the journalist. See it, smell it, taste it, hear it, touch it. Example- writing a picture book for kids on grief- what is it like to be a child who lost a loved one? Smell the flowers, taste the casseroles, feel the tears and sadness.

Know your audience

I heard it said, "if you don't write to your audience, you are writing to no one." That's so right! If it's ages 4-8 make sure the vocab is appropriate to 4-8 year olds, if it's board book, simpler the better.

Be real

Kids like books they can relate to on some level. If you are naturally funny, write a humor book. If you want to tackle a tough topic, consult scripture. What does the Bible have to say about the topic you are covering? Write about topics you know personally. Model the book after an experience with a grandchild or an event you witnessed.

Look to the world

So much of our world offers writing prompts. That red balloon floating in the sky. A cool breeze. People watch at the park. Sit at a coffee shop. What are people doing? Talking about? Engaging with? Take overarching concepts on TV and boil them down into concepts for kids. Use that as fodder to start writing.

