

Tips for a Successful (and Fun!) Author Visit



Faith Harkey

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About Faith

Faith Harkey is the author of the middle-grade children's novels *Genuine Sweet* and *Sneak Thief*. A bright-spirited and engaging speaker, Faith has a passion for language, fiction and traditional publishing. She is a graduate of the Writer's Workshop at Eckerd College, and makes her home in Tallahassee, Florida.

Before the Visit

Create interest and excitement with library displays and classroom activities. For ideas, consult the enclosed educator's guide. Contact the author for no-cost book jacket or author images.

Encourage students to visit Faith's website.

Read a chapter of *Sneak Thief* or *Genuine Sweet* to students or encourage eager readers to read the book before visit day. (Many teachers choose to create a 'waiting list' for the classroom copy.)

Contact local newspapers and radio stations. Alert parents that an author will be visiting.

Faith loves to do writing activities with kids! If your group is small (30 kids or less) and you feel your students might be responsive to a writing activity, *please let Faith know in advance*.

If you hope to have Faith as the special guest at a formal or informal snack or meal, please discuss this in advance, so she can do her best to schedule the necessary time and communicate any food restrictions.

IMPORTANT! Student Q & A sessions are often the most valuable parts of an author visit! Invite students to brainstorm interesting questions before the event.

On the Day of the Visit

If possible, assign someone to handle any author requests and to accompany her throughout the visit (student escorts are great, too!).

Consider the size and location of the event! Gymnasiums are a difficult speaking arena because of poor acoustics. Presentations to smaller groups in classrooms/media centers are much more effective and personal than all-school assemblies.

If you photograph or video-record the appearance, please consider sending copies or links to Faith or her publicist!

Make sure any equipment needed for the presentation (i.e. microphone) is set up and working prior to the first presentation. For smaller spaces in libraries or classrooms, Faith will *not* need a microphone. Have a glass of fresh water handy.

If the author is doing more than one presentation, please be sure to schedule breaks (15–20 min.) between presentations.

Choose a faculty timekeeper. When time runs out, end the session with "one last question," and allow both the students and the guest to express thanks for the opportunity.

Please remember that the speaker's job is to offer interesting content. 'Crowd control' (wrangling very excited kids) should be handled by school staff.

Allow plenty of time at the end of the event if there will be a book signing. Pass out Post-It notes to those in line so they can write down the name of the person to whom the autograph will be addressed. This will expedite the line and ensure correct spelling. Have a teacher assist the author in the process, so that it goes smoothly.