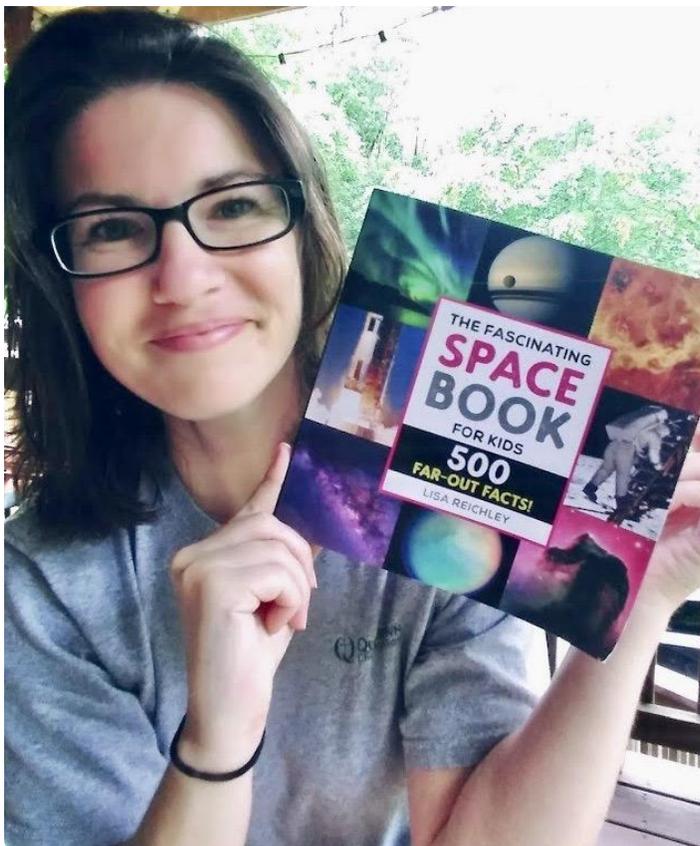


Middle School Science Teacher Publishes Far Out Facts about Space by J. Eric Bishop

Lisa Reichley, middle school science teacher at Quakertown Christian School, will be releasing her second book, *The Fascinating Space Book for Kids: 500 Far-Out Facts* (203 pages) on August 10, 2021. Her first book, *Our Solar System* (164 pages) was published October 20, 2020. Both books are published by Rockridge Press in association with Callisto Media and both are “written for children ages 8-12 who are



interested in space.” Lisa says that her first book could be used for a middle school course in astronomy but the second book is “more of a collection of obscure solar system facts, more of a light read than a reference style classroom book.” She says, “Kids are like sponges, and they love the fun facts!” An example of a fun fact is that astronauts took spiders up into space to see if they could spin webs, and they could. Another fun fact is that they took moths up into space and discovered that moths born on Earth couldn’t fly there, but moths that were born in space *were* able to fly.

Lisa says, “I think I write for the higher-level-thinking, middle school kid.” As an example she offers that “most space books write the same thing, over and over again, like about Jupiter and its big red spot, the giant storm, but when I talk to my students who maybe want to know what their astrological sign is, they don’t understand that most of those

signs are wrong. Those astrological signs were assigned thousands of years ago, and the planet wobbles, so they're not correct anymore."

Lisa says, "I love the research and the writing involved in these book projects, but working with editors can be very frustrating. I tell my students that editing is not fun, but when an editor writes back and tells me that something I've written is really good, I'm like YES!" An example of the frustrating part of the editing process is this one: "I love the story of Gene Kranz, the flight director for the Apollo 13 mission. For each mission at NASA Gene's wife would sew him a vest. Colors were assigned for the flight team, as is still the case, and his flight team's color for Apollo 13 was white. The beautiful white vest that Gene's wife sewed for him now hangs in the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C. because he donated it, and afterwards the color white was retired for flight teams. I think that fact is so cool! But my editor said, 'Kids are not going to be interested in the vest.' And I said, 'It's in the *Apollo 13* movie! It's in the museum now! It's a famous vest!' There are also things that my editor thinks are interesting, and I'm like *really?* For example, I wrote some facts about animals going into space, and my editor said, 'Do more animals! Kids want to read about animals.' So Ham the astrochimp (Project Mercury) is in the book. But I wasn't allowed to write about animals dying in space."

Lisa did not go looking for these writing opportunities. "I have a store on *Teachers Pay Teachers*. I publish a lot of middle school science curriculum, and through my publishing of curriculum is how Callisto Media found me." Callisto Media contacted her and asked if she would be interested in a work-for-hire contract. She had to submit a blurb to see if she would be a good fit for the intended book. "They liked what they saw and hired me to write the first book. Callisto Media works with Rockridge Press. I don't get paid per copy. I get a flat payment, before the book even comes out. Rockridge Press advertises through Amazon. On Amazon, my first book has over five hundred reviews already, but I don't know how many copies have been sold. Amazon is the biggest distributor of my books, but they are also available through other online bookstores. I know that Target carries them."

Though Lisa has been a classroom teacher for 13 years, this fall she will begin her third year at Quakertown Christian School where she is the only full time science teacher and a mother of three children, each of whom attends QCS. Her husband Zeke teaches Biology at Owen J. Roberts High School. Regarding finding time to work on these books, Lisa says, “The book writing, for me, is a creative outlet and a break from everything else I have to do. And I don’t watch television.” Lisa says, “Space is my favorite, favorite thing to study.” As a child, her dream was to grow up and become an astronaut. That hasn’t happened, but she does hold a BS in Secondary Education, Earth and Space Science with a concentration in Astronomy from West Chester University.

“Some people who know me and who have read the books say that they can hear me teaching when they read them. They feel like they’re in my classroom.” And the students cannot get enough of what her research and writing has added to her curriculum and instruction. Regarding any plans for writing for more books, she says, “I didn’t really plan for this. It was more of a surprise, so we’ll see.”

Lisa’s TpT site: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Crazysciencelady>

Her blog site: <https://crazysciencelady.com/>

Lisa’s books can be purchased on Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Lisa-Reichley/e/B08KNSS49Z%3Fref=dbs_a_mng_rwt_scns_share

J. Eric Bishop is Director of Curriculum and Instruction at Quakertown Christian School, a K-12 school entering its 70th year of operations.

