

# Seton



# MAGAZINE

*"Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church"*

OCTOBER 2012



# A.M.D.G.

AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM – "TO THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD!"

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**Executive Editor**

Dr. Mary Kay Clark

**Editor**

Kevin Clark

**Marketing Director**

Jim Shanley

**Art Directors**

Pam Owens

Joe Sparks

**Copy Editor**

Sarah Daley

**Contributing Writers**

Ginny Seuffert

John Clark

Bob Wiesner

Tom Herlihy

Maria Nauman

**Contributing Photography**

The Nauman Family

**Did you know?**



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton died at the age of 46, only 16 years after her conversion to Catholicism.

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Seton Home Study School

1350 Progress Dr.

Front Royal, VA 22630

Phone: (540) 636-9990

Fax: (540) 636-1602

Internet: [www.setonhome.org](http://www.setonhome.org)

E-Mail: [info@setonhome.org](mailto:info@setonhome.org)

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**Front Cover:** Clockwise from left: Anna, Nicholas, John Paul, Grace, Luke, Benjamin

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



**Customer Service**

[custserv@setonhome.org](mailto:custserv@setonhome.org)

**Counselors**

[counselors@setonhome.org](mailto:counselors@setonhome.org)

**Admissions**

[admissions@setonhome.org](mailto:admissions@setonhome.org)

**Grading**

[grading@setonhome.org](mailto:grading@setonhome.org)

**General Information**

[info@setonhome.org](mailto:info@setonhome.org)

**My Seton**

[myseton@setonhome.org](mailto:myseton@setonhome.org)

**Shipping**

[shipping@setonhome.org](mailto:shipping@setonhome.org)

**Standardized Testing**

[testing@setonhome.org](mailto:testing@setonhome.org)

**Special Services**

[SSDept@setonhome.org](mailto:SSDept@setonhome.org)



**Seton Home Study School**

540-636-9990

**Admissions**

540-636-2039

**High School Grading**

Rhonda Way

540-622-5525

**Elementary Grading**

Bruce Hacker

540-622-5524

**High School**

Course Approval

Gene McGuirk

540-635-4728

**High School English**

Walker Solis

540-636-1755

Christine Smitha

540-636-1633

**High School History**

Bruce Clark

540-636-1199

**High School Math**

Tom Herlihy

540-636-1846

**High School Math/Science**

Don Valaika

540-636-1396

**Seton Educational Media**

540-636-9996

**Transcripts, Records,  
and Extensions**

Betty Valaika

540-635-1937

**Senior Guidance/  
Enrollment/  
Independent Studies**

Christopher Smith

540-622-5563

**Religion/Sacraments**

Fr. Constantine

540-636-1527

**Special Services**

Stephen Costanzo

540-622-5546

Sharon Hines

540-622-5542

**Standardized Testing**

Patty Graham

540-636-1250

**Elementary  
Counseling**

Sharon Hassett

540-636-1429

Carin Delancey

540-636-2342

Cecilia Sauer

General Counseling

540-622-5526

**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](mailto:jshanley@setonhome.org)

**SHARE YOUR STORY AND INSPIRE ANOTHER FAMILY**

## Letter from the Director of Seton Home Study School Dr. Mary Kay Clark



### Fatima and the Rosary

The month of October is called the Month of the Holy Rosary. On October 13, 1917, thousands of people saw the colorful miraculous display of the “falling” of the sun in Fatima, Portugal. The Blessed Mother had appeared to the three children, Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco, for several months previously, always encouraging them to pray the daily Rosary.

On the very first appearance of the Blessed Mother, Lucia asked if the three children would go to Heaven. The Blessed Mother answered yes, but said that Francisco “must say many Rosaries.”

Lucia, who later became Sister Lucia, eventually wrote a book, *“Calls” from the Message of Fatima*, published by the Fatima Shrine. Sister Lucia wrote that the last words of the Blessed Mother on May 13, 1917, were “Pray the Rosary every day in order to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war.”

We homeschooling parents know we need to be saying the family Rosary every day with our children for peace in the world and for the end of all the wars in the world. Perhaps the greatest “war” in our own country is the culture war.

The culture war damages the souls of all of us, children and adults, as through all kinds of means of communication, we are subject to the pressure of accepting the devil’s agenda for abortion and same-sex “marriage,” immodesty, and continual self-pleasure. These are part of an all-out effort to destroy the family.

From the Garden of Eden, God made us male and female with the command to be fruitful. From the Garden of Eden, the devil was allowed to tempt our first parents, who fell for the devil’s lies. From that beginning, Abel and Cain became two brothers, one who obeyed the laws of God, one who disobeyed God’s laws, and even killed his own brother.

Sister Lucia writes, “Why should Our Lady have told us to say the Rosary every day rather than tell us to go to Mass every day?” Sister Lucia says she believes that Our Lady realized that not everyone can go to Mass everyday. “On the other hand, to pray the Rosary is something everybody can do, rich and poor, wise and ignorant, great and small” (p. 132).

“All people of good will can, and must, say the Rosary every day. Why? In order to put ourselves into contact with God, to thank Him for His benefits and ask Him for the graces we need. It is the prayer which places us in familiar contact with God, like the son who goes to his father to thank him for the gifts he has received, to talk to him about his special concerns, to receive his guidance, his help, his support, and his blessing.

“Since we all need to pray, God asks of us, as a kind of daily installment, a prayer which is within our reach: the Rosary, which can be recited either in common or in private, either in Church in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament or at home, either with the rest of the family or alone, either when traveling or while walking quietly in the fields. A mother of a family can say the Rosary while she rocks her baby’s cradle or does the housework. Our day has twenty-four hours

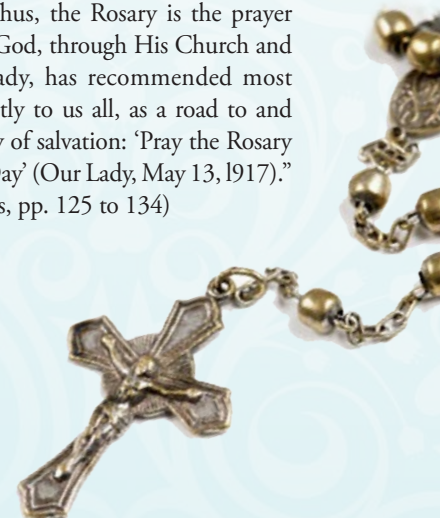
in it. It is not asking a great deal to set aside a quarter of an hour for the spiritual life, for our intimate and familiar converse with God.”

“God, Who is our Father and understands better than we do the needs of His children, chose to stoop to the simple, ordinary level of all of us in asking for the daily recitation of the Rosary, in order to smooth for us the way to Him.

“...through the Message [of Fatima] God has asked us for so insistently, we can conclude that the Rosary is the form of vocal prayer which is most suited to people in general...God and Our Lady know better than anyone else what is most appropriate for us and what we most need. Moreover, it will be a powerful means of helping us to preserve our faith, hope, and charity.

“Even for those people who do not know how, or who are not able to recollect themselves sufficiently to meditate, the simple act of taking the rosary in their hands in order to pray, is already to become mindful of God, and the mention in each decade of a mystery of the life of Christ recalls Him to their minds; this in turn will light in their souls the gentle light of faith which supports the still smoldering wick, preventing it from extinguishing itself altogether...”

“Thus, the Rosary is the prayer which God, through His Church and Our Lady, has recommended most insistently to us all, as a road to and gateway of salvation: ‘Pray the Rosary every Day’ (Our Lady, May 13, 1917).” (Quotes, pp. 125 to 134)



# Your Questions...

answered by Dr. Clark

## Virtual Views

### On Facebook, one mom asked:

"Hi Everyone! Care to share, with those getting started, ways you've found to keep your students on track and focused on their school work?"

Elisa C.: This is our 5th year of homeschooling. This year, because my 3-year-old is so "busy," we had to move our classroom out of our designated homeschool room upstairs, down to the kitchen table so the 3-year-old can have more space to run amuck. :-). In order to give my 8-and-10-year-olds a bit more privacy while doing their schoolwork in the wide open kitchen, my husband made partitions to sit on the table which can be put up and taken down when needed. This helps keep my older kids' eyes from wandering around the room, which allows for more focus on schoolwork. They are L-shaped, made out of pegboard, and provide a designated work area for each of them that they LOVE. My husband put hinges on them so they can be folded up and slipped next to the fridge when not in use.

Jari W.: My eldest was very active, so I would put her books across the room from where we worked. When it was time to get a different book, I would have her go put a book away, and

continued on page 10

### **The National Assessment Governing Board reported that only 24 percent of America's 8th and 12th graders have "solid writing skills." What can we parents do to help our children improve their writing skills. Is the computer helping or hindering?**

It is important for our children to be writing every day. Seton includes several paragraph writing assignments within each English quarter, some almost weekly. At least one book report or book analysis is written each quarter. Beyond these items, writing skills can improve if whole sentences are written instead of one-word answers for the usual questions at the end of a chapter (for history and science especially) as well as for the reading assignments.

It is important that parents look over written work and evaluate writing skills, especially before sending it to Seton for grading. If you have a friend or relative who is an English teacher, or an especially good writer, you may ask that person to look over your child's written work. While Seton is evaluating writing assignments quarterly, someone you know may be able to help more quickly.

Overall, the computer helps most students in the area of creative writing or writing skills. It corrects spelling and some grammar and helps students to be more efficient in writing, which encourages students to improve. Being able to make corrections or improvements in sentences and paragraphs, easily moving around sentences and paragraphs, being able to insert a more accurate or precise word or phrase, all help students improve the final product. Like it or not, students at the fourth or fifth grade and even older, are not likely to improve their composition if they must rewrite the whole assignment.

### **Is it okay for me to look over the tests and book reports, and make suggestions, before sending them to Seton?**

We encourage parents to look over their student's work before sending it to Seton for grading. Many times, mistakes are from being careless, such as omitting answers to questions on the back page of the test. When that happens we must either give a low grade or an Incomplete.

Parents should go over the test with the student, reading aloud or having the student read aloud the answers. That alerts the student that he must make a correction. It is especially important to read aloud any paragraphs or compositions, for both grade school and high school students. Parents can point out that sometimes questions are not being answered with specific details. Parents can say "That does not sound like the correct answer to me. Go back and review the chapter and correct your answer." With this approach, you are not giving your student the answer, but you are encouraging him to review and learn the material. Your

goal and Seton's goal is for the children to learn, not to send in work just to record a grade. Seton parents care about their children's education. Eventually, the children realize this, and also begin to put in the extra effort.

### **Why do you have so many books at the elementary grade levels?**

It may seem overwhelming when the box arrives, but remember that your student has a full year to do the lessons in all the subjects. You might want to look at our online video "Opening the Box." (You can access this through your *MySeton* page at [www.setonhome.org/myseton](http://www.setonhome.org/myseton). Simply log on with your family number and click on your student's name in the upper right-hand corner, then click on Resources, then click on Videos, then click on Opening the Box.) This presentation reviews all the books and materials you received in your box and gives you an overview about how they will be used in the next year. Notice that while you have received two Readers, one is for the first half of the year, the other for the second half. While you have received two reading workbooks, each is done for only one-half of the year. Only one of the four books for the book reports is assigned to be read for each quarter of the year.

Take a thorough look at your Course Manual of daily lesson plans. You should see that we follow a daily pattern of assignments that are fairly close in line with the Catholic schools daily schedule. If you look at what the student is asked to do each day, it should not be overwhelming. The main thing is to make and keep to a schedule which will allow you and your student to reach your educational goals for the year.

If you are having problems, you may phone one of our academic counselors who can give you some ideas of how to accomplish your homeschooling more efficiently.

### **May I combine some classes to make it easier for me to teach two children at one time?**

We encourage you to do this whenever possible. In some subjects, such as science, history, and religion (as well as art and music), this can be done in both the elementary and high school levels. However, in the elementary levels, it usually works when students are in adjacent grade levels. If you want to combine another subject, such as math, spelling, or vocabulary, it would be worth your time to have the younger student take the next grade level over the previous summer to be able to join the older sibling the following school year.

An advantage to having two children taking the same course is that they can take turns answering questions, reading paragraphs in their reader, quizzing each other for spelling words and vocabulary words. Be careful, though, that the children work independently, maybe in different rooms, when they take their tests. We have seen some siblings' tests which are exact duplicates (in misspelling and incorrect punctuation, as well as answers).

If you decide to combine classes, call our Admissions Department at 866-280-1930. If you want to discuss the issue first, call our Academic Counselors. For elementary counselors, call Sharon Hassett (Ext. 118) or Carin Delancy (Ext. 120). For high school, call Gene McGuirk (Ext. 117).

**My son in sixth grade says he can do all the problems in his math book, and wants a seventh grade math book.**

Tell your son that he needs to show you that he can do the problems correctly in his sixth grade book. Start out by asking him to do the at-home chapter tests so you can check his answers. If they are correct, then give him the chapter test to send to Seton. If his grade is in the 90s or 100, then have him take the next at-home chapter test, and the next chapter test to send to Seton. Do this for the whole book, if he can. If not, it may be that he can start with the daily lessons perhaps half-way or three-fourths through the book. If he is successful with very good grades for the whole grade level, then contact our Admissions Department so we can ship the next grade level math book, lessons, and tests.

Math is one subject you don't want your student to advance in too rapidly because what has been learned in the past must be learned well, to the point where the student can give the correct answer almost automatically, for him to be successful with lessons and tests in the future. While some students can progress quickly in the lower grades, some higher thinking skills are needed when they reach seventh and eighth grades; another jump in higher thinking skills is needed in high school. It is better to learn slowly with complete understanding in the lower levels than to struggle in the upper levels.

**My high school son cannot seem to get his work done in a day.**

We recently made a video for high school students called *Juggling Your Time*. One problem with adolescence is that it causes young people to want to sleep longer in the morning. Once your student reaches high school, you need to remind him that he is now a Young Adult. That means he is an adult, even though he is a young one. He needs to change his lifestyle to a more adult lifestyle.

Homeschool students often look with pity on the public school student who must get up at 6:30 every morning to be ready to catch a 7:30 bus to school. However, there is an upside to needing to get up early: the student is up!

Since homeschooling students don't have a bus to catch, their days can sometimes dribble away without being productive. Structure and routine are necessary. If the bus doesn't enforce a routine, then the routine may need to be self-enforced. A 7:00 or 7:30 wake-up time is a good idea, because most people are more productive in the early hours of the day. Changing out of pajamas and into "school" clothes is also a good way to tell the mind that it's time to start being productive. If possible, try to have students do a few quick exercises, grab a glass of juice, and start into the first subject even before breakfast.

Some parents have told us that an early daily Mass, far from taking away from the schooling routine, actually works to enforce it. Needing to get up for early Mass means that the day has begun and something useful can be accomplished.

A schedule is vitally important, but just like every else in homeschooling, the schedule should be adjusted to the educational needs of the student. For instance, some students like the "regular school" schedule, doing an hour or so of work for each subject each day, with additional reading in the evening. Some students like to take more time to focus on an individual subject; these students study and take the tests for one subject all morning and a second subject all afternoon. They are able to complete the two courses and have final grades recorded for two subjects in a few months. Then they take two more courses in the next three months, and two more in the final three months.

**My fifth grader, a bright student, keeps saying, "I can do it myself." Should I let her?**

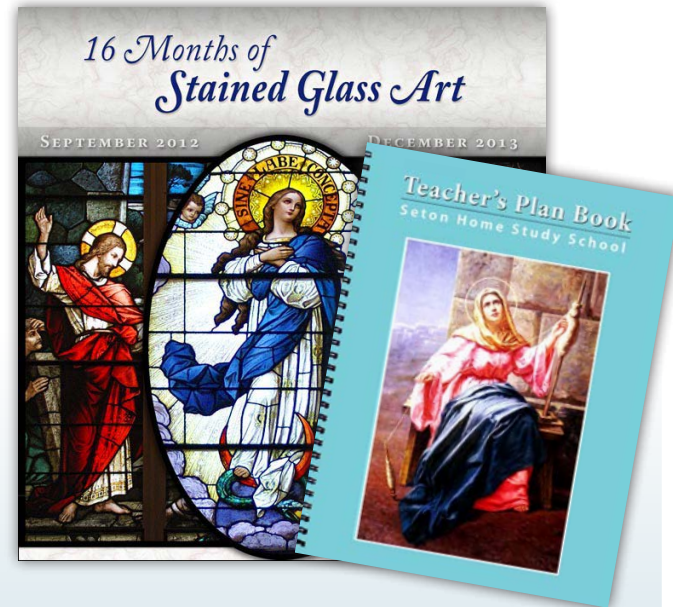
We have had mothers tell us that when they allow a child, even in high school, to "be on her own," they have regretted it by spring when they realize the student did not keep up with the work. Children, even high school students, are not old enough to do their schoolwork on their own without any parental oversight. That is the truth based on past unhappy experiences from our Seton parents.

However, self-motivation and self-direction are important habits and skills that will help a child throughout life. You do not want to discourage a truly motivated child. It takes wisdom to discern exactly what a child can do, and when a child needs help.

God has given us parents not only the right but also the responsibility to teach our children. That responsibility means that children need to accept their parents' leadership in directing, observing, and overseeing for accountability.

**My last child graduated from Seton and is now in college. After all these years, I want to help other homeschooling families. Do you think this is wise?**

This could be a wonderful apostolate for you and a blessing for a younger homeschooling family. Very few experienced Catholic homeschooling mothers are available to help young families. We certainly encourage you to help out with maybe a



"A schedule is vitally important, but just like every else in homeschooling, the schedule should be adjusted to the educational needs of the student."

**SetonBooks.com offers calendars and plan books designed to help you plan and schedule your homeschooling.**

couple of afternoons a week with English, reading, or math. We have had some single mothers call who want to homeschool but cannot find help, or moms who are ill, or whose high school child is home alone. Many moms need help desperately. Contact any homeschooling family in your area and see who needs your help the most. There surely is a special place in Heaven for someone like you.

**My husband is willing to let me homeschool, but he is not enthusiastic.**

This is a tough situation. Some mothers make sure all the books, pencils, notes, papers, whatever, are out of sight and put in cupboards or in the children's bedroom bookcases when Dad comes home, just so there is no dissension. What you especially do not want is for your husband to make any derogatory comments to the children about their education, since this may make the children pit the two of you against each other. A prophecy of failure in homeschooling can become self-fulfilling if it makes the children believe that their father is against the idea.

What must be hoped and prayed for is that your husband will eventually see the fruits of your homeschooling and will become enthusiastic. Your husband may not like homeschooling, but he loves his children and wants what is best for them. If he can see that homeschooling is helping them to learn, then he may become a real partner in the enterprise.

# BAYLEY BULLETIN

The Quarterly Newsletter of Seton Home Study High School

## Calling All High Schoolers!

Two years ago, Seton Home Study School started a little publication called the Bayley Bulletin. The purpose of the Bulletin was to connect with our Seton teens and help you connect with one another. We loved the idea of having a resource to talk with you about real life, your achievements, our inspirations, and other community-building topics that weren't always related to the details of your coursework. However, with the recent change in management of our monthly newsletter and the shift to a magazine format for that newsletter, the Bayley Bulletin is back on the table for discussion.



A NOTE FROM CHRISTINE SMITHA

That's where you come in! We need your help to determine whether or not to keep publishing the Bayley Bulletin, and if the answer is "keep it," to determine the format and content.

Did you enjoy the Bayley Bulletin? If so, what did you like about it? Was it fun to have a newsletter just for yourselves and no one else? Did you like the content? Was there something you would have liked to see included in the Bayley Bulletin? Was there something you would have preferred not to see in the Bayley Bulletin? Did the Bulletin make you feel connected to the counselors and students? How many pages would you like the Bayley Bulletin to be? Should it be its own magazine or a section of the Seton Magazine? Tell us what you think, and we'll do our best to ensure that Seton Home Study high schoolers continue to have their own media outlet.

Send your comments and ideas to Christine Smitha at [cmsmitha@setonhome.org](mailto:cmsmitha@setonhome.org).

God bless you!

## Student Achievements

### Sibling Seton Graduates Make Dean's List in College

Brother and sister Seton graduates Sarah and Paul Ashour each earned straight A's in the spring 2012 semester. They are both on the Dean's List for their respective colleges. Paul is attending Texas A & M University, and Sarah is attending the University of St. Thomas in Houston.

### Graduate Earns Nursing Degree at Steubenville

This May, 2008 Seton graduate Kaitlyn Sharp graduated Magna Cum Laude from Franciscan University of Steubenville with a degree in Nursing and a GPA of 3.87. She also received the United States Air Force Leadership in Nursing award given to the senior nursing student who best exemplified the qualities of Integrity First, Service before Self, and Excellence in All Things. At Franciscan, Kaitlyn was a student supervisor serving as Student Head of Events for two years, which involved directly hiring and overseeing over sixty peer workers. She received the Student Work Program's Outstanding Student Worker award last spring.

Kaitlyn is very proud of her Seton schooling. She firmly believes that the virtues and lessons it instilled in her have helped her to achieve these accomplishments. She feels the discipline of the rigorous program taught her invaluable lessons, and she will always be grateful for the outstanding English classes that taught her how to critically evaluate and to express her thoughts.

### Seton Graduate Earns Masters Degree in Trumpet Performance

2006 Seton graduate Nathaniel Bean has just graduated with a Master of Arts degree in trumpet performance from the University of Iowa with a 4.0 GPA. He also just completed a two-year tenure as a graduate teaching assistant for the University of Iowa trumpet studio. Nathaniel has also been accepted to the Doctor of Musical Arts degree program at Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI with a generous scholarship.



While going to Iowa, Nathaniel taught private trumpet lessons in the Iowa City area and regularly played at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Iowa City and St. Mary's Church in Riverside, IA. He also tried to stay involved with 40 Days for Life and other pro-life events.

### Graduate Awarded Scholarship to Local University

Seton graduate Katie Peterson has been accepted to the University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth, Kansas, where she will major in Music/Vocal Performance and minor in Theology. She has been awarded \$19,500 in scholarships and a grant. Katie is a published author and has recorded one religious music CD and is in the process of recording her second CD containing three of her own songs.

Katie joined Seton in January of 2011 as a second semester sophomore.

Please let us know about your own achievements!  
Visit our website for contact information.

# Seton's Tips for a Successful School Year

## Turning in your first quarter's completed work

Seton has made the process for recording grades and turning in required assignments easy and intuitive. You can submit your students' grades instantly on MySeton and receive your feedback more quickly, or you can mail in your grades and materials.

If you mail in your work: we recommend that you turn in your completed work at the end of each quarter. If you still haven't finished every assignment, that's fine! It is better to get in whatever work you have ready, than to wait until everything is done.

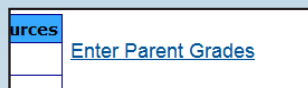


For a video walk-through, visit [www.setonhome.org/magazine](http://www.setonhome.org/magazine)

### Submit Your Grades Online

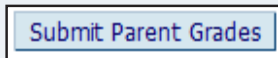


- Log on to MySeton, select the "Courses" Tab, and select a student.
- Click the "View" link for the course and quarter.
- Select the "Enter Parent Grades" on the right-hand side of the page.
- Enter grades into available boxes on parent-graded items. Seton will enter grades for materials graded by Seton staff.

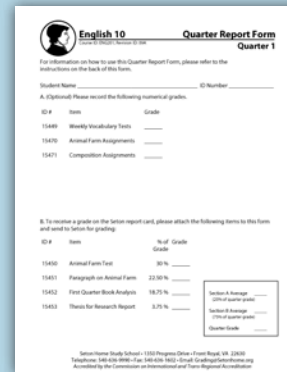


ID	Graded by	%	Grade	Resources
7	Parent	8.33%	85	
8	Parent	8.33%	90	
9	Parent	8.34%	90	
0	Seton	18.75%		

- When finished, click "Submit Parent Grades."



### Mail in Your Grades



**Quarter Report Forms (QRFs)** are included with each course lesson plan packet. Should you opt to send your grades via mail, these forms are essential for recording and submitting your student's grades. To correctly complete the forms, follow the steps below. There are also instructions on the back of every form.

- Be sure to record your student's name and Seton ID.
- Section A deals only with parent-graded assignments. Record the grades you have given to your student in this section.
- Section B deals with Seton-graded assignments. Leave section B blank.
- Record the Section A average. Seton will record the Section B average and the Quarter Grade.
- Attach the Seton-graded assignments to the QRF and then mail them to Seton's grading department.

A. (Optional) Please record the following numerical grades.

ID #	Item	Grade
15449	Weekly Vocabulary Tests	<u>85</u>
15470	Animal Farm Assignments	<u>93</u>
15471	Composition Assignments	<u>98</u>

Section A Average	<u>92</u>
(25% of quarter grade)	
Section B Average	_____
(75% of quarter grade)	
Quarter Grade	_____

**For More Information**  
See the Back of the Quarter Report Form



Remember, grades should be submitted either online or by mail. Please do not submit the grades twice.  
Enter the parent grades online only if you submit the Seton-graded assignments online.

# A.M.D.G.

*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam – “To The Greater Glory of God!”*

BY MARIA C. SCHAEFER NAUMAN

I'm a cradle Catholic, born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland, the premier archdiocese of the United States. Here, when someone asks, "Where did you go to school?" they mean which *Catholic high school* you attended (e.g. – Mount de Sales, Cardinal Gibbons, St. Joe, etc.), rather than which college or university. Baltimore is a big-small-town, and its Catholic community even more so.

In this environment, our New Jersey-born parents raised my sister and me with twelve wonderful years of Catholic school. We were not just informed by our Faith: our entire lives were permeated by it.

So when it came time for my own husband, a convert, and I, to send *our* children to school, Catholic school was our only consideration.

Well, except for Nicholas.

I had been married for nine years and finally diagnosed as infertile, when Prince Charming and I decided to navigate the labyrinth of adoption. We were rewarded with our first son, adopted from Ukraine. "There are plenty of kids in the world," I shrugged happily. "Let's just start buying them up!"

So in 2000, we adopted Nicholas, a nine-month-old boy weighing only nine pounds, who had endured abdominal surgery, pneumonia, a cleft palate, and over a *dozen* other purported ailments.

Whoa.

But, when you long for a child and someone finally hands you one, you don't say, "Well, *this* one isn't good enough."

We were elated! After a month in-country, our trans-Atlantic flight skimmed out of the former Soviet Union with our son tucked safely between us. We took him home, fed him, loved him up, and thankfully many of his lesser diagnoses were unfounded. But, he did have a cleft palate and severe cerebral palsy, so "school" meant special education.

Not inclusion.

Not mainstreaming.

Not least restrictive environment.

The United Cerebral Palsy's Delrey School became the Munchkinland to our Kansas. "School" was a blessing! Then God surprised us.

We were in the grocery store one day when Prince Charming gave me a queer look and said, "I think you're pregnant."

I frowned, disgruntled. "I think you're crazy."



Grace and Anna

*"... Whatever you do, do it all for the Glory of God."*

I CORINTHIANS 10:31



Chris and Nicholas



Chris and Maria Nauman

He grinned. "I'm going to get a pregnancy test." I frowned harder. "I'm going to get cupcakes. I'll meet you at the register."

Nine months later, he was right. (Hey, we *can* do this!) After that, a new kid arrived every two years, whether we were ready or not.

...and believe me, we were *not* ready for some of them.

When our second child, a girl, was ready for kindergarten, we chose an exemplary local Catholic school, paid tuition, bought cute uniforms, stockpiled her backpack with 487 lbs. of supplies, and happily drove an hour roundtrip daily.

Within two weeks, I regretted it. Deeply.

Not only would she *sleep* from exhaustion the entire ride home ("Oh, she'll get used to it," other parents chirped) and have *more* work to do that evening, but my sunny, generous, cheerful daughter had become sullen, defensive, and insecure.

The school itself was wonderful.

It was begun by homeschool families loyal to the Magisterium. Yet I noticed bumper stickers in the parking lot for pro-abortion politicians or "alternative" lifestyles.

"Well, she has to learn to get along with everyone, you know," people groused. So we stayed.

By Easter we were counting the days.

I should have been stronger and pulled the plug. The school wasn't the problem. It was the unrelenting daily influence of other children and families who did not share the same moral goals, values, and standards of behavior that we did. Some people send their children to Catholic school because they live their Faith. Some people do because they're paying the school to raise their kid.

It took another year for my daughter to *begin* to believe again in her inherent value as a child of God. "Children are resilient," people said. "She'll heal."

And children are cruel. It had been a mistake to throw my lamb to the wolves *before* I had taught her self-defense. Just because the cultural cess pool was out there, didn't mean I had to let her swim in it.

So now here we are with *six* children, the rest of whom arrived in the natural way. (Isn't God hilarious!?)

We are. Therefore we homeschool.

Look, I can't tell you how to run your homeschool. I can tell you only what's worked well for



## Here's what we've learned:

### **Fact #1 – In homeschooling, not every day will be perfect, but every day will be blessed.**

When I die, the Lord will not care about my children's algebraic or musical prowess. He *will*, however, want to know how I shaped the souls He entrusted to my care. With five kids under ten and Nicholas's therapy and school schedule, we only can make daily Mass on Fridays. So we watch EWTN's Mass during breakfast or lunch. And on days when the toddlers are running through the house like Grant through Richmond, the baby's diaper explodes on the new carpet, I step barefoot in the dog's vomit, the washing machine blows up, and every child needs my hand-held help, every second, in every subject, then we call that a "Character Building Day" and move on. In the immortal words of Scarlett O'Hara, "After all, tomorrow is another day!"

**Moral: Tomorrow will be better...it has to be!**

### **Fact #2 – Why yes, as a matter of fact, you are your brother's keeper.**

Having a child with special needs is not my responsibility. He is *our* responsibility. (So is our elderly neighbor. So is our new baby. So is our Grandmom. ....oh, did I mention my mother lives with us, too?) We are blessed to have *family* and not be alone in this world. So on days when our oldest son is home, *his* needs take precedence, which means all hands on deck to help mind the baby, teach the pre-schoolers, and keep up with lunch and laundry. My kids are delighted when they master a concept and can explain it to little ones! And the skill of preparing and serving food, and each other, will serve them better throughout life than being choosy about the handouts they get in a cafeteria line.

**Moral: If we all make it to Heaven, we can thank each other for opportunities to be unselfish!**

### **Fact #3 – It is neither practical nor kind to expect one person (i.e. – Momma) to be the house servant to eight selfish slob.**

I cannot run a tight ship with lay-about deckhands, so one of my favorite phrases to hear is, "Can I help, Momma?" From the lips of a toddler, however, this can be both endearing *and* exasperating. But, rest assured that the (albeit sometimes painful) time invested in teaching Junior at an early age how to empty trash cans, dust shelves, put toys away, or make a peanut butter sandwich, will be rewarded richly with a capable youth who is a generous, active, effective, contributing member of your domestic church and a marvelous future spouse for some fortunate soul.

**Moral: Helping hands not only speed a task and make light work; they also teach a heart of service and self-determination, qualities that carry over beautifully in the school room.**

### **Fact #4 – Like it or not, a schedule makes life easier.**

I have neither the time nor the inclination for chore charts, points, prizes, and ticker tape parades just because you blew your nose. Thus, every child has simple, daily, common courtesy chores (e.g. – make bed, put dirty clothes in laundry cart, empty dishwasher, clear place at meals, etc.). They also each have a sheet in a page protector with his/her wake-up and bedtime lists (using either clip art or words, as needed).

Weekly, we clean bathrooms on Monday, vacuum on Tuesday (or as needed), dust on Wednesday, and fold and put away laundry on Thursday. (We pared our clothes down to 10-15 outfits each, plus church clothes. You only wear 20% of your wardrobe 80% of the time anyway, so purge!) Older children have increasing areas of responsibility, and additional chores may be performed for monetary (or other) compensation, from which they must save and donate and spend a portion. Taxes or other penalties may be assessed for neglect or infractions.

**Moral: Parents love to read aloud the "Little House on the Prairie" series for a reason! We ALL must help maintain the blessed life we enjoy.**

### **Fact #5 – Choose a homeschool curriculum that fits your family.**

Nicholas *must* have 40 minutes of my *undivided* attention to get ready for school, during which time the other children (theoretically) dress, make their beds, and pick up books or debris from the previous evening. Younger children have an older buddy to help him/her. Then it's time for breakfast and school.

As much as I would *love* to construct my own classical curriculum, I simply can't. So Seton Home Study School works perfectly for me. I greatly appreciate the plethora of Catholic homeschool resources out there, but Seton's "curriculum in a box" gives me structured lesson plans, voluminous materials, recommended supplements, and authentic Catholic content – *without* my having to invest time researching and planning.

So – if the lesson plan says that on Week 13, Day 4, we're to be on page 72 doing items 1-4....are we?

Um, no. Frequently not. Each child progresses at his/her pace in each subject.

When my daughter independently read and understood, *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* in first grade, we breezed through phonics and instead spent more time on history and math, not finishing the latter until July. Seton recommends tailoring their materials to each child, and as the resident expert on my children, I do.



Above, clockwise from top: Chris (Daddy), John Paul, Benjamin, Nicholas, Luke, Anna, Grace



Luke



Benjamin

mine. Without Seton, I would flounder and rate myself a failure. With Seton, I have academic structure, substance, accountability, and enough flexibility to support each child.

The Catechism teaches that "the role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute" (2221). Be confident that God *will* give you the grace to run your household *and* your homeschool so that you ALL will know, love, and serve Him in this world and be happy with Him together forever in the next!

*Maria, her husband, Chris, and their six Lilliputians live a quiet country life in Mount Airy, MD. When she's not sitting around with her feet up eating bonbons, she homeschools, makes rosary wrap bracelets at [www.AveMomma.com](http://www.AveMomma.com), and blogs after midnight at [AveMomma.blogspot.com](http://AveMomma.blogspot.com).*

## Virtual Views

"Hi Everyone! Care to share with those getting started, ways you've found to keep your students on track and focused on their school work?"

## continued from page 4

cartwheel back. Then cartwheel to the shelf again and get the new book and return. This way she used up some of her extra energy and could sit longer. Yes: she was in gymnastics at the time.

Teri G.: Mom HAS to stay off facebook! I'm just sayin'.....

Lara M.: Daily assignment sheets, printed from Homeschool Tracker software.

Christine A.: Prayer!;

Tonia T.: No TV ever during school hours...ever.

Jenny L.: Daily assignments. And rewards when finished. I like to mix up the schedule just a little, throw in a trip to the park if it is nice. Kids need a break too. And if they know a reward is on the way, they will work for it....at least some of the time. Lol

Jennifer M.: Awards for achieving or exceeding goals for the day.

Becky P.: Pep talks from dad in the morning and during the day if they have focus issues. :)

Kristine H.: Predictable consistent morning schedule. I stay off the phone. The TV stays off. I send my spirited child to the trampoline for breaks. And my kindergartner earns computer time in the form of poker chips for finishing work. I set up a center for the little guys. No one enters the classroom who cannot sit and read or at least try or pretend.



# According to Dads



BY JOHN CLARK

## First Day of School

In the final days of August and the first days of September, thousands of parents proudly posted "First Day of School" pictures of their children on blogs and on their Facebook pages. These moms and dads were proud to show how their little ones were ready to begin academic life, with some of the girls clad in variants of multi-colored checkerboard dresses (which, for some reason, has never come to be known as "Catholic plaid"), and the boys in crisp white shirts and red ties (thereby making sartorial arguments for Catholic universality).

No doubt, these were cute pictures with the small kids wearing little backpacks and a grin, as if to say to the world: "I'm ready." Maybe their smiles are a recognition of the promise that the long days with Mom and the brothers and sisters will now be filled instead with other children their own age, writing tablets, playgrounds, and erasers.

But, in a way, this seemed like yet another reminder of what homeschooling parents miss out on.

Sometimes as Catholic homeschooling parents, we feel left out of the fun that schooling parents seem to be having. After all, we're human; we like to have fun, too. But we homeschooling parents don't have school plays, bake sales, or even lunchboxes. We don't have metal school desks or chalkboards. We don't even have a bell to tell us it's time for recess (even though most of us parents could really use some recess time). We don't even have parent-teacher conferences. Well, I guess we could, but it might seem a bit redundant (in our house, a parent/teacher conference is Lisa's subtle way of telling the kids—and her husband—that their father is taking her out to dinner that night). And these Facebook posts struck me as just one more thing that Lisa and I were missing out on all these years: first day of school photographs. So as I perused these pictures, I was tempted to post one of my own kid, only mine would have looked a little different than most. You see, my child's first day of school came a little later.

He was 18 years old.

I didn't know if the picture would have carried the same meaning as those of the other kids. After all, my "little boy" is 6' 1," weighs 180 pounds, and has already been shaving for 5 years. Not only that, he didn't wear the standard Catholic schoolboy garb which made the

other pictures cute; instead, he wore Diesel jeans and a Dr. Seuss T-shirt, thus making a sartorial argument of his own.

Of course, this Facebook idea was academic anyway—like many schoolboys, Athan didn't want me to take his photo. But picture aside, as I dropped Athan off at his first day of classes at an actual school (a community college), I probably ran the same gamut of emotions, and had the same questions that most parents do. Will my son make friends with the other kids at school? Did he remember his milk money? Will he get picked last for teams? Will he fall asleep in class? Will he miss his mom?

The "make friends" part was particularly worrisome, as non-homeschooling parents have assured me over the years that it's difficult to make friends outside of school. Of course, most of my friends who tell me this are not people that I met in school, but that's another matter. The weird thing is, it's funny how my kids seem pretty popular WBOS (Without Benefit Of School). I must simply be reading things wrong.

Milk money? No worries there. Athan's more of a coffee drinker. And coffee drinkers never forget their coffee money.

Picked last? I felt pretty good about this one, since Athan is being recruited for college baseball. But admittedly, kickball requires a certain type of specialized athleticism, so you never know.

Fall asleep in class? Well, he fell asleep in most of the classes that I ever taught him. Why should this be any different?

Will he miss his mom? Heck, I miss his mom, and I'm not even at school.

Fears somewhat allayed, I finally got a taste of what it's like for most parents. That's a pretty involved left-side-brain thing—dropping kids off at school. Hats off to other parents who go through that process every day, especially when their kids are closer to 18 months than 18 years old.

There are moments in your life as a homeschooling father when you're glad you made the decision to keep your children at home. The first day in an actual school for my son was one glad moment for

*continued on page 11*



# College Prep

## ACT and SAT

BOB WIESNER

Most colleges require either the SAT or the ACT test as part of their admissions process. These days, many colleges will accept either test, though they usually have a preference for one or the other. Some colleges absolutely require a specific test; so you need to ask the college which they would like to see. Many Seton students take both to cover all the bases.

These tests have different designs. The SAT, an aptitude test, is meant to predict the future performance of the student in a college setting. The questions are analytical in nature, asking the student to actually work through situations in math and language arts. The ACT is an achievement test. This test checks a student's past performance to indicate how well they might perform in college. There are strengths and weaknesses in both approaches, of course. Seton students perform far above the national norms in both, so a serious student should not be intimidated.

These tests are given six or seven times each year, so there is ample opportunity to take them. Seton recommends that they be taken the second semester of the Junior year, which will allow for re-taking them in 12th grade if the score is not satisfactory.

There are test prep books available for both to familiarize the student with the format and style of the tests. A student might also wish to review books such as *Geometry the Easy Way* if some time has passed since taking the course.

As always, the student should eat a good dinner the night before, get a good night's sleep, and eat a good breakfast before the test.

### Next Month's Column

## The Essay, The Applications, and Recommendations



Driving down a steep mountain road, the driver suddenly slammed on the brakes and skidded to a stop!

Stunned by the dramatic turn of events, the passenger anxiously asked him why he had stopped so suddenly.

The driver replied: "Why, don't you see that boulder?"

"What boulder? Are you talking about that pebble in the roadway?" replied the passenger.

"What's the matter with you? That's a boulder!"

At this point the passenger got out of the car, went over to the pebble, and kicked it out of the way. As he got back into his seat, he looked at the flabbergasted driver, who exclaimed: "I can't believe it; it really was a pebble!"

The driver then stepped on the gas and drove on.

What does this have to do with high school math, you may ask? Well, maybe a lot.

Here's why. Students often magnify the difficulties involved in working out math problems. They run into a minor misunderstanding in the course of solving a problem and imagine it to be of major importance. Unless somehow they can be shown that it is simply a minor difficulty that can easily be remedied, the student is apt to get not only bogged down on that problem, but also suffer a loss of overall mathematical confidence. They start to doubt themselves and begin to seriously think that they are "no good at math." And in math, confidence is at least 50% of the battle.

What is needed at these critical moments is someone or something to show them that the "boulder" is really just a pebble.

Consider the following ways of showing that "boulders" are really pebbles:

- 1. Solution Manual and/or Saxon Teacher CD.** Do a problem and immediately check the solution. If right, move on. If wrong, find out exactly where the mistake lies by comparing your solution to the solution shown. Then do the problem over from the beginning.
- 2. Textbook and/or Saxon Teacher or DIVE CDs.** If the solution manual's solution is not enough, go back to the lesson the problem came from and read the explanation about the concept.
- 3. Seek help from another person: father, mother, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, tutor, or call a Seton math counselor.** If the other two ways are not enough, the help of another person is essential. Find someone who will walk you through the solution to isolate your difficulty and correct it.

In all this, remind students to realize that there is no substitute for diligence and hard work. If students do not concentrate while reading and studying the textbook or CD lessons, they should not expect to truly understand the concepts involved in solving the textbook or test problems.

In any case, do not allow them to get bogged down by imaginary boulders.



## According to Dads

*continued from page 10*

me, because whether or not you homeschool, your children will face arguments to the things that you have taught them: faith, politics, economics...everything. And when that day comes, they will either be ready,

or not. Moreover, this readiness isn't just academic—it's spiritual, it's emotional, and it is psychological.

Having children is a gamble (sadly, it's a gamble that fewer and fewer people want to make). Raising and educating children is a gamble, too; there's no way around that fact. But before I make a large wager, I

make sure that I've got a pretty strong hand. And when I saw Athan get out of the car and make his way to class, I was ready to go all-in. The ten thousand hours of homeschooling from his mom and dad that led up to this point gave me the confidence to know that our risks had paid off. Even if I didn't get a picture.

# Presidential Election



BY GINNY SEUFFERT

Every four years, American home schoolers are handed an ideal civics lesson: the presidential campaign and election. With TV coverage, the

Internet, historic sites, and even public libraries, every family has an opportunity to learn more about the world's most influential position and the political process. Make sure you and your children take advantage of these resources before November 6.

## Explain the Basics

Now is an ideal time to make certain that your students who are in the fourth grade or older understand the three branches of the United States government: legislative, executive, and judicial. Minimally, they should know that the Congress is comprised of elected representatives who make laws for the people. It is the job of the president and other members of the executive branch to carry out, or “execute,” those laws. The president is also the Commander-in-Chief of our armed forces. The presidency is an important and powerful position.

## Capture their Imaginations with History

Your local public library has grade-appropriate biographies and videos of some of our nation's presidents. Even the youngest children will recognize George Washington as the “Father of our Country.” If you live near Virginia, you can visit his home at Mount Vernon, but there are historic sites all over the East Coast where children can learn more about Washington's roles as gentleman farmer, Commander-in-Chief of the colonial forces during the American Revolution, President of the Constitutional Convention, and President of the United States.

## Bring It Closer to Home

Sometimes children are able to better comprehend the political process when it concerns local issues and candidates. In addition to the candidates for president, talk to your children about local elections that may concern people they know. For example, you may say that you are supporting John Smith for the library board in

your town because he wants to cut wasteful spending. Explain that a voter can support the library as good for the community, but have legitimate objections about the way it uses taxpayer money. Your high schoolers might check how many pro-life books or pro-homeschooling books they have in their collection.

## Setting Priorities

As with everything else, Catholics must consider Holy Scripture, Catholic traditions, and the teachings of the Church when they support or vote for a candidate for public office. I had a friend who would ask a candidate for any office what his position was regarding legal abortion. My friend did not wish to help the career of a politician who was not on the right side of life issues. Moreover, a member of the school board or the library board does exert influence on book selections or programs. We Catholics, who pay taxes for the schools and libraries, want the books in the local public library and the curriculum in the local public school to reflect basic Judeo-Christian values.

Students in junior high school and older students can comprehend how Church teaching affects public policy. This can sometimes seem complicated, as one political party may appear to support some Church teaching, but not others. The American Catholic bishops have provided guidance in this respect which can be found here: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship-document.cfm>. Older students can read this document and you can explain it to younger children in an age-appropriate way.

## Practice Good Citizenship

Explain to your children why you favor a presidential candidate, and what your family is doing to support him. Younger children will enjoy the buttons, bumper stickers, and signs for your yard that are available from local campaign offices. You might assign a high school student to write a letter advocating your candidate to the editor of your local newspaper. Encourage everyone to watch political speeches and debates on television, and then discuss them at the dinner table.

The most important way parents educate their own children is by word and example. Donate some time, even one hour a week, for local political activity. Your high schoolers might be interested in helping at the local political headquarters, in helping with door-to-door visits, or with the local phone bank. Take your children with you to the polling place to vote. Help out an hour or two at the polling place on election day; take your children with you. Let your kids be witnesses firsthand of the importance you place on voting for pro-life candidates. Let them see you sign in, go into the booth, and exercise this precious right that so many citizens of other nations have been denied since the beginning of time. Explain the meaning of “exceptionalism.”

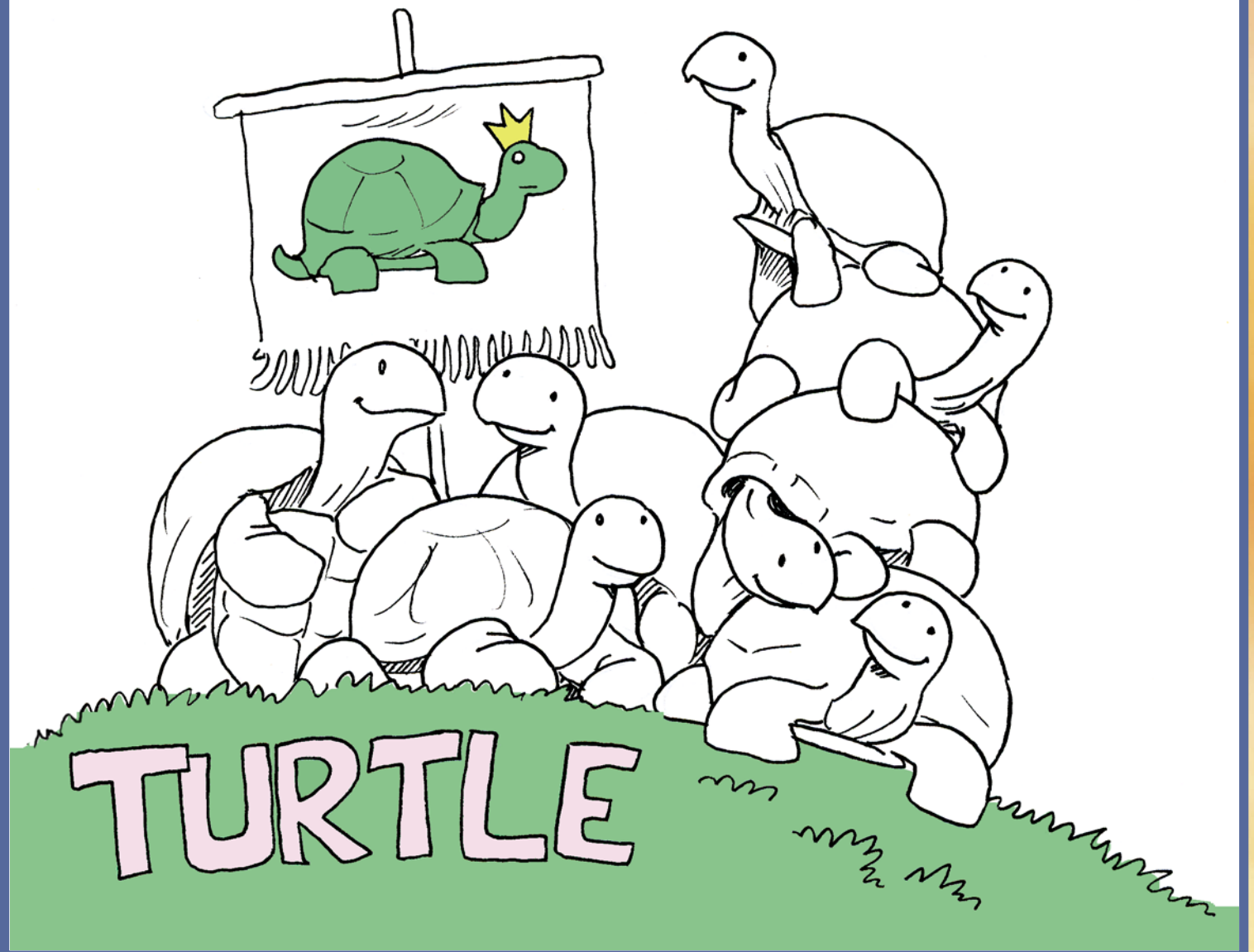
## Remember the Ultimate Goals

The Catholic homeschooling parents I speak to are very convinced about the ultimate goal of home education: forming our children's hearts and minds for God so they will be saints forever in Heaven. Clearly, nothing is more important. But how we Catholics sanctify ourselves is through our everyday, ordinary lives. We become holy by being the best children, spouses, parents, employees, business owners, or religious that we possibly can be. How we live our lives here as citizens of the United States matters when viewed through the lens of our eternal salvation.

Sadly, very few young people are being prepared to assume their roles as citizens of selfless interest, noble character, and impeccable integrity. Many public schools and American university staffs are committed to values directly opposed to Judeo-Christian ethics, Catholic values, and the vision of the Founding Fathers. Graduates of these institutions dominate much of the media, academia, the law, and politics, so we should not be surprised about our present state of affairs. Those of us who have chosen home education have a unique opportunity—and responsibility—to prepare our children to assume leadership positions in all areas of American life, and to form and inform our beloved country by the teachings of Jesus Christ.

# Kid's Corner

## A TIME FOR TURTLES

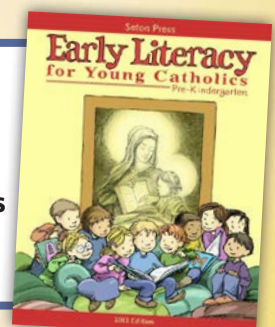


*Color the  
turtle picture.*

For more coloring activities  
like this one, check out

**Early Literacy for Young Catholics**

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

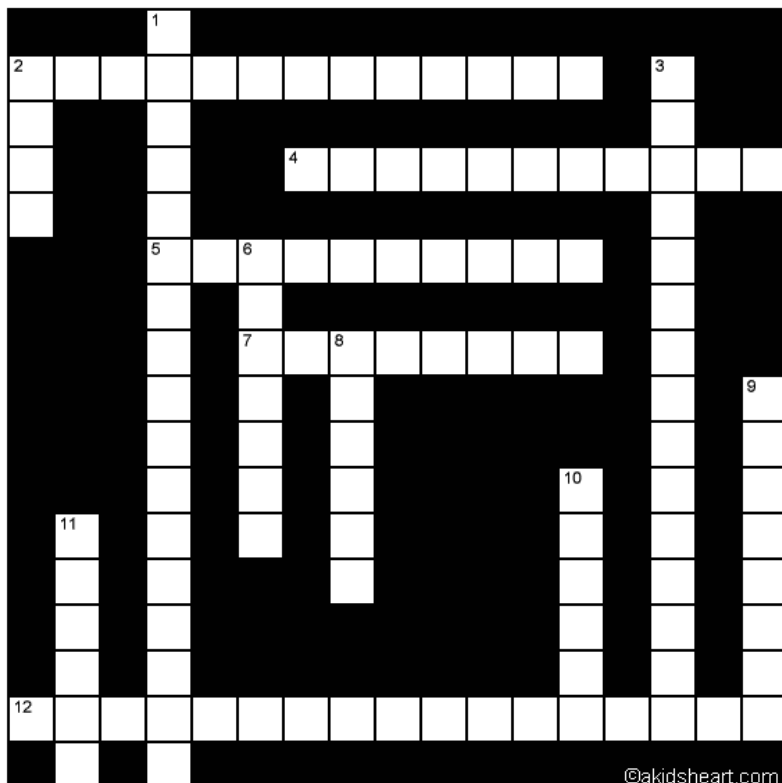


## The Apostles Word Search

Q G T H A D D E U S D  
 J A M E S A L P H E U S S  
 G M A T T H I A S T H O M A S  
 Y P I K J U D A S Q D P U F T  
 Z L G G H Q X P  
 G T M Z I K I W  
 G W M Q L F G J  
 B T Q Y I V L A  
 J U C B P W K M  
 E S I M O N P E T E R V L S E  
 S P C D C Q T A N D R E W S  
 V A U L V R Y C V I V Z  
 I Q Q J V H Z G T D A D G M  
 E X R W P F C P R C Z I F A  
 E D I B A R T H O L O M E W T  
 M H G G S I J T  
 E H W Y I B O H  
 Q P N S M V H E  
 P H H I O T N W  
 Q I J W N W B Y

Find the names of all the apostles hidden in the puzzle. It includes the 12 original apostles and the one selected to take Judas' place.

- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| Andrew        | Matthias    |
| Bartholomew   | Philip      |
| James         | Simon       |
| James Alpheus | Simon Peter |
| John          | Thaddeus    |
| Judas         | Thomas      |
| Matthew       |             |



## The Apostles Crossword Puzzle

Across

2. Betrayed Jesus
4. Nathanael
5. Jesus told him to feed His sheep
7. Aka: Jude
12. Known as the less

Down

1. Herod had him killed with the sword
2. He was exiled on the isle of Patmos
3. The Zealot
6. Used to be a tax collector
8. Peter's brother; He told Jesus about the lad with the fish and bread
9. He took Judas' place
10. He brought Nathanael to Christ
11. The doubting one

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## PAPAL WISDOM



Dear friends, a number of you are surely asking in a more or less conscious way: What is it that God expects of me? What is His plan for me? Wouldn't I like to proclaim to the world the grandeur of His love in the priesthood, in the consecrated life or in marriage? Might not Christ be calling me to follow Him more closely? Think about these questions with confidence and trust. Take time to reflect on them and ask for enlightenment. Respond to His invitation by offering yourselves daily to the Lord, for He calls you to be His friends. Strive to follow Christ wholeheartedly and generously, for out of love He redeemed us and gave His life for each one of us. You will come to know inconceivable joy and fulfillment! To answer Christ's call to each of us: that is the secret of true peace.

**Pope Benedict XVI**

Address to Young People, September 15, 2012

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