

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Authors of Children's books

Author: Leila Lynne Leidtke

Don't Be a Pig in a Panic

Book excerpt: Once upon a time in a far off jungle lived three little pigs. They loved to play and sing all day. The first pig was named Freddy. Freddy often fretted and got in a stew over big things and small things when he didn't know what to do. The second pig was named Harry. Harry was always in a hurry. Harry hurried and scurried from tree to tree looking for something to do and to see. The third pig was named Larry. Larry listened carefully and looked to see the things he could learn at Old Uncle Boar's knee.

Old Uncle Boar was teaching them one day, how to be smart and live long to play. Benjamin Piggletton, our founding father, said Haste makes waste. Benjamin Piggletton also said Look before you leap. Remember boys; never let them see you panic. Our jungle enemies will take advantage of you.

The inspiration for this book comes from storytelling, knowledge of animals and my own experience as missionary to the jungles of Honduras. In Honduras, many people keep pigs in the jungle along with chickens, cattle and the occasional dog or cat. However all animals including pigs have to forage for food.

I learned about pythons and boa constrictors from the Animal Planet network. They wrap around the animal and each time the animal cries out they constrict further until the animal cannot breathe and dies. They then swallow the animal head first. This is depicted in the picture when Freddy is swallowed by the python. I decided to do three little pigs in the jungle and wanted to bring a message home to children: look before you leap. This is a very important message they need to survive (traffic), (aggressive dogs), (other children who are mean). And kids also will succeed more in life if they study the circumstances before jumping into a situation. The awful fact that Harry leaped on the crocodile's back before he looked is a visual message to them. I have often leaped into a situation before I checked it out and still have to remind myself to do that.

My writing journey has been a lot of fun to date. Poetry comes very easily to me and so far the two children's books and the poetry book, *Seasons of the Heart*, contain poems I have written over the past 40 years. I am now working on a book about our missionary journeys to Honduras entitled *When You Pass Through the Waters*. It is my fond hope to complete this book and to sell many more of my books as a result. I also hope to do many more book signings in local venues and do the puppet shows I have created that go with each childrens' book that I wrote. I have always enjoyed writing and love to express my thoughts and experiences via the written word. My purpose in some of the things I have written is to provide instruction to children, inspire my readers to try new things and to show spiritual truths in the things I have experienced.

For example, in my childrens' book titled *If I Were President*, the overall theme is to dare to dream. In the book a little boy dreams of being President of the United States. His dreams include boyhood ambitions and ideas about helping each family by giving them a new car and a pet. He envisions giving the kids at school and his Dad a holiday. He also dreams of doing a "walk" in outer space. I want to encourage children to dream about things they'd like to try in the future and career opportunities they might want to take. Dreaming about the future is also for adults who wish to try new things and/or to "reinvent themselves." Many people have had their dreams crushed in childhood or beyond by naysayers. It has always been my dream to be instrumental in helping others to reach their own goals in career, life and, most importantly, spiritual enrichment. I wish to communicate the love of God to them through poetry, images and words about my experiences and my life.

From 2000 to 2007, my husband and I went to Honduras as the Liberty Dental Mission with teams. The experiences there and relationships with team members and Honduran people were life changing for us. (He continues to go as a missionary dentist with another missionary group.) I am now writing about the trips we took and focusing on the people I met. In my new book, *When You Pass Through the Waters*, I hope to communicate the lessons learned from the experiences I had along with those who went with us. We indeed passed through many waters on canoe trips to reach remote villages and over bridges and around lakes. In the canoes we

sat indian style, single file with our luggage in the front and the boatman and motor in the back. We knew that God was with us as we never had rain during these trips; the sun was always shining even during the rainy season.

We had God's favor with the people too. They cooked for us, did our laundry and provided places for the team to stay and do the dentistry, share the gospel and do puppet shows for the children. They were very grateful for the work of the dentist and his assistants and also for relationships with team members. They wore their best clothes to see us, even though most of them had to walk through the jungle to get there. Some had two and even three days journey with small children and babies. The villagers put them up until they could be seen in the clinic. Villagers were very hospitable. Learning about the hardships and faith of the people in spite of circumstances was very humbling for me. There are no dentists in the jungle. The Mosquito Indians live with pain and hoard medicines because there are also no drug stores. Moreover, natives usually don't have money to buy medicines even if they are available. We in the USA don't have the slightest idea what it is to live in a third world country unless we go there. We learned about how hard it is to live in these areas and how trusting and open the people were with us. We learned to be more grateful to God for all of our blessings and we learned to humble ourselves while attending to the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ in those places.