

Publisher: Bendt Family Ministries

Author: Valerie Bendt

Creating Books with Children

List Price: \$20.00

Reviewed By: Jean Hall

In this six-week unit study, students create books. But that doesn't begin to describe this exciting study guide by Valerie Bendt!

Children from early elementary age through high school can benefit from the methodical, step-by-step process outlined here, with its directions that even the least "crafty" mom can follow, and when the unit is finished each participant has a high-quality, hard-cover, hand-sewn book, personally written and illustrated.

Each week has a theme:

Week 1: Prewriting activities

Week 2: Writing the stories

Week 3: Text layout and editing

Week 4: Illustrating the books

Week 5: Developing the beginning and ending pages and the book jackets

Week 6: Assembling the books

Within this context you are reading together, but taking reading to a new level of awareness as you observe styles of writing and art, study the life of one or more children's authors, learn about story elements and writing tools, plan, write, edit, illustrate, and bind.

A variety of learning methods are put to use, including listening, copywork, dictation, time and space management, using a thesaurus, constructive correcting (ah yes, there is a way to critique without discouraging!), and a lot of hands-on activity. I recognized a number of exercises I've seen in books written for adults who would like to write and publish children's books!

*Creating Books with Children* is written in an easy-to-follow manner, full of examples of real books created by writers/illustrators ranging in age from three to adult. Helpful figures are sprinkled through the text to help with construction and assembly of both "mock up books" and the final product. The author gives examples of how her own children have tackled such a project. Many suggestions for reading during the unit are included, but with wonderful flexibility the choice of specific books is left to you and your children. A great deal of thought has gone into the structure and sequence of this material, and often I found my questions being answered just as I thought of them!

One thing that I really like about Valerie Bendt's books is that she doesn't just tell me **what** to do, but **why**. ("Reading aloud with your children will influence their writing abilities in a positive manner. Their sense of observation will be enhanced as their imaginations are beckoned to produce the information that is **not** provided for them. Having a child narrate ... a story you have read is a terrific way to strengthen their observation skills.") Throughout the book, age-appropriate comments direct the teacher to the "whys" as well as the "hows" of writing, illustrating, and producing books.

This book works well for a single family, even with a wide range of ages, or could be adapted for use in a co-op setting where parents attend the class with their student(s), doing some of the exercises with the group but a majority of the "background" work at home. (I'm not saying that this is a terribly time-consuming unit, for it will work alongside the reading you are already doing in your home.)

And when you've worked your way to the end, you can sit down on the couch together to read through the finished book with a sense of wonder, for you saw this project through from its earliest "inklings" to the first reading. And, if your child is anything like mine, you might well hear, "That was fun! Let's do it again!" (And they won't just be talking about the reading.)

### **More Information**

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Other Notes:

### **Jean Hall**

Jean Hall, a Christian home educator with three daughters, enjoys writing stories and music. Her family's interests include reading together, art, gardening, volkswalking and pets: two chinchillas, a hamster, a fish and fond memories of a German Shepherd

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