

Paulette Bourgeois gives children the dirt on soap

Paulette Bourgeois has done it again. She has already given us *The Amazing Apple Book* and *The Amazing Paper Book* and now it's *The Amazing Dirt Book* (Kids Can Press, \$9.95).

I always enjoy reading these fact-filled activity books. Of course, when my children get hold of them, they want to jump right in and start one (or all) of the projects.

When we began reading *The Amazing Dirt Book* one night, I wasn't ready for Bourgeois's first chapter on dirt close to home. I had only to glance down and see my children's filthy fingernails to know that dirt was lurking in our household. And let's not mention all those other unknowns hiding under the beds.

At this point, we should acknow-

Books for Kids
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ledge Mr. Cecil Booth, who invented the first suction vacuum in 1898. And speaking of dirt removal, a careless worker at Proctor and Gamble forgot to turn off his soap-making machine at bedtime. All that extra pumped-in air whipped up Ivory, the floating soap.

Historical tidbits are interspersed with related projects. In explaining how archeologists made plaster casts of Pompeians who perished during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, Bourgeois also tells

readers how to make foot prints with plaster of Paris.

My 12 year old has his sights set on next summer's project. With Bourgeois's directions, he will make bricks for an adobe playhouse.

By the way, Paulette Bourgeois may already be a familiar name to you and your children. She created Franklin, the young turtle who is afraid to sleep in his shell (*Franklin in the Dark*) and who finds never ending distractions on his way to a party (*Hurry Up, Franklin*).

Good Planets Are Hard to Find! Catchy title, isn't it? This environmental guide by Roma Dehr and Ronald M. Bazar (McLelland & Stewart, \$6.95) covers in alphabetical order everything from acid rain, deforestation, geothermal energy and nuclear waste to overgrazing,

pesticides, recycling and war.

This action book suggests ways in which children and their families can protect our living earth. As Gandhi once said, "What you do may seem insignificant but it's very important that you do it."

Playing It Safe (Firefly Books, \$8.95) by Barbara and Doug Hall is an activity and colouring book that speaks directly to children about how to deal with threats to their safety, whether the hazards are on the street or in the home. They also discuss safety measures related to summer and winter activities.

As one police officer commented upon reading the book, "The great thing about *Playing It Safe* is that it isn't a 'no' book." Rather than setting up a list of rules, the Halls provide scenarios and encourage

young readers to make informed and positive choices. In real life situations, children have to depend on their own decision-making capabilities to survive.

I was hesitant at first to read Dr. Margaret Merrifield's *Come Sit By Me* (Women's Press, \$6.95) to my four and seven year olds. This picture book deals with a child who has AIDS and the reactions of his classmates. The book is positive and reassuring and an information guide for adults at the conclusion explains HIV infection and AIDS in greater detail.

The author suggests caregivers tell children that AIDS is a serious illness but that it is very difficult for a child to get. Children might wonder then why the young boy in the story ended up with AIDS.

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