



## Lighten Up #3 - Laughing With Children

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Children are a great comfort in your old age -- and they help you reach it faster, too. ~Lionel Kauffman

### INTRODUCTION

Kids. I have four children, and most of my amusing scrapbook pages are inspired by them. Whether it's making up stories, choosing to watch TV while sitting upside down in a chair (don't laugh, my youngest son does this ALL THE TIME), or just some of the really goofy things they say, my kids keep me on my toes.

My oldest daughter, at 10, is too "cool" to be funny now, but I can still document what she used to do before she became a pre-teen. My oldest son, at 8, wants to be a writer, so he documents everything in his journals, which are a gold mine of funny stuff. My youngest son, age 6, is just plain goofy, and my youngest daughter, 4, is still at the "awwwww!" stage of funny cuteness.

No matter what stages your kids (or your nieces, nephews, grandchildren, siblings or godchildren) are in, there are funny pages out there. Let's make some.

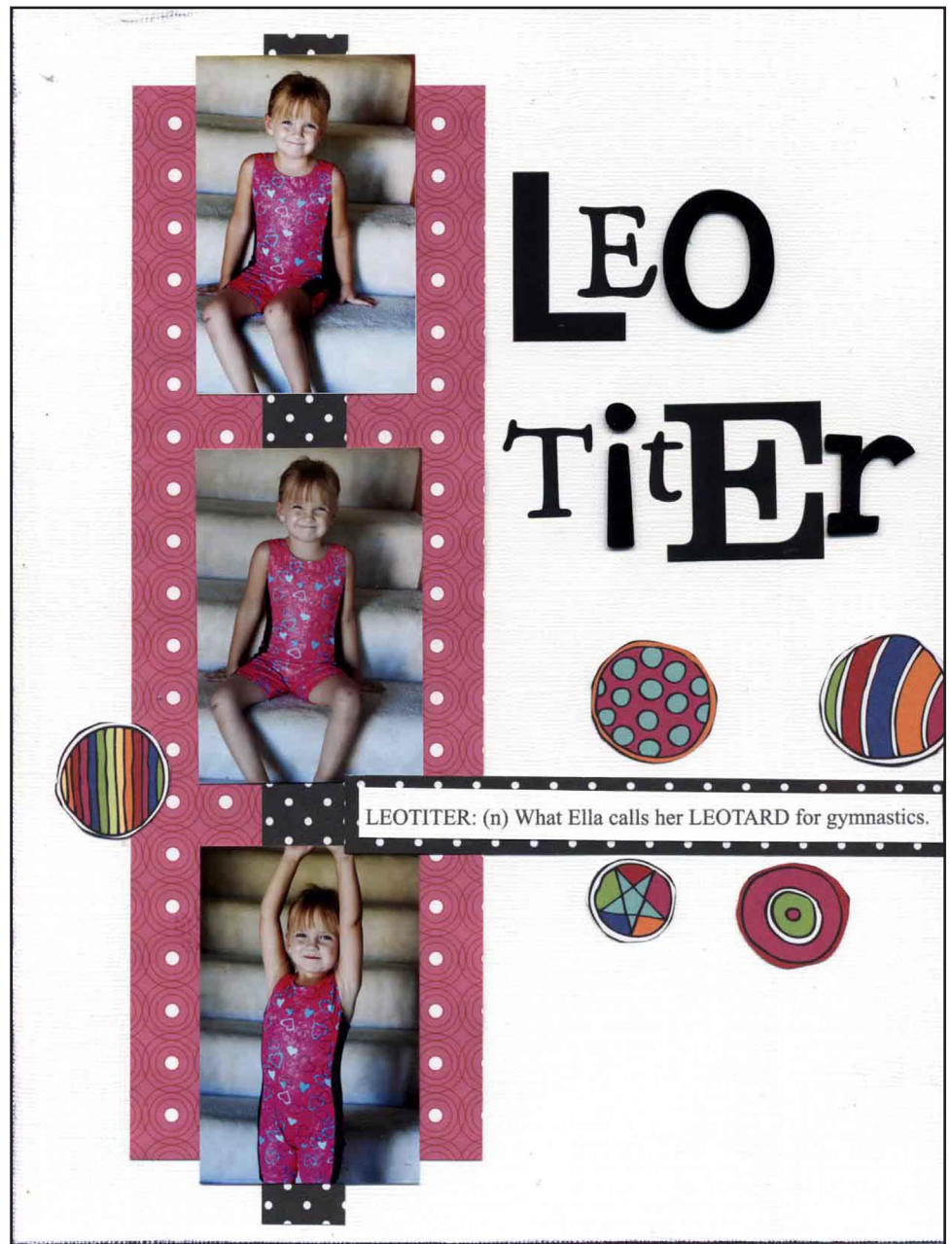
**APPROACHES TO SCRAPBOOKING THE LAUGHS YOU SHARE WITH CHILDREN**

- **Document their mispronunciations.**

My daughter Abby used to say "Apple Doo-yah" for apple juice. She did this for a couple of years, until one day she said it correctly and that was the end of that. Fortunately, I wrote it down so the memory will live on.

I am writing this on a Tuesday, which is gymnastics day for my daughter Ella. She loves gymnastics with every fiber of her being, and she can't wait to get home every Tuesday and put on her LEOTITER in preparation for gymnastics.

"Leotiter" documents this extremely cute way of pronouncing "leotard." I'm sure that by the

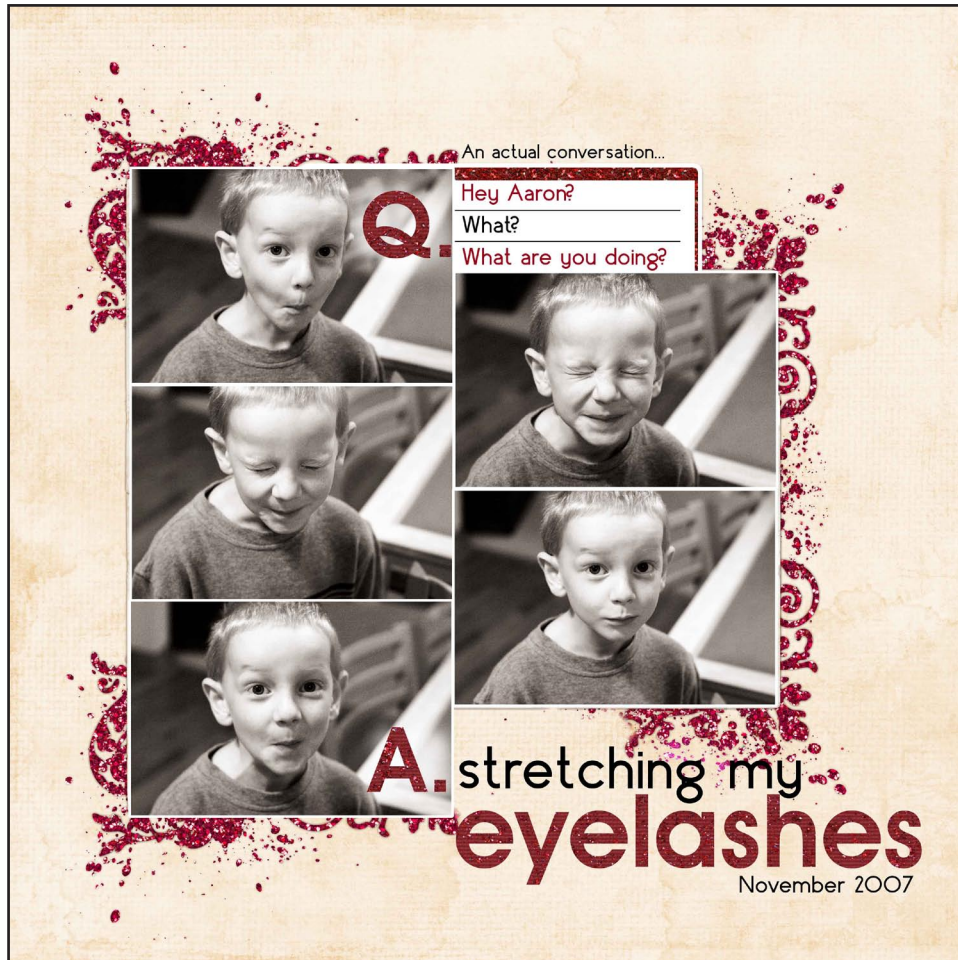


end of the year, she'll say it correctly, which will be a shame, but I'll have the scrapbook page to remind me.

How I scrapbooked her mispronunciation in "Leotiter:"

- ◇ Journaling. Less is more on this layout. I imitated a dictionary entry and just documented what the word meant. Don't be afraid to use minimal journaling to get the point across. It can be very effective.
- ◇ Title. Since the journaling and design are simple, I used larger letter stickers to create the title. I am a letter-sticker junkie, but I also like to use as much as I can of a sheet of stickers. I used letters from a few different sheets and manufacturers to create this random-looking title, and it adds to the general silly feeling.
- ◇ Design. I used three photos of Ella in her "leotiter," backed by strong color and balanced by the strong title. I chose to cut up my paper to make the simple circle accents and create some visual interest.

## 2. Scrapbook kids' quotable quotes.



My son Alex, aka Bubba, used to be famous throughout the online scrapbooking community for his witticisms at ages 4 and 5. Now that he is 8, he is still funny but in a less precocious way - he's graduated to puns and one-liners. Some of my favorite all-time scrapbook pages are the ones that document "Bubba-isms."

His younger brother Aaron is coming along nicely in his humorous statements, and I have a pretty good stash of Aaron layouts as well. This layout, "Stretching My Eyelashes," talks about something Aaron said that had me shaking my head for quite a while. I'm still not sure how he came up with this concept, but it had to be scrapbooked.

How I documented a funny quote in "Stretching My Eyelashes:"

- ◇ Photos. I ran for the camera when he was doing this, and I snapped a few photos in sequence to illustrate the concept of stretching one's eyelashes. (Admit it. You just tried it.) I made the photos black and white because he was wearing a burnt orange shirt, set off by yellow wall and green chairs, and I wanted to avoid the clashing colors.
- ◇ Journaling. I REALLY enjoy documenting actual conversations on this type of layout. It's simple and to the point and really conveys the humor to me.
- ◇ Title. I made the title the actual "punchline" of our conversation. It's simple but effective.



**3. Scrapbook the "strange" situations you come across.**

I am constantly discovering little vignettes in my home that I know my kids are responsible for - things like all the stuffed Easter bunnies arranged in a circle around a plastic carrot, all the old VHS tapes laid end to end to form a road, a mishmash of Barbie arms, heads and legs (not connected, mind you...). Cleaning can be quite an adventure in my house, because I never know what I'm going to find.

The funniest of all was when I was dusting last year at Christmastime and found the green M&M ornament with the nativity scene.

Apparently someone in this house felt it added a bit of holiday spirit! Of course, I had to document it for posterity in "Wise Man #4."



Journaling for "Wise Man #4:" I'm not quite sure how this happened. I came along one day to find the M&M ornament in with the nativity scene. I have my suspicions about who put it there, but I was too busy laughing to do anything about it. For the rest of the holiday season, we left the "Fourth Wise Man" in place, because we figured the baby Jesus would have liked M&Ms.)

How I showed a funny vignette in "Wise Man #4"

- ◇ Photos. I wanted to show the ornament itself as well as where it sat in the nativity scene, so I used both close-ups and wider shots. The photos in this layout are cropped to unusual sizes to fit the design, though they all started as 4" x 6" photos
- ◇ Design. I kept it clean and simple, and used three brads to fill in some of the white space left by the different sized photos and journaling block. As usual, I tried to let the photos and journaling tell the story.

**4. Document things kids do that are a bit strange.**

I have this one covered. All of my kids do some strange things: Abby can actually shake her eyeballs (hard to capture in photos, but trust me, it's weird). Aaron can suck in his stomach to the point where his ribs stand out in a most disturbing manner. Ella hasn't come up with any weird habits yet, but she's only 4 so there's still time.

The funniest habit, to me, is Bubba's ability to make noise with his own body. The boy can play an actual tune on his armpit. Don't worry! I don't let him do this in public, or at the dinner table. "Question...Answer" documents not only what he does, but something funny he said about it.



How I laughed at my son with "Question...Answer:"

- ◇ Title. The two words of the title are clear but easily visible, and I chose to type the actual question and answer over the words themselves.
- ◇ Journaling. Again, I chose to document the conversation itself and make the journaling short and sweet. Well, maybe not sweet, but to the point!
- ◇ Photos. Yes...I took photos of my son doing this. I figure that when he's 30, I can pull out this page and make my grandchildren laugh.

**5. Document funny stories involving your kids and what they said or did.**

Kids come with a treasure trove of stories. From their first word to their first tooth to their first steps, the stories are told and re-told as the children grow older.

With the cute and sentimental stories also come the funny stories--lots of them. It can be fun to document the stories in your scrapbook and re-tell them from time to time. I know that if I hadn't written down this story on my page "Honest Abe and MLK," I would have forgotten it by now, as it happened three years ago. (As a side note, which I didn't mention in my journaling, Alex had been studying BOTH Martin Luther King and Abe Lincoln in kindergarten, which lead to the thought process documented in the layout.)



Journaling for "Honest Abe and MLK:" This is a true story. Alex made an Abe Lincoln hat & beard in kindergarten yesterday. He put it on to show me, and left it on for a while. As the boys usually do, he and Aaron started chasing each other through the house. Aaron was the chaser and Alex the chatee. As they ran by, I heard Alex shout, "Thank you, Martin Luther King, for bringing joy into our world!" When they had stopped running (after I had finished my fit of giggles), I asked Alex why he said that. He replied, "He did bring joy into the world. Now brown kids and peach kids can go to the same school." True...true. But why shout about that when you're wearing Abe Lincoln's beard? "It was just going through my head." Fair enough. )

6. How I documented a story in "Honest Abe and MLK:"

- ◇ Journaling. I had to tell the whole story. I tried to document it as simply and straightforwardly as I could, with my son's words in bold.
- ◇ Photos. I had to get photos of the Abe Lincoln beard, and I chose to include some smaller photos of both boys to set the stage for the story.

## **TRIGGERS for laughing with children**

**Trigger #1:** Baby books. For my first three children, I was great about keeping up with the baby books. (Poor Ella - she has no updated baby book, but a LOT of scrapbook pages instead!) Go back and see what you wrote. It may trigger some funny memories of your kids, their funny words, sayings, or habits.

**Trigger #2:** Observe. Write down everything about your kids, or the kids you are around, that make you laugh in the span of a day. (For me, this can also help with my patience and tolerance of the general rowdiness around here.) You may be surprised at how funny these kids really are. Scrapbook about it!