

Ten Ways to Wow Parents Though Your Writing

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1. Make sure you know your audience and their needs. Research the current situation. What problems or struggles are parents facing? What wisdom or help are they seeking? What principles, ideologies, or characteristics are they trying to instill in their children?

2. Writing a parenting book or a children's book – research what is new and what books remain out there – what is evergreen and what is timely. Perhaps write a felt-need book or an issue situation book. Reach out to your target audience and experts.

Perhaps ask your church or school if they will allow you to reach out to the parents, like a focus group. Maybe put together a focus group of parents of preschoolers that can discuss the needs of the children or teenagers.

Parents are eager to learn something new and how to implement what they have learned.

Submit a galley to the local teachers with a questionnaire. What did they like about the book, and how could it serve the audience better? Children's book galley – with a questionnaire. Beta readers for parenting books may be a way to go. But, of course, your friends and family will be biased.

3. Parents are desperately looking for answers, but most importantly, looking for the "how to do it." How can I raise my child to have a strong foundation in Jesus? What do I specifically need to do? Unfortunately, too many books tell parents what to do but not how to do it organically. Walk alongside the parent. Let them know you care – you're not just trying to sell a book. Let them feel the concern and the desire to serve them in your writing.

4. Have a biblical index and bibliography (parents love to look at other books on the same subject) or research all bible verses that pertain to the message. Maybe add a glossary of keywords.

Break significant chapters into bit-size reading with headers. Make sure your text is under 40,000 or so words. If they see it looks like a lot of reading; they may not pick it up.

5. Don't talk down to parents, "You must, You need to, You have to, You should understand." Give examples of how you did it or how others have done it. Ensure you don't leave them feeling guilty that they "had not done that or think they messed up in their parenting journey." Share with them your mistakes. Also, help them to feel they can do it! Parents need encouragement today more than ever.

6. For picture books, make sure the illustrations are outstanding! The child should understand the story through the illustrations; words are just there to support the illustrations. Picture a

scene in your mind and think of the pictures. Keep the action happening (what will happen next). And the words should be age-appropriate, about 400 to 900 words total.

7. When writing Christian children's books, don't veer so far off that the Christian message becomes diluted or takes a back seat. For example, I know of one author who wrote a children's book about the birth of Christ, but this author took too much liberty with the story, and the main message was utterly lost. I was like, what I am I reading? I thought this was a book about the birth of Christ. Too much fiction at the cost of losing the biblical narrative.

8. Look for a unique way to describe an evergreen problem or a biblical story. Nancy Sanders's book "One Sentence Storybooks" has only one sentence on each page for the Biblical narrative - 'One Truth to Learn' 'One Verse to Say' and 'One Prayer to Pray.' She wrote an excellent book using simplicity as a tool.

And parents love when a book teaches a moral and a faith lesson. (Bullying – My book Fast Freddy.) Let the character teach the moral or the lesson. Also, understand the difference between a moral and a lesson in the story. Influencing moral behavior is different from building faith. A faith lesson reflects on Jesus in the story, and a moral lesson teaches about how Jesus acted.

9. Clyde Young and Michelle Medlock Adams (both extremely established) wrote a book "Writing & Selling Children's Books in the Christian Market, and they talk about writing high-concept ideas. These are books that capture the imagination and have the wow factor. For example, remember the left behind series; those books had a wow factor.

Also, incorporate the "What If" What if Mommy turned into Superwoman? Or What if Mary Poppins had children of her own? What if Eve didn't bite the apple?

10. Make sure you take the parent and the child on the journey together. If the parent loves the story, they will want to read it to their kids! If the parent feels they have learned from your parenting book, they will tell others!

Remember, we serve God and are called to do our best with our God-given abilities. And ask for help from those who have gone before you and remember to help those who come after you – we are all the body of Christ!