

Tips on writing: How to help your children write stories that reach people's hearts

- Writing essays vs writing fiction
 - We focus on essay writing over story writing.
 - We want a language arts program that is easy to grade.
 - Fiction writing has different "rules" from essay writing.
- Is fiction writing important?
 - God used stories in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.
 - Well-written stories capture people's hearts.

Where do I start?

- Tip #1
 - Read to your children, read with your children, and keep reading with them.
 - Allow your children plenty of time to read fiction stories, both Christian and secular.
 - When your child is reading a book from the library, talk with him about the story.
 - Ask questions to draw out his thinking about the author's meaning.
- Tip #2
 - Key Elements of a story
 - A Protagonist
 - This is the main character.
 - The reader needs to care about this character more than any other character in the story.
 - An Inner Journey
 - The protagonist should not be perfect. He needs a flaw that can change throughout the story. This is his inner journey.
 - Reading about the inner journey reaches deep into the reader's heart to help her experience change along with the protagonist.
 - A Story Goal
 - The protagonist needs to strive after this goal throughout the story, even if the goal changes.
 - A problem close to the beginning of the story should start the "journey" for the protagonist.
 - Conflicts make the story interesting.
 - An Antagonist
 - This is the person or thing that is against the protagonist that is trying to stop him from reaching the story goal.
 - It may be a villain or just a person who is in the way.
 - It may be circumstances.
 - It can be the protagonist who is his own enemy.
 - A Resolution
 - The story goal needs to be met in some way.
 - Sometimes the goal is not met in stories, but usually the story goal is accomplished.

How can I help them at least tolerate grammar?

- Tip #3
 - Show your children that grammar is important as it relates to writing stories.
 - Give them funny examples of when meanings change because punctuation is used incorrectly or words are placed in incorrect order.

How can I help them improve their writing?

- Tip #4
 - Be careful which writing program you use for fiction writing.
 - Good writing uses words in such a way that the reader can picture in their mind what the writer is trying to get across without always directly telling them.
 - Show vs Tell
 - Watch out for sensory words.
 - Show the emotions.
 - Watch out for adverbs.
 - Don't give away the suspense.
 - Know the difference between description and telling.
 - Go through scenarios that they can write to practice this skill.
 - Have them name the characters.
 - Have them figure out the emotions.
 - Have them describe and show the feelings and events.

How can I help them reach people's hearts?

- Tips #5
 - Encourage your writer to develop characters with real motivations and real struggles.
 - Show them how this works by talking about it in stories, movies, and real life. The more they see characters and their flaws and how they change, the easier they will be able to write their own realistic characters.

Final Tips:

- Tip #6
 - Teach them to type, and how to use Word or another word processor program.
 - Supply them with the tools they need to be successful.
- Tip #7
 - Put away your red pen. Don't edit their stories, but be willing to talk with them and give them ideas, IF they want you to.
- Tip # 8
 - Provide them books on writing and you should also read them so that you can know what they are learning and how you can encourage them.
 - Look into OYAN (One Year Adventure Novel) for writing a novel: clearwaterpress.com
 - Suggested books: *Stories for God's Glory*, *Plot Versus Character*, *Go Teen Writers: Write Your Novel*, *Go Teen Writers: Edit Your Novel*, *Storyworld First*, *Punctuation 101*, *Write Your Novel in a Month*, *Irresistible Novel*, *Save the Cat Writes a Novel*