

Children & School Visits

Do you want to know what my favorite part is about doing an author school visit? Everything! I love every part of it. Even my inner child loves doing school visits -- it gives her a chance to get out and stretch her legs, exercise her sense of humor, and be among people her own age for a little while. Of course, I have to rein her in every now and then -- she takes such liberties, at times -- tsk tsk, you know how children can be ...



What surprises me is how many children's authors I've met who have no interest in doing an author school visit. They just don't know the fun they're missing. For me anyway, it's the icing on the cake. It's the best part about being a children's author. Writing the book was the hard part, getting a publisher was right up there with hard, but more of a pain in the butt than anything else. School visits are the very best part of being published ... not to mention, that's where an author makes their money.

In talking with some, it comes down to speaking to a group -- *any*group. Doesn't matter how old the group is, they don't want to do it. I guess I have to respect that ... to each his own, they say. What they don't seem to realize is, children are so honest and trusting. They hold you in awe and high regard because you "wrote a book" -- jeeppers, they don't even care what *kind* of book! They only know that you *wrote* it, so they trust that you must be pretty special.

I always leave about ten minutes open for questions at the end. They have a *ton* of questions about writing, publishing, being a writer, and I mean to tell you, they're excellent questions, too. Well, once in awhile, you get some pretty funny ones,

too. Friday, I got a few of those ... "How old are you?" "What was the very first poem you ever wrote?" "Do you have any poems about race cars or snakes?" "What does C.J. *really* stand for?" "Can I come to your house?"

Children are also very forgiving if you goof up. As long as you still own the ability to laugh at yourself, goofing up isn't a problem, it's actually a positive, and can be an ice-breaker, if, that is, the ice hasn't already been broken by the time you goof up. I don't know how many times over the years I've said a line from one of my own poems wrong. Solution: make a silly face, say the line the way it *should* be said, and say something like: "Oh man, I sure screwed that up, didn't I? I don't even know my own poem! Sorry 'bout that." And then laugh -- they'll laugh right along with you. BOOM, you're forgiven.

So, if you're a children's author who doesn't yet do school visits, please reconsider. Send me an email if you need more information. Better yet, call me and I'll give you a pep talk. The number is on here somewhere. It's fun signing autographs between presentations. It's wonderful getting hugs at the end of the day, and you feel really good to walk down the hallway and have a child or two smile, wave, and call out your name ... trust me.