

Seton



MAGAZINE

“Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church”

AUGUST 2012

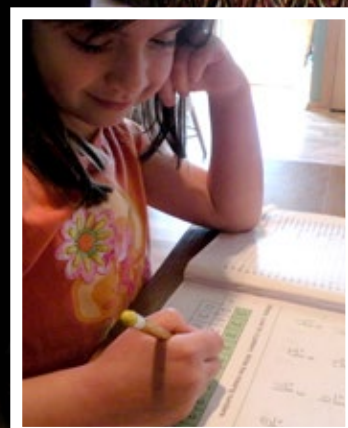


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Did you know?



Before she founded the Sisters of Charity, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was married and had five children.

*“With you every day,
every step of the way”*



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Front Cover: The Michael Alger family at Faith's First Communion (l-r, Mike, Michelle, Faith, Jacob, and Haley) with Pastor Rev. Daniel Kelley, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Amherst, VA, May 12, 2012.

**THERE IS A GREAT STORY
BEHIND EVERY HOMESCHOOLING FAMILY**

Homeschooling is an adventure, and each family who embarks on the adventure has a unique story, touched and guided by Divine Providence.

We'd like to feature *your* story. If you have a story, or would like to share part of your adventure with us, please contact us at jshanley@setonhome.org

SHARE YOUR STORY AND INSPIRE ANOTHER FAMILY

Letter from the Director of Seton Home Study School

Dr. Mary Kay Clark



The Mystery of the Assumption

On August 15th, we celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven. The Church teaches that her body as well as her soul was assumed into Heaven. According to tradition, the apostles discovered her missing body only a few days after she was entombed. One of the apostles was late in arriving, so the others opened her tomb for him to see her, but her body was no longer there.

The Assumption of the Blessed Mother reminds us that we are not meant for this world, that God's Plan is for us to remain only for a time on this planet. Our final and eternal destination is Heaven.

While we go about the usual day-to-day homeschooling, fixing meals, and planning daily events, we need to keep within us an awareness of the Presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother. We need to be constantly aware of our responsibility to adore Him continually in everything we say and do and think and work and pray.

St. Alphonsus Liguori, a Doctor of the Church, wrote the book *The Glories of Mary*, considered a classic among Catholic writings and which many consider to have been inspired. Writing about the Assumption of Mary, he says that Jesus Himself "went forth from Heaven to accompany His Mother" up to Heaven. St. Alphonsus records the words of Jesus to Mary upon her death:

Come in, soul and body, to enjoy the recompense of thy holy life. If thy sufferings have been great on earth, far greater is the glory which I have prepared for thee in Heaven.

On her entrance, [into Heaven].... The angels proclaim "She is the Mother of our King; she is our Queen, and the blessed one among women; full of

grace, the saint of saints, the beloved of God, the immaculate one, the dove, the fairest of all creatures." Then all the blessed spirits began to bless her and praise her...

All the saints who were in Paradise then came to welcome her and salute her as their Queen. ...St. James, the only apostle who was yet in Heaven, also came to thank her in the name of all the other apostles for all the comfort and help she had afforded them while she was on earth. The prophets came to salute her... The holy patriarchs came... Adam and Eve came to thank her... St. Simeon came to kiss her feet. ... St. Zachary and St. Elizabeth came and thanked her for that loving visit... by which they had received such treasures of grace. St. John the Baptist came... to thank her for having sanctified him by her voice. .. St. Joachim and St. Anne ...blessed her, saying, "O beloved daughter, what a favor it was for us to have such a child!"

...her dear spouse, St. Joseph, came to salute her... With what tenderness must he have addressed her: "O my Lady and spouse, how can I ever thank our God as I ought for having made me thy spouse, thou who art His true Mother! Through thee, I merited to assist on earth the Childhood of the Eternal Word, to carry Him so often in my arms, and to receive so many graces. Ever blessed be those moments which I spent in life serving Jesus and thee, my spouse. Behold our Jesus! Let us rejoice that he now no longer lies on straw in a

manger... He no longer lives despised in a shop, as He once lived with us in Nazareth; He is now no longer nailed to an infamous gibbet, as when He died in Jerusalem for the salvation of the world; but He is seated at the right hand of His Father as King and Lord of Heaven and earth."

Then...the great Queen thanked all the angels for their assistance they had given her on earth, and more especially, she thanked the Archangel Gabriel... The humble and holy Virgin, then kneeling, adored the Divine Majesty and ...thanked Him for all the graces bestowed upon her by His pure goodness, and especially for having made her the Mother of the Eternal Word."

Blessed Mother Mary, on the Feast of your Assumption, pray for us. Most holy Virgin Mother, Queen of Heaven, pray for us.



Your Questions...

answered by Dr. Clark

Virtual Views

On Facebook we asked: *How have you taught your pre-schoolers to pray? What was their first prayer? What prayers do they like? What about prayers before bedtime and Grace at meals?*

Christina: First we teach the Bless Us Oh Lord, followed by the Our Father, and Hail Mary. The reason for the Bless Us Oh Lord being first, is it is said at meals, so it is said more often.

Shelly: Grace Before Meals, Guardian Angel prayer and Hail Mary. Those are the easiest since we pray before all meals and enter and end our day with the Guardian Angel prayer. We pray the Rosary often, too.

Amy: My children have learned prayer by listening to me say them every day. There is no better teacher (in my opinion) than repetition. My 5 yo loves the Creed and The Lord's Prayer because we say them every day.

Lisa: When my boys were little we would leave Mass blowing sweet kisses to Jesus in the tabernacle. To this day all three of my boys (18, 15, 12) have a beautiful devotion to Eucharistic Adoration.

Michelle: I started with prayer at bedtime when my son was about 3yrs old. He would start to say the Hail Mary with me little by

continued on page 10

Do I need to return my children's lesson plans at the end of the year?

Yes, please return the lesson plans. Enrollments include the use of the lesson plans for the enrolled student. The lesson plans are copyrighted "intellectual property" and should not be used by other students. Lesson plans are actually rented rather than purchased.

The books you receive are yours to keep. However, if you don't need them anymore and would like to return them, Seton does have a book donation program. Go to www.setonhome.org/new-life-for-old-books for more information.

Should I keep tests or workbooks each year as evidence of my children's work?

It is not necessary to keep tests or workbooks as evidence since your children are enrolled in an accredited school and we can easily provide a transcript of grades based on tests and other work graded by us. However, sometimes parents keep some of the workbooks as "treasures" to present to their children when they are much older.

Why do you put so much emphasis on diagramming sentences?

Diagramming helps students to analyze the construction of sentences and the relationship of words and phrases. Catholic schools traditionally emphasized writing and thinking skills, and diagramming produces clear and accurate thinking and writing. Seton now has a number of videos to explain diagramming concepts, which are easily available for enrolled students on our website. Sixteen online diagramming tutorial videos are available currently, with a few more soon available. If you would like to see one on a particular topic, please call one of our counselors to let us know!

My child's grades are all extremely good. Should he skip a grade?

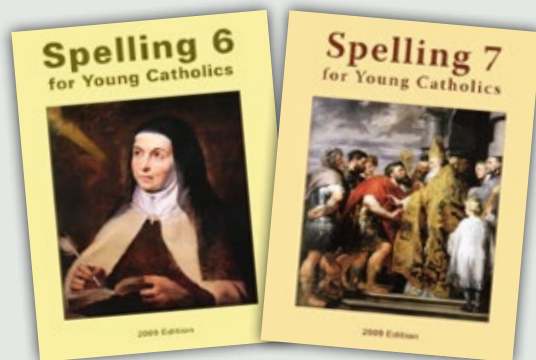
Our experience of many, many years is that when a student skips a grade, there are unforeseen consequences. Suddenly, the student must work harder than ever, spending more

time with more effort than ever before. Often parents and students quickly regret their decision.

We recommend that a student take the normal next grade level, but proceed at the pace that is best, subject by subject. A student who loves math could start out the next year by doing the review exercises for each chapter. Perhaps the first quarter or even half of the book's exercises can be done quickly with almost perfect scores. However, there is likely to be a little slowdown, a little more time and thought required toward the second half of the book. New concepts may be introduced in the last quarter of the book. The student may be ready for the next grade level of math within a few months; at that time, a parent could order the next grade level of math. By then, there is positive proof that the student is ready for the next grade level, especially with daily prayer for success.

A student who spells all the spelling words correctly without even studying can advance to the next speller whenever the first one is finished. Perhaps the student can do two grade levels of spellers in one year.

Besides moving to the next grade level, parents may consider having the student do enrichment activities. For example, if a student is a whiz at science, instead of simply finishing up the year quickly, consider having the student do a special project or two. Let the student pick an area of interest and learn it in depth. This should have the added benefit of keeping the student excited about learning.



“ We recommend that a student take the normal next grade level, but proceed at the pace that is best, subject by subject....Perhaps the student can do two grade levels of spellers in one year. ”

How can I help my young children stay on their schoolwork? They like to play with each other, especially if I leave them to take care of the baby.

Teaching the younger children demands a good deal of patience, a recognition of the attention span of young children, and the children's need for activity, as well as the necessity of teaching self-discipline. Children in the primary grades usually need short classes and regular activity, either during the class time or between the class times. Consider purchasing a white board and have the children write their math problems or other assignments so they are kept standing and moving their arms and hands to do the problems. Let them read while walking around the kitchen while you make dinner or feed the baby.

Establish rules, not only for discipline but to make sure the work is done in a timely manner. Consider giving some sort of treat, or even a monetary reward, as an incentive for finishing a page of work in the timeframe you set. The reward must be immediate, not something to be scheduled the next day or next weekend. To God a thousand years is the same as a day, but to a child a day is the same as a thousand years.

Keep yourself in good health. Don't allow yourself to become too emotional, frustrated, or angry. Try to solve the problem by talking it over with your husband, work out a strategy, then together you both should present the "rules" to your children. Don't get upset if they don't always follow your rules, but try to enforce the rules. Many homeschooling moms think that being flexible is a good idea, but that should be only after rules of discipline have been followed for a length of time. If you allow flexibility from the rules on the first day, you will never have any discipline!

Use an alarm clock to help your children stay on track in a timely manner. Set the alarm so they know that when it rings, they should be finished with their assignment.

Find good books for your young children to read. Simply reading aloud or quietly for 15 minutes develops a certain patience, concentration, and self-control.

Be sure you relate their daily activities to their religion lessons. We are not only to learn our Faith, we are to live it, so teach your children about obedience and point out when they are not obedient. Our Lord, the Blessed

Mother, the stories of the saints should be discussed in relation to the daily situations in your home. These young years are a time for the children to learn the Catholic lifestyle, the daily practice of saying the Rosary, attending Mass, discussing the saints, and the children's activities in relation to what is required of them as good Catholic children.

Two of my children have a learning disability. I believe I can do better helping them at home. Do many parents homeschool their LD children?

Many parents believe that they can do a better job teaching their children rather than have them taught by a teacher responsible for several children who have a variety of learning problems. No matter how skilled and dedicated a teacher may be, the teacher cannot have the same knowledge of the child that parents possess.

We feel that enrolling with Seton gives parents the best of both worlds—the knowledge and dedication of a parent, along with the knowledge and expertise of a trained professional. Stephen Costanzo, a fully-certified and experienced LD teacher, for many years has been helping Seton students with various learning problems. Phone counseling is available before enrolling and during the year.

Seton sells a book through our Seton Educational Media department written by a homeschooling mother with a degree in special education: *Home Schooling Children with Special Needs*. To learn more about our Special Needs department, go to our website, click on Curriculum, then scroll down to Special Services. We have a section on Most Frequently Asked Questions. If you still want more specific information, you can phone the Special Services department at 540-636-9990, Ext. 151.

How can my son win a college scholarship or find financial aid?

Many of our students win scholarships and obtain financial aid. Students who have learned to study on their own do very well in college. Some of our graduates help other college students with study skills and in writing workshops; they often are paid for it, even in their freshman year!

Colleges base scholarships not only on the scores of an ACT or SAT test, but also on the Grade Point Average (GPA) for high

school courses. Parents need to make sure that their children are doing well in the 7th and 8th grade courses so that from the 9th grade on, their grades are high, especially in the areas of math, English, and composition.

If your children ever ask you why they need to learn math, you can point to the SAT or ACT test. A student's score on these tests can mean the difference between gaining admissions to the student's first choice of college, or not. Plus, a difference of a few hundred points on the SAT test can mean a difference of a few thousand dollars a year in scholarship money.

What do you recommend about joining a local home schooling support group?

I think families need to be very careful about joining support groups. They are great for some families and perhaps not so good for others.

First, you will be happier if you join a Catholic group. The support from a Catholic group will be better for you. For the children, you definitely need not just a Catholic group but a Catholic group in which the parents and children share your values and reasons for homeschooling.

Second, you need to consider if a support group actually helps you or if it hinders you from doing the homeschooling as you need to. Sometimes, support groups have so many activities for the children, they don't have enough time to finish their assignments in a timely manner. A homeschooling support group should not prevent actual homeschooling from being done.

If you decide to join a support group, start out with being involved in only one activity at a time. Consider how you can handle it if you have four children in four different activities four afternoons a week. Not only will it be expensive in gas, but the travel time will take away from study time.

Many parents and children are involved in various sports and other activities, and these activities are no doubt good in themselves. But remember that home is where the heart is, home is where you can be in charge of teaching values, home is where the Faith can be practiced as you know it should be, home is where you and the children should spend the most time, home is where you have the most influence in training and teaching your children.

Don't Forget Me, Mommy!

How to Involve Your Pre-Schoolers

We invite you to experience Seton Home Study School's Pre-Kindergarten Program—the first new grade added to Seton's Homeschool Curriculum in over 30 years!



For many years, one of the most popular requests Seton received from our enrolled families was the creation of an educational program for pre-kindergarten children. Thanks to a number of providential meetings and collaborations, we are finally able to provide this much needed service to our families.

How It Began

In the spring of 2010, Seton began conversations with Nan Alcott, an educational expert in the field of pre-kindergarten learning, about the development of a Seton Pre-K Program. We consulted with Mrs. Alcott on how we might develop the finest academic program as well as one rich in our Catholic Faith. Nan, a homeschooling parent & grandparent as well as someone thoroughly familiar with Seton's curriculum, offered to help us. The result of that collaboration far exceeded our expectations!

Her work resulted in *Early Literacy for Young Catholics Pre-K Activity Book* and a comprehensive set of lesson plans to complement it. This material is the cornerstone of our Pre-K Program. The wonderfully nuanced educational content authored by Nan was taken to an even higher level through the vivid illustrations by acclaimed children's artist Ben Hatke. Ben has worked on many Seton books, but he was most enthusiastic about this new book—and it shows!

Another great strength of the Program that we are sure you will appreciate is the new *Religion for Young Catholics Pre-Kindergarten*. Developed by Seton staff, it is based on the philosophy of Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

The instructions in *Religion Pre-K* are presented within the context of a loving Catholic family. It is our hope that a child growing up in such an environment from an early age will view Catholicism as natural and necessary as the air he breathes.

The Program's Goals

Two key points: First, because preschoolers learn best by doing and playing, Seton's Pre-K Program is activity-based. Second, this is a year of exposure, not mastery, of the alphabet and its sounds.

You can be assured that the books and lesson plans you receive will provide the guidance and materials you need and will help you create a Catholic and child-friendly learning environment.

The Program is designed to refresh your own wonder and curiosity as you work and play with your young child. Not only will this be a year

to reflect and teach, it will be a time to introduce concepts and to expose your child to vocabulary, the notion of letters and sounds, many sensory activities as precursors to handwriting, as well as print and book awareness in a developmentally appropriate way for a four-year-old.

Preparing a Catholic Home Environment

Our Faith is precious, and our traditions are rich. Preschoolers do not understand the depths of the mysteries of our Faith; however, they absorb a tremendous amount by ardently observing what we as parents do. Even one-year-olds at the table will stop and watch intently as the family makes the Sign of the Cross and prays grace together. You will find simple, suggested activities throughout the Program which are consciously designed to emphasize the Catholic Faith in your home life.

Special Introductory Enrollment Pricing Available!



Pre-K Profiles

About the Author

Nan Alcott holds her Master of Education in Early Childhood Special Education from James Madison University. Her Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education/Special Education is from Marygrove College.



Early Literacy for Young Catholics draws extensively on her experience of 21 years as a Special Education teacher, nine of which have been at the preschool level.

Nan has taught catechesis for seven years and homeschooled her youngest child for three high school years. Of her sterling achievements, Nan is perhaps most proud to state that she is “blessed to be a wife, mother of 6, and grandmother of 12.”

About the Illustrator



Ben Hatke is an artist, writer, and comics creator. His work for Seton Press includes Seton’s phonics books, the *Vocabulary for Young Catholics* series, and the Seton Literary Classics edition of *Ballad of the White Horse*.

Ben learned painting by studying the Italian Masters and by training at the Charles Cecil Studios in Florence, Italy.

He lives and works in Front Royal, Virginia, with his lovely wife and growing family. Ben enjoys swords and whistles and juggling and adventures.

One Last Point!

Preschoolers need time outside everyday! They need time to enjoy God’s creation and the weather, to run, climb, dig, and jump with no fear of knocking over fragile items!



A note about the skills developed in Seton’s Pre-Kindergarten Program

Early Literacy for Young Catholics Pre-K Activity Book and Pre-K lesson plans were written to enable you to help your child develop the essential skills for four-year-olds in the areas of Literacy, Mathematics, Science, History and Social Science, Physical and Motor Development, and Personal and Social Development.

Four of the six Literacy Foundation Blocks are addressed in *Early Literacy for Young Catholics Pre-K Activity Book*: Vocabulary, Phonetic Awareness, Letter Knowledge, and Written Expression. The other two components, Oral Expression and Print and Book Awareness, are covered in the accompanying lesson plans.

The criteria for these six standards is based on the Virginia Department of Education’s *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds* (2007).

Our hope is that this Program will assist you in teaching your preschool child Catholic values and culture, along with essential pre-literacy skills. May God bless your family in this endeavor!



Included with our Pre-K Program



A FOUNDATION of PRAYER

BY MICHELLE ALGER

“If you will only believe, every gift you ask for in your prayer will be granted.” Matthew 21:22

There were a lot of factors that went into our decision to homeschool back in 2003. We were a two-income family with two kids in Catholic school, Haley in kindergarten and Jacob in 3rd grade. Six weeks into that school year, however, Haley was so unhappy that we decided to bring her home. Mike worked second shift so he was home to teach her the basics. We had every intention of sending her back for 1st grade, but that year, I became pregnant with Faith. We spent a lot of time considering and praying in Eucharistic Adoration on making the leap to become a one-income, homeschooling family. We assessed our finances and realized that so much of my

pay was going to private school tuition and extra activities such as horseback riding, movies, and dinner out. That realization made it easier to decide to homeschool. We’ve found that, although some months can be tight, when we leave it to God, He always makes it work for us financially.

Ultimately, we made the decision to homeschool with the understanding that we could always stop if it didn’t work. It seems to have worked. We are still doing it.

A Day in the Life

I’d describe our typical day for you, but I’m sorry to say (well, maybe not too sorry), we don’t have one. We tend to go with the flow and be flexible according to everyone’s needs. However, if we were to have one, it might look like this:

I usually begin my day with a walk and say my prayers while Mike and Faith take care of the animals and pets. We then all meet up in the kitchen and have breakfast together. Breakfast tends to be our family meal because of Mike’s work schedule. Then,

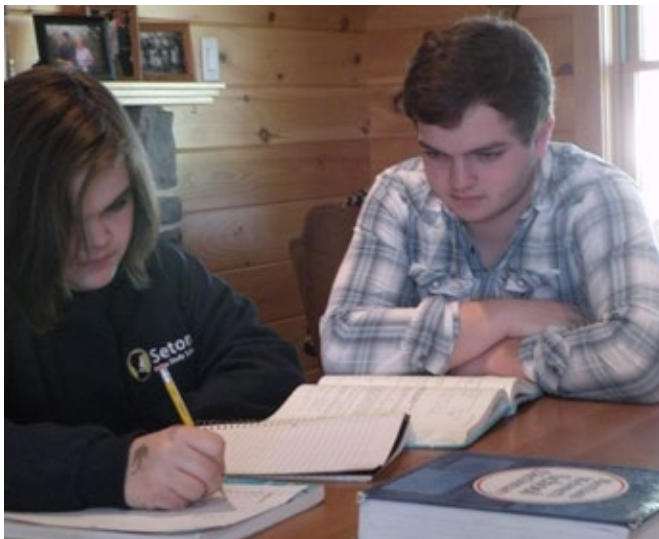


Photos, clockwise from left: Jake helping Haley with Algebra. Jake leading the youth choir at St. Francis of Assisi. Faith working on *Mathematics for Young Catholics*. Dad and Faith doing a science lesson together.

everyone takes care of any morning chores they haven’t gotten to, and each child goes to their respective work areas and starts their school work. Then a break for lunch and play time, and any school work that wasn’t already completed is done. We typically pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 3:00 or the Rosary at 3:30, accompanied by the one shown on EWTN. By this time, Mike has gone off to work, and the kids and I continue with the usual family routine, i.e., outdoor play, chores, TV time, dinner time, dance classes, meeting up with friends, and art time.

So much has changed and happened since we began to homeschool that it’s hard to know where to begin.

We began when Jacob was entering the 4th grade. Today he is 17 and will be





starting 12th grade. He has become a proficient writer and musician and has recently been using his talents as a pianist and guitarist to lead the folk group at church. He chooses the music, teaches it to some parishioners, plays and leads them at one Mass each month, and is now discerning college choices and long-term life decisions. He

just returned from a visit to a Christendom College summer camp.

Haley started her homeschooling in 1st grade. Now she is 14 this month and entering 9th grade. She has become an avid reader, photographer, and artist, and when she has spare time, you'll find her knitting, crocheting, sewing, or playing with Faith. Haley regularly works as a mother's helper for our neighbor and sings in the folk group at church with Jake.

I was pregnant with Faith when we began our discernment to homeschool our children. Faith is 8 now and begins 3rd grade this year. She loves to dance and takes classes at Sweet Briar College with their student-teacher program. She made her First Penance and First Communion in May. She LOVES to shadow her dad around the yard and be outside in general. Reading has not come as easily to her as the other two kids, and we are working on that. I'm just thankful that I've been able to be

a part of her getting over this hurdle and not leaving it to the county school system. It has also allowed me to improve my prayer time and patience.

It isn't a secret that Seton's curriculum requires a lot of writing, and I've seen how it has influenced Jake and Haley's passion for writing and reading. Some kids do what needs to be done just to

get through it, and others realize they love it. Jacob is one that just loves it. For a time, he even wrote and edited a newsletter that we would send to family and friends every couple of months. It contained stories he had written about things that our family had done. I truly believe it's only because of Seton's curriculum that this love of writing was discovered. Because of the free time during the day that my kids have, it could be easy to allow couch potatoes to foster. And trust me there are days (rainy or snowy ones) that we enjoy our TV or video game time. However, we usually require a balance. Read an hour or do some kind of outdoor activity to earn that lazy down time. Haley enjoys the simple path for most things, and reading is her easy street. By the time we started homeschooling, Jacob knew how to read; Haley I had to teach. Once she began, though, she took to it like a fish to water.

Now, she devours books!!

Homeschooling has also helped us to grow as a family around Mike's work schedule (3:00 pm-11:30 pm). If we weren't homeschooling, he wouldn't see the children very much. Now that he is used to seeing them and being a big part of their day, he wouldn't give it up too easily. When Jacob started high school and making friends with kids that go to the public

high school, we actually looked at that option. We even went on a tour, met with a guidance counselor, and sent for transcripts from Seton. When it came right down to it, though, Jacob was not willing to give up the freedom of spending his day the way he wanted. He wasn't willing to be a slave to "the system" because "they" know what works best.

The Prayer Method

The easiest and most often used method in our home is prayer. If I could pass one lesson on to any family contemplating homeschooling or to a struggling family, it would most certainly be to pray every day and take each day one day at a time. If the day seems overwhelming, then take it one minute at a time. If there is anything homeschooling has afforded me, it is that I now have an incredible prayer life, so I embrace the importance of prayer whole-heartedly.

It's not always sunny in the homeschool! Remember you are doing this because it is better for your children. If one of your children is struggling, slow down, back up, take a new course. That is the freedom of homeschooling. Seton also has wonderful people that selflessly have helped us on more than a few occasions to keep our homeschooling on track.



Virtual Views



College Prep



BOB WIESNER

Studying for the PSAT

The PSAT test is given in October each year, usually on Tuesday and Saturday of the second week of the month. This test is used to determine the National Merit Scholarships, a program operated mostly by foundations and corporations to enable America's top students to have funds for college.

Students are eligible for the National Merit program by taking the PSAT in October of their eleventh grade year. At times this can be difficult to determine for homeschooling students, so parents should take into account student age as well as academic records. The top two percent of scores on the PSAT in each state are selected for Semi-Finalist status; one percent are finalists. Each year, Seton averages five or six semi-finalists. Some Seton students have received full four-year scholarships from the program!

In order to take the test, students must register with the guidance office at a local school. You would need to talk to the office as soon as the school opens in the fall, usually in late August. The school will need to know in plenty of time how many tests they should order for the year.

Although Seton does have a school code, students should NOT use the Seton code for the PSAT. The semi-finalists are determined on a state-by-state basis, so students should use the general

homeschool code for their own state on this test. Also, do NOT use the school code of the school where the test is taken; that could cause problems in obtaining results. The school codes for each state are on the Seton web site. If you have difficulty finding the codes, call Chris Smith at Seton (540-622-5563) and he can supply the correct number.

Some students take the PSAT earlier than the eleventh grade year, just for practice. This may be helpful to students who have trouble with standardized tests, but usually a Seton education suffices for a good showing. The one area where students tend to have difficulty is the math section. Many would find it beneficial to go through a PSAT prep book and review geometry with a book such as *Geometry the Easy Way*. These books are available at setonbooks.com.

Available from
Setonbooks.com

Students chosen as semi-finalists will have quite a daunting form sent to them. This generally is filled out on-line now, but if you have questions about it, you can call Seton and we will help you.

As with any test, get a good night's sleep and have a good dinner and breakfast beforehand. Good luck!

The College Prep column will offer advice on the various entrance tests and the processes for college preparation. These articles are not intended only for upperclassmen but also for other students, because much of the preparation for graduation and college needs to be considered in the 9th and 10th grades. The columns will appear at approximately the times that you will need to use the advice given. The topics to be covered in future columns are as follows:

August: The PSAT Test	December: The Scholarship Search	May: Final Academic Preparations
September: The Early Admissions Process	January: Choosing the Right College	June: The Future without College
October: The SAT and ACT Tests	February: The Service Academies	July: Making the Break
November: The Essay, the Application, and Recommendations	March: Make Yourself Irresistible to Colleges	
	April: Material and Spiritual Preparations	

Of course, questions will arise which are not covered in the monthly columns. Please feel free to call the Seton staff with additional queries. Christopher Smith is the Guidance Counselor. Deacon Gene McGuirk takes questions regarding entrance into the military service academies.

continued from page 4

little. Pretty soon he could say it all by himself! The cutest part was one night when we got done saying the Hail Mary....he wanted to know what kind of fruit was in Mary's womb!!! lol! I'll never forget that as long as I live!!

Jessica: My daughter's first prayer was "Now I lay me down to sleep...." Just from listening to me say that each night with her, she gradually started saying it herself. Now at almost 4, she says that prayer, the prayer to her guardian angel, and most of the Hail Mary before bed....her little brother listens and loudly chimes in with "AMEN!" at the end of each prayer!

Bridget: I prayed aloud every night rocking my son to sleep and when he began to speak, he just knew the words and began to pray along with me. Saying the Rosary as a family is the best way to develop a love of prayer. "When 2 or more are gathered together...."

Christy: My daughter Iris will be in pre-k this year, her first prayer she learned was the Hail Mary at 2 yrs old. Both of my daughters can now say it well in Latin, and teaching them both that to love Jesus in all we do is the BEST prayer we can offer...

Missy: My 5 year old is learning The Guardian Angel prayer, the blessing at meal time.

See all 25 comments on

Facebook
in our July 6 posting

According to Dads



BY JOHN CLARK

What About Today?

When Lisa and I signed up Tarcisius for his spring baseball season earlier this year, we all knew that it would be his last year in Little League. He turned 13 years old, which is too old to play any longer; so, in a sense, it's a graduation. And like almost every kid who has ever picked up a bat, he dreamed of hitting a home run one day. (Unlike in the Major Leagues, home runs are rare in little league.) And with encouraging parents who have always told him that he would hit balls out one day, he never had much doubt that baseballs were going to be "leaving the yard." Yet, though he had frequently come close, he had never hit a ball over the wall.

However, on the night of his very last game, in his last batting practice before the session, he crushed a ball over the left field wall. In fact, it went so far that it rolled half-way to the next field. Mission accomplished.

After he hit it, Tarcisius glanced over at me and gave me a look that seemed to say two things: first, "It's about time," and second, "That's the first of many, Dad!"

George Gilder, author of *Wealth and Poverty*, wrote: "Dreams always die when they come true." I think what he meant was that once our goal is attained, we don't need the dream anymore, because it has become a reality. And then you need another dream.

That's the funny thing about dreams—about goals and aspirations: they are usually about tomorrow. Don't get me wrong—it's important to think about tomorrow, to think about accomplishment. But what about today? Sometimes we put so much emphasis on what might happen tomorrow that we forget about today. "Today" takes a bad rap—it is often the unfulfilled hope of yesterday, and it lacks the promise of tomorrow.

The more I thought about it, the more I wondered: was that hit any more important than anything he achieved in T-Ball? Was it

a bigger accomplishment than pitching well in the minor league? Are any of our accomplishments of tomorrow greater than those of today?

For homeschooling parents, it's a question worth pondering.

More than most of life's endeavors, academics are tomorrow-oriented. Even the names point toward the future: Literature 1 implies Literature 2, and fifth grade suggests sixth grade. High school is a prelude to college, and college is just a preparation for post-graduate work. At times, you may begin to wonder if children are just overwhelmed by it all. When the boxes of school books arrive, do the children ever think: "Even when I'm finished with all this work, it only means that I have to move on from the seventh grade to the eighth grade!"

The goal of homeschooling is to help our children get to Heaven; there is no more noble goal. Yet, sometimes this goal may cause us homeschooling parents to live for tomorrow, to the exclusion of today. And presumably, today is just as important as tomorrow, if not more important; after all, we are alive and able to make a difference today—tomorrow offers no such guarantee. And the thought of tomorrow may just as easily cause consternation, as Our Lord counseled us in Matthew 6:34: "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Moreover, we are called to be happy today, as Psalm 118:24 tells us: "Today is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

Children must understand that the good that they do today matters. They should be congratulated for the accomplishments of the present, rather than simply making a move closer to something in the future. The

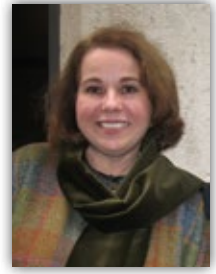
goodness of today doesn't consist of the fact that it precedes tomorrow. Today is good on its own merits. That's not just true for academics—that's true for many aspects of parenting.

This morning, as I was having a cup of coffee, our little two-year-old daughter Mary Katherine wandered into the kitchen with her toy ponies in hand. She proceeded to tell me a very detailed story about them; however, since she is still learning how to speak clearly, I could only understand about ten percent of her words. But she was so emphatic, with such a powerful range of verbal inflection that I was able to decipher the basic feeling of the story. I thought that it was so cute that she wanted to teach me about each of her special toys, that I sat and listened to her for quite a while. Every once in a while, I would interject with a word of approval or a question, and she would answer me and move on with her story.

Let me tell you something: the first thing that went through my mind was not that, one day, she will be able to speak clearly, using proper syntax and grammatical structure. However advanced a linguist she ever becomes, I'll always appreciate today, and the conversation we had. For that matter, I'm looking forward to another conversation like that tonight.

This year, Seton is introducing a Pre-K program. Presumably, Kindergarten follows Pre-K. Don't worry so much about that. Try not to even think much about that. This Pre-K program is a wonderful way to teach your children; it is a terrific way to enjoy teaching your children today. Wherever you are in the homeschooling process, it is important that you and your children understand the good that can be accomplished today.

And then go do it.



BY GINNY SEUFFERT

Pre-K at Home is Better!

This article is taken from the introduction to Ginny's Gems: 10 Essentials for Teaching Your Preschooler at Home by Ginny Seuffert. See the ad below for more details.

The last several decades have seen a major change in how Americans educate their youngest children, most notably an explosion of tiny tots attending formal preschool outside the home. From all the major media outlets, parents hear, "Children must enter kindergarten ready to learn." "Lack of readiness" is routinely blamed for poor achievement in American schools. So-called experts preach the acceptable path to follow: preschool is essential to prepare young learners by teaching necessary academic skills. Early education will foster socialization among peers. Children learn best in classes taught by teachers trained in early education, and toddlers are exposed to art, music, and physical education. They learn how to wait their turn and follow other simple rules of courtesy. They experience the diversity of modern America at an early age.

What could be better?

This little book answers that question.

Home education is better!

There is something better: preschool right in your own home.

Study after study shows that homeschooled children receive an all-around better education. The one-on-one relationship between the starter student and the teaching parent leads to astonishing academic progress.

Some educators believe that home educated children do not do "as well" socially. In fact, some studies show they are **better socialized** than their peers who attend institutional schools. Looking ahead, in every grade including high school, homeschooled children are less likely to engage in anti-social behaviors or destructive habits.

Homeschooled children have teachers who love them more than anything in the world. Homeschooled children forge **strong ties with parents**, siblings, and other family members. They learn life skills at Mom's knees. Classroom kids are supposed to learn "diversity" sitting in a room with age-mates from their own neighborhoods. Home educated children **interact** with their parents, shopkeepers, the mail carrier, older and younger siblings, extended family, and other homeschooling families.

Don't homeschooled preschoolers miss out?

Everything in life is a tradeoff, but there are elements of brick and mortar schools that your children will be better off without. They will not miss the teasing and bullying. They will be better off not worrying about whether their lunchboxes sport the current popular cartoon characters. They will not have the same opportunity to feel blue because other children have nicer toys and gadgets. They are less likely to be exposed to a host of infectious diseases that spread through preschools like wildfire. No more van rides to school when they are feeling out of sorts, and no more waiting to learn while the teacher tries to get an unruly class to come to attention. Their vocabularies will not be enriched and enlivened by words of the four-letter variety. Your children will be **better off missing some experiences** at school.

Can I do preschool in the home?

Do you know your colors and shapes? Can you count to twenty? Recite the alphabet? Sing some fun songs? Can you teach your children some basic prayers like the Sign of the Cross and Grace before meals?

You qualify!

You will be shocked at how easy it is to provide your preschooler with a first-rate educational experience. *Ginny's Gems: 10 Essentials for Teaching Your Preschooler at*

Home is written with the intention of giving you a simple roadmap to follow as you embark on the first leg of your homeschool journey.

Parents of young children do not have hours to sit and read, so this book is intentionally short and written in plain language. It will help you overcome common objections to homeschooling, raise children who are a joy to teach, and give you some simple ideas to get you started. *Ginny's Gems: 10 Essentials for Teaching Your Preschooler at Home* is based on my experience as a wife of over forty years, a mother of twelve children, and a grandmother of sixteen. Most of all, this book is based on my more than twenty years of experience as a Catholic homeschooling mother.

Ginny's Gems

10 Essentials for Teaching Your Preschooler at Home

In this book, you will find: Essential Toddler Do's and Don'ts, How to Stimulate Your Child's Unlimited Potential, Looking Ahead to Kindergarten and Beyond, How to Overcome Objections from Friends and Family, and more.



Ginny affirms with humor and good sense that homeschooled children have teachers who love them more than anything in the world. Her practical counsel will help your homeschooled children forge strong ties with parents, siblings, and other family members. After all, what could be better than to learn life skills at Mom's knees! 60 pp.

M-FMBK-72 **\$7.95**

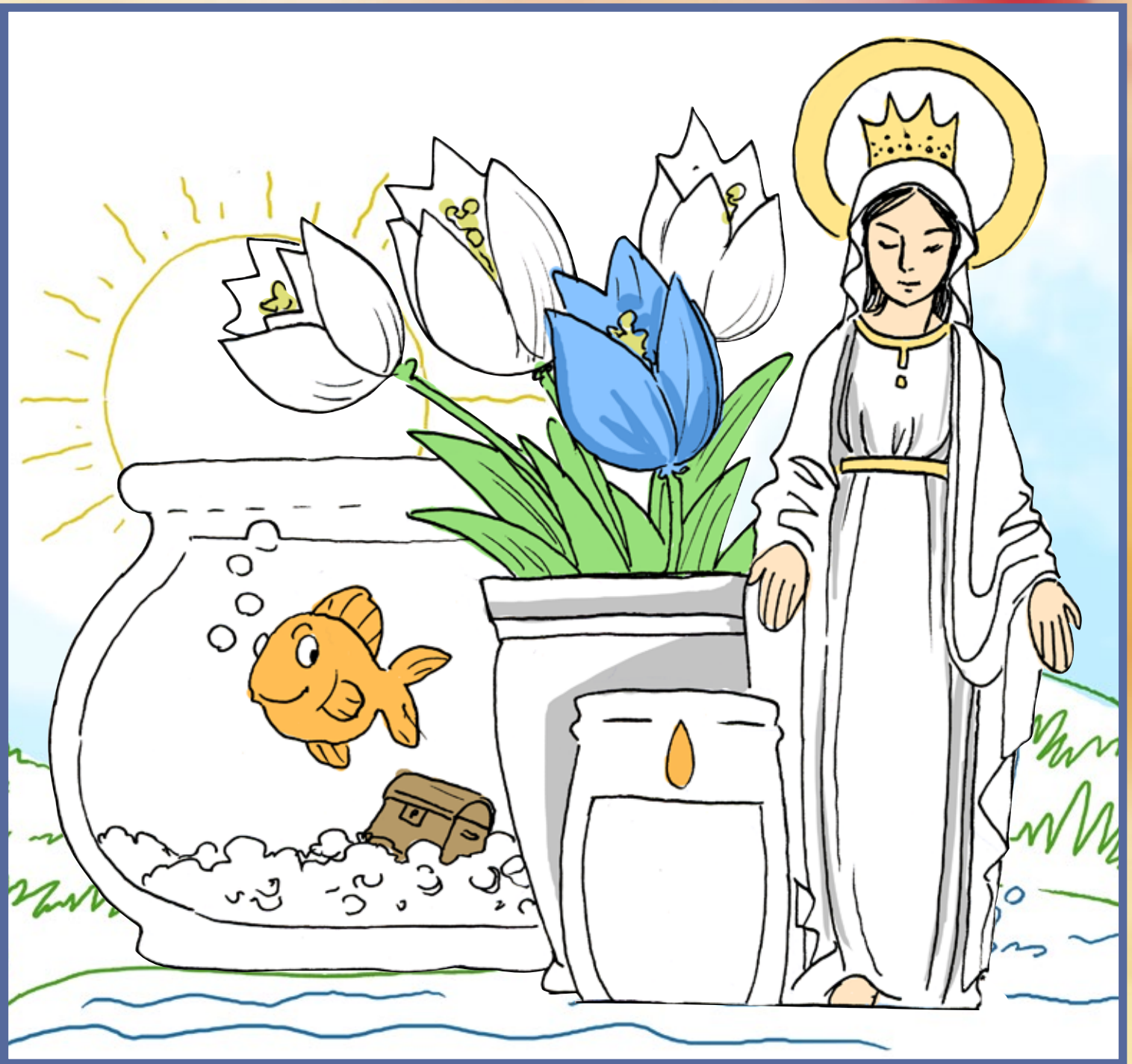
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Ginny's Gems:
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Kid's Corner

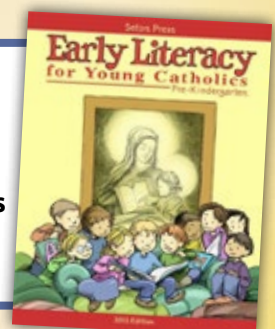


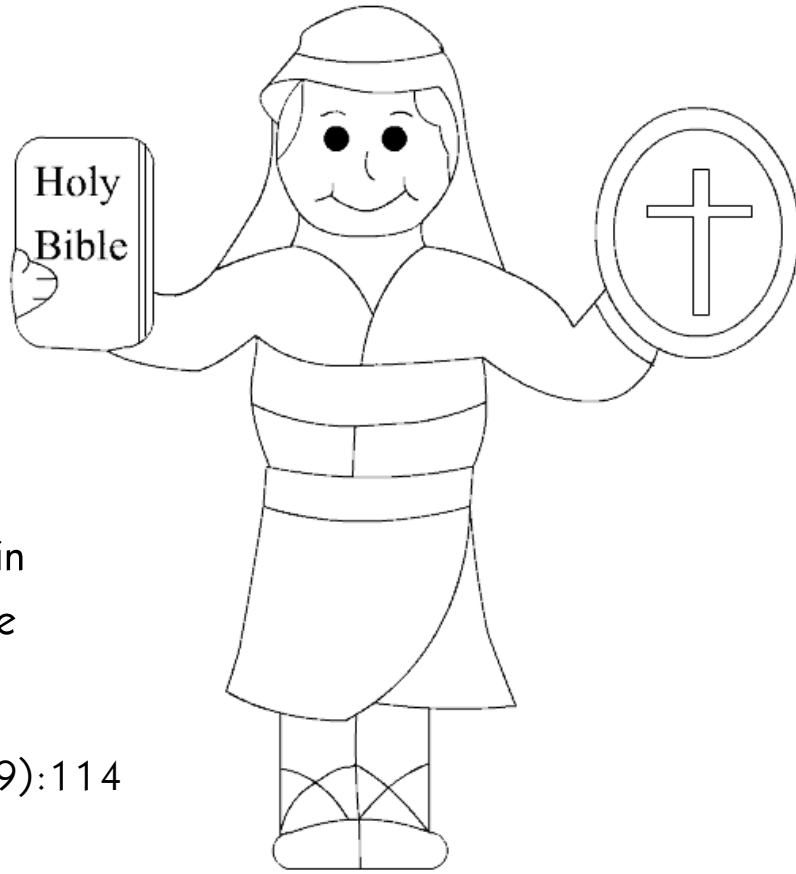
*Many things are colored blue.
Color in the areas that should be
blue.*

For more coloring activities
like this one, check out

Early Literacy for Young Catholics

<http://www.setonhome.org/preenrollment/>





Thou art my helper and my protector: and in thy word I have greatly hoped.

Psalm 118(119):114

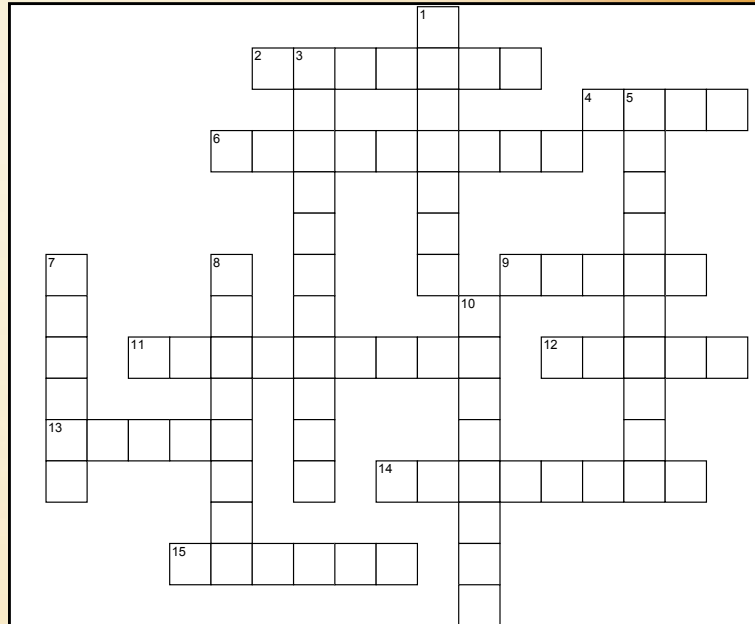
©A Kid's Heart at kidsheart.com

Circle the correct word.

- Which word relates to something that occurs in the mind?
 (a) drift b) unique c) imagination d) reality
- Which word relates to an event of the past?
 a) historical b) wistful c) sigh d) construct
- Which word may describe a curving line?
 a) drift b) winding c) stirring d) historical
- Which word suggests a sudden change?
 a) function b) whim c) imagination d) event
- Which word relates to putting something together?
 a) dramatize b) drift c) linger d) construct

Circle two words which have either similar or opposite meanings. Write the letter **S** if they are similar, or **O** if they are opposite. **Optional:** Use a thesaurus for more synonyms and antonyms for Exercise A words.

- | | | | | |
|--------------|----------|------------|-------------|-------|
| 1. leave | savor | linger | dramatize | _____ |
| 2. wistful | whim | winding | wishful | _____ |
| 3. dramatize | function | savor | enjoy | _____ |
| 4. abruptly | event | occurrence | imagination | _____ |
| 5. unique | stirring | unusual | winding | _____ |



ACROSS

- bending; turning
- sudden wish or desire; sudden change of mind
- to act out events or situations, usually in a theatrical way
- to taste or enjoy with pleasure
- to make; to form
- to move along without effort or purpose
- something usually of importance that occurs
- without warning; suddenly
- unusual; rare; notable

DOWN

- longing; wishful; yearning
- the power to form a mental picture of something not present
- relating to or based on actual events of the past
- to stay as though not wanting to leave
- purpose; the action for which something is fitted or used
- inspiring; moving; touching

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Ages 4-10. This music series is the most exciting and effective way to help young children become fluent in the language of music. This comprehensive, interactive software helps young children learn to read music, play piano with both hands, compose, and improvise.

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- 🎵 how to play simple pieces on a piano or keyboard
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A helpful way of helping your children remember their prayers

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- Learn Catholic prayers
- Remember to say prayers
- Begin and end each day with a prayerful heart!



Prayer Pillowcases **\$14.95**

See the website for full listing!

Little Acts of Grace

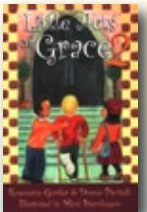


These books are great ways to introduce children to Catholic customs. Topics include: Bowing your head at the name of Jesus, what to do when passing a Catholic Church, how to behave during Mass as well as at the Consecration, praying to Mary and the saints, saying prayers before meals, as well as before bedtime.



Book two deals with guiding your young children to grow in their relationship with Jesus by understanding that He is their Best Friend.

Recommended for preschool to grade 4. Soft cover. 48 pages each.



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As it is the parents who have given life to their children, on them lies the gravest obligation of educating their family. They must therefore be recognized as being primarily and principally responsible for their education. The role of parents is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute... It is therefore above all in the Christian family, inspired by the grace and responsibility of the sacrament of matrimony, that children should be taught to know and worship God and to love their neighbor, in accordance with the faith which they have received in earliest infancy in the sacrament of Baptism.

Declaration on Education, Second Vatican Council

www.setonhome.org

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