

## **Journaling: I Write for ME!**

A lot of people don't like the idea of journaling. Maybe they think it sounds boring, or too much like schoolwork. Or maybe they think they won't have anything to say, or that they're not good at writing. But writing in a journal is a lot different than the writing you do in school! What you write in a journal is for you and you only. No one is going to go through your journal circling the spelling mistakes or checking for perfect grammar. In fact, no one is going to read it at all if you don't want them to.

People like to write lots of different things in their journals. Some people write about all the things that happened to them that day. Some people write about their deepest thoughts, feelings and dreams. Some people write poems or stories, or they don't even write at all, they draw or paste in pictures. However you do it, journaling is a great way to express yourself, and to let out all those thoughts and emotions that are running through your heart and your mind.

### **Tips on Journaling:**

- Find a journal that you like! Leather or spiral bound, plain or polka dotted, lines or no lines, whatever you like best.
- Give yourself some peace and quiet! It's hard to focus when the dog is barking and your little sister is crying and the TV is blasting. Find a quiet place to write where you won't be interrupted for a little while.
- Write in whatever way is comfortable for you. Write memories, stories, poems, quotes, feelings, even song lyrics. Write in cursive, print, with pen or with pencil. Start a new page each day or continue right where you left off. Find the way that lets you best express yourself!
- Mark the date of each entry. As time passes you might like to look back and see how your thoughts and feelings have changed, it's surprising how quickly we forget how we felt even a few weeks or months ago.
- Try not to censor yourself. Remember, no one will see your journal unless you choose to show it to them, so don't worry about what other people would think or say. Sometimes it helps to write quickly, and to avoid erasing or crossing things out.
- Don't worry about spelling or grammar.
- Include some "extras" with your writing, like photographs or pictures other things that mean something to you.
- When you're done writing, take a few minutes before you go back out into the world. Have a glass of water, or just sit quietly for a second and relax.

## Journal Topic Ideas

1. Write down memories you have of your loved one. Try picking a specific memory and describing it in as great of detail as you can. Include what you remember from all your different senses, sights, sounds, even smells.
2. Start by picking three words that describe how you are feeling, then write about why you picked those words, and what they mean to you.
3. Write a poem or a prayer, either from your own heart or one you know that has meaning to you.
4. Write an "unsent letter," saying the things that you never got to tell a loved one, or a conversation that should have taken place but never did.
5. Write down the lyrics to a song that you identify with, or a quote.
6. Describe your feelings toward God, or ask Him questions. It's ok to tell God you are angry, He can take it!
7. Make a to-do list. When you're feeling really busy, sometimes it helps to get organized with a list of everything that needs to be done.
8. Write an "alpha poem," a poem where the first line starts with A, the next with B, and so on. Don't worry about rhyming, and feel free to cheat on any "xtra" hard letters
9. Reflect on the ways in which you will continue to remember your loved one after he or she is gone.
10. Write a "One year from today..." entry. Think about what you hope will be happening in your life one year from today. What will have changed? What stayed the same? How will you be feeling?