

JOURNALING: Calling Forth the Muses

'Tis the season when in days of old, kids would make ink for their schoolwork from the soot scraped off the inside of the chimney. More likely nowadays you'll find kids doing homework on the laptop in the glow of the TV with headphones on while the CD player spins.

So if the thought of writing a journal by hand seems a bit anachronistic, pick up a copy of *Rachel's Journal: The Story of a Pioneer Girl* by Marissa Moss (Harcourt Brace, \$15). Kids will recognize it as part of the delightful journaling series also by Moss, *Amelia's Notebook*, *Amelia Hits the Road* and others (\$14.95, Ten Speed Press) which have turned kids onto journaling in classrooms across the land.

In *Rachel's Journal*, kids meet a family heading to California from Illinois with all the details recorded in Rachel's notebook that celebrates each new day as an adventure. Kids will love the little details that fill every page of this story, just as in the *Amelia* books- flowers stuck in the book, pieces of hair, a button here and there, a toenail of a wolf, there's lots for kids to enjoy besides just the writing and the hilarious drawings by Rachel. There are funny anecdotes throughout the journal entries, my favorite being the time an old lady scared away hostile Indians by taking out her false teeth!

The feeling that kids are sure to get from this delightful book is that EACH of our lives has significance and that EACH of us is on a journey, and if we don't write it down, we'll forget it! Whether we're walking to California or racing to the millennium, our lives each matter and the best way to validate

that sense of purpose and direction is to WRITE each and every day, even if nothing earthshaking happened.

Therefore I beseech you,--if you've got a "ten to teen" kid to buy presents for this year, please consider a blank journal and a good pen. A great example of a journal kids will love is *Through my Eyes: A Journal for Teens* (Rising Moon Publishing, \$12.95) with its snappy blue cover with eye-catching graphics, high quality paper, and intriguing "starters" to get the writing going. In the same series, Linda Kranz has also edited *All About Me* (Rising Moon, \$12.95) which is a first keepsake journal for young writers and its sequel, *More About Me* (Rising Moon, \$12.95) which will certainly call forth the muses of writing for any kid, boy or girl (although it is certainly easier to get girls to write!) Kids don't often get treated to great pens, either. They settle for Bic Sticks or whatever is handy. Treat your budding journal-writer to a fabulous pen--maybe a ceramic tip pen, or one with silver or gold ink. Making the writing process easier by using the BEST materials is a lot easier than you would imagine. In school kids tend to get yucky paper and worse pens. Don't do it to them at home.

Keep in mind that there's nothing like setting a good example to get kids to write in their journals daily by turning off the TV and the radio, unplugging the phone, and sitting at the dining room table with them to face the blank page. *For My Child: A Mother's Keepsake Journal* is designed for moms to tell their kids about themselves, with story starters as well as space to write whatever you want. It's the perfect antidote for the mom who WANTS to write but just doesn't know where to start.

One thing is guaranteed: if you make time to write every day (instead of making excuses), every one's journal will fill up with funny stories, stupid

jokes, irreverent pictures drawn by doodlers. Years from now, you can recapture the past by rereading those journals. But one thing is sure: if you don't write it now, you won't be able to read it later. So WRITE ON!

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