

“I’m getting history on the carpet”

written by Holly

September 12, 2003

By Holly Lisle

The kidlet and I discovered something wonderful today (and I owe Sheila Kelly a huge thanks for this, since she gave a link for a paleontology kit in her weblog).

We picked up an archeology kit from Scholastic the last time we were at Toys ‘R Us – it’s called “Mysteries of Egypt” and it comes with a five-or-six pound compressed stone pyramid, hammer, chisel, paints and brushes, safety glasses, and booklet with some nice starter information on the history of Egypt and the work of archeologists. My son and I had done some previous reading on Egypt. I read him the history in the booklet, and he knew a fair amount from our previous reading. So I showed my little guy, who is five, how to hold the chisel and the hammer and turned him loose. He knew there were artifacts in there.

He worked for a good fifteen minutes before he got the first inkling of where one might be. It took him another three hours to free the first two artifacts – a small Sphinx and a hieroglyphic tablet.

In the meantime, while he worked with amazing intensity and excitement, we talked about the history of ancient Egypt, the work of archeologists, science, how things get buried over time, and a bunch of other goodies. We’re good for at least six more hours of digging over the next couple of days, I had to peel him away from the pyramid when it was time to go do other things, and he has fallen in love with archeology.

We did art, writing, science, math, history, spelling, and

geography (measuring the artifacts, cataloging his dig, filling out a site survey in our best attempt at proper format, drawing the uncovered artifacts, finding Egypt, and so on) and we had three lovely hours together while I watched him uncover something thrilling. This is what education should be.

And he gave me the best line I've had in days; with little bits of stone flying everywhere as he worked, he told me, "Mom, I'm getting history on the carpet."

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