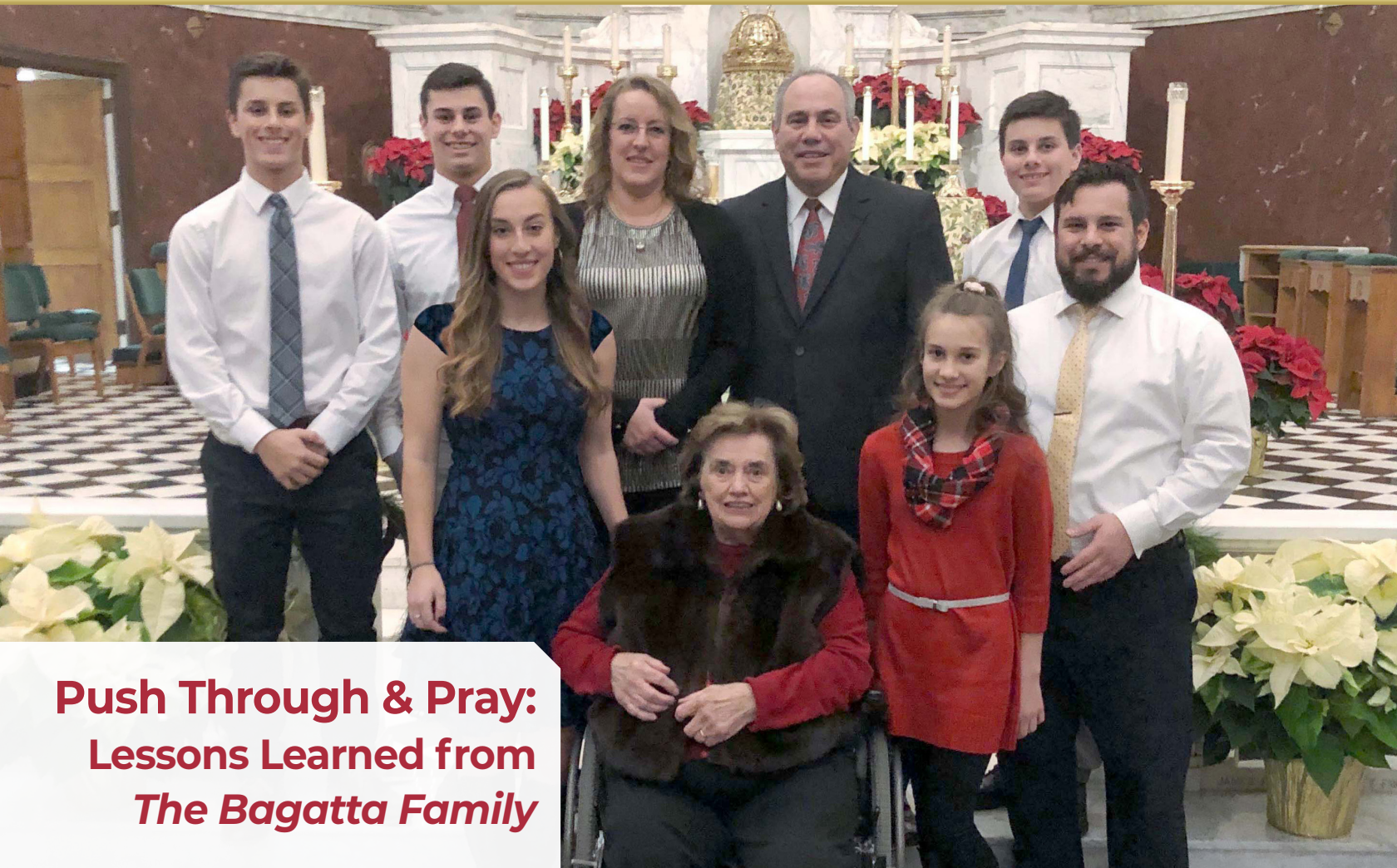


# Seton MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church SETONMAGAZINE.COM | JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021



## Push Through & Pray: Lessons Learned from *The Bagatta Family*



**Thanksgiving 2020 -  
From Our Home to Yours**  
Seton Families - pg 18

## Special SAT/ACT Test Prep Issue

- ✓ **Tips on Prepping for the Test**  
Jeff Minick - pg 10
- ✓ **Think Outside the Oval**  
John Clark - pg 16
- ✓ **A Practical Guide for SAT/ACT**  
Nick Marmalejo - pg 14
- ✓ **SAT/ACT in Times of COVID**  
Mary Ellen Barrett - pg 20
- ✓ **Standardized Testing for Homeschoolers**  
Jeff Minick - pg 22



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Dear Readers,

I hope this issue finds you all well and ready to set up 2021 for success! I think I speak for everyone at Seton when I say we could all use some happy, less stressful times this year.

One of the stresses we want to help our families deal with is that, because of the pandemic restrictions, many students have been unable to sit for the SAT or ACT.

To shed light on the matter and help ease that stress, we have gathered a wealth of information for you. You'll find advice from college admissions directors about applying to college in these difficult situations and practical tips for studying for and taking the exams. In all, there are five SAT/ACT themed articles in this issue to inform and equip you and ease your concerns.

I particularly encourage all of our juniors and seniors to read John Clark's article. John makes the excellent point that you are more than the score on your standardized tests. You are a whole person created in the image and likeness of God and as such your success cannot be measured by a national exam; it is a great article.

However, you choose to proceed with the testing situation, please know that we are here to help you. Our guidance office and testing department are ready and eager to walk you through this part of your high school experience. Know too that we pray daily for your success and stand ready to guide you in whatever way we can. God bless you all.

Blessings,

Mary Ellen Barrett

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Seton Home Study School, an international Catholic institution, is to ensure that all of its students thrive intellectually and spiritually using a Christ-centered, educational program that empowers them to live the Catholic Faith while embracing the academic and vocational challenges of the twenty-first century.



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## THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



SHARE YOUR "WHY WE HOMESCHOOL" ON **FACEBOOK**

“

### Why Do We Homeschool?

We always wanted to do homeschooling because we like having our kids learn the Catholic faith through school.

Our kids just love Seton because it just makes them so creative and wants to go to extra lengths to get something done and to find out what they want to do with their life.

We chose Seton because it really puts great moral materials in its courses and just makes it really fun!

*The Parmantier Family*

”



# your Questions ANSWERED

FOR HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES

## **Now that January is here, I find that I am way behind in certain subjects. What can I do to get back on track?**

Remember, Seton has no timeline! However, if the going is very slow it might be time to rethink your strategy.

First, remember that the lesson plans are just a guide. The only thing required for your student to receive grades in each subject is that he turns in the Seton-graded assignments. These are the ones on Part B of the printed Quarter Report Forms, or that are designated "Seton" in the "graded by" column on your MySeton quarter page.

The important thing is that your child is well-prepared to take the quarter or chapter tests. For some, it means doing all the work as laid out in the plans. Some children may be able to scan the written work and do only a few. Others may need you to explain it in other terms and use concrete examples. How you get there is up to you, as long as he will do well on the tests.

## **I think I have misplaced the answer key to one of my child's books. Can I get a replacement?**

Yes, call or email the counseling or customer service department and we can email it to you. This also applies to missing tests. I advise you not to ask other parents online as they may have a different version than yours and give you outdated information.



**Nick Marmalejo,**  
Guidance Counselor

## **This is our first year homeschooling, and my child is having great difficulty with English 7 grammar and sentence diagramming.**

We hear this frequently — many schools don't teach grammar the way they used to, but we find it is a great help to students in becoming better writers. However, if the moms haven't studied grammar or diagramming before, that makes it even more difficult! The first thing we would suggest is that you try to learn along with your child.

Secondly, be sure you understand the first concept before moving on to the next. Diagramming is like a code or a puzzle, but you need to know the basics before moving on to the next level.

Thirdly, there are many videos in the resources section of your MySeton account under English — take a look at those and see if you can find the answer to your questions there.

If you are still struggling, Seton does have two books that can help. One is the text *Rex Barks*, and the other is the workbook *Diagraming Sentences*. Both are available from **Setonbooks.com**.

Finally, feel free to call one of the English counselors if you are still having trouble understanding the diagrams. They are more than willing to help!

## **We've been going slowly with our daughter in certain subjects to prepare for taking tests. How long do I have before I have to send in grades? Must I wait and send all the subjects together?**

When you enroll with Seton, you have a full calendar year to finish the curriculum. The lesson plans are only for 32-36 weeks, so there is extra time built in. We also don't have any start or end dates for the quarters — that's entirely up to you!

As far as sending in the materials, if you are uploading assignments through your MySeton account, you can upload as you finish, input the grades when you are ready, and we'll give you a grade once everything for the quarter is complete in a subject.

If you are mailing things to us, for the elementary grades we prefer that you mail an entire quarter at the same time, but if you are more than a few weeks behind in a course, then mail the ones

## **What About the PSAT?**

**T**he PSAT (pre-SAT) was created to help orient students to the SAT and give them a chance to obtain a \$2500 National Merit Scholarship. Nonetheless, the PSAT is not considered a college entrance exam and cannot be used in lieu of the SAT/ACT.

While it can be a benefit for a student to take the PSAT, it is certainly not required for success on the SAT or ACT. Homeschooling students who wish to take the exam must request permission to sit for the exam from a public or private school offering it.

### ***Exciting News!***

While my experience has been that recipients of the scholarship are few and far between, a Seton Family recently sent some exciting news from Benedictine College, a Seton College Partner.

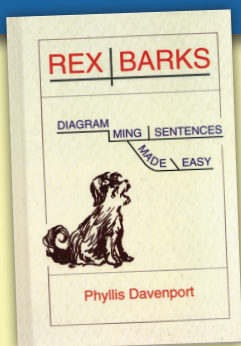
We checked, and this is the news: Each year, Benedictine College awards up to ten (10) full-tuition scholarships to National Merit Finalists and National Hispanic Merit Finalists. These scholarships are renewable all four years of attendance. The scholarship adjusts annually in accordance with any increases in tuition that may occur. To be considered for this scholarship you must provide a copy of your National Merit Finalist letter to the Office of Admission.

**For more information, please contact**  
**Benedictine's Director of Undergraduate Admission Becca Caudle at**  
**bcaudle@benedictine.edu.**





# Grammar Supplements



## Rex Barks

Enthusiastically endorsed by Seton's English counselors. With wit and charm, the author truly does make diagramming sentences easy and fun.

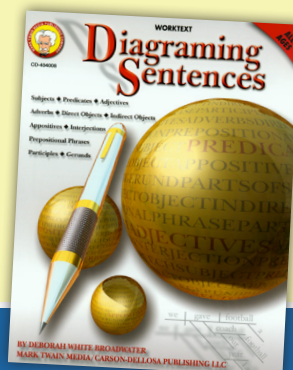
Hardcover. 152 pp.

Recommended for grades 4-10. \$26.00

## Diagramming Sentences

Helpful for visual learners, this workbook dissects sentences so students are better able to grasp writing concepts. Covers sentence diagramming from easy to challenging – one step at a time. 46 pp.

Recommended for grades 4 and higher. \$8.95



[www.SetonBooks.com](http://www.SetonBooks.com)

that are already completed. Be sure that you have the proper quarter report forms (QRFs) attached to your work.

You can also include a note on your checklist that the other subjects will be coming later. For high school, you can send in each completed course separately.

**My kindergartener has sped through her handwriting book. Should I order the Grade 1 book or have her practice on the tablet?**

It's up to you, but I wouldn't worry about it. Handwriting develops by doing any writing, not because of a specific book. Also, a 5-year-old is developmentally different than a 6 or 7-year-old, so she might not be ready for the next level quite yet. Find some copy work and a good Kindergarten level tablet to write in and let her keep practicing.

**My fourth grader is having trouble absorbing all of the information for the history tests. How can I help him study and review for the exams?**

You, the parent, are certainly allowed to look at the tests ahead of time and guide your child in what to study. If you are reading together, and come to something that you know will be on the test, stop and say "I think that's important — let's remember that."

You can also go through your child's book and highlight things that you know will be on the test, so he realizes they are important

things to remember. Finally, you could make a study guide for him to look at to help him prepare for the test.

**I work full time from home. Is it ok for my 6th and 7th-grade students to follow the lesson plans and work on their own?**

As long as you periodically check in with them that the assignments and work are getting done properly, it's fine. In fact, in high school, our lesson plans are written for the student, rather than the parent, so it's good preparation for when that day comes.

However, you'll want to make sure they are staying on your schedule for them, and that they understand the material they are working on. You don't want to get to the end of the quarter and find that they didn't understand their math, and so everything is wrong. Or you thought you were done, but then find that they never read their book report book!

And while they certainly can correct their work, for children that young, a parent should probably take a look every so often to make sure they are doing as well as they tell you they're doing.



Dr. Mary Kay Clark has been the Director of Seton Home Study School for more than 30 years. She writes columns for the *Seton Magazine* and is the author of *Catholic Home Schooling*.



The Seton College Partner Program is a way to encourage students to continue their Catholic education by attending solidly Catholic Colleges after high school.



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COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY  
OF DALLAS



CHRISTENDOM  
COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY  
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Wisdom in God's Country



OUR LADY  
SEAT OF WISDOM  
COLLEGE

[setonhome.org/colleges](http://setonhome.org/colleges)







# St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

BY DR. MARY KAY CLARK

January 4th is the feast day of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. At the time she was declared a saint by the Catholic Church, she was chosen as the patron saint of our new diocese of Arlington, Virginia.

Shortly after, Mrs. Ann Carroll founded the Seton High School in Manassas, Virginia, in the Arlington Diocese. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was an inspiration for Mrs. Carroll.

When Elizabeth Ann Seton was declared a saint in the year 1975, she immediately became an inspiration for Catholic parents and school teachers in the United States.

Elizabeth Seton was a Protestant mother who lived in New York and frequently taught her children at home during the cold, snowy winter weather.

When her husband became very sick, and the family moved to Italy to help him improve his health, they lived with a Catholic Italian family.

A priest came every day to say Mass in their chapel, and to explain the Faith. Though not Catholic, Elizabeth and her family attended the daily Mass.

*“St. Elizabeth continued to teach her children at home, and even taught a few other children...”*

While she lived with the Catholic family, Elizabeth learned about the Catholic Faith and taught her children about it.

After her husband died, Elizabeth moved back to New York, where the Setons were received into the Church. She continued to teach her children at home, and even taught a few other children whose parents asked her to help them.

However, because of difficult circumstances in New York, she moved her family to Maryland, where the local bishop gave her property to start a school for girls. She soon became a nun, a teaching nun. The building provided space for bedrooms, so she was not required to leave her school.

One of her daughters also became a teaching nun. As the school grew, she encouraged other nuns to come to help her in her Catholic school for girls.

Elizabeth had many difficult years as she taught in her school. There was never enough money to keep the buildings adequately heated, so the sisters suffered from the cold.

*“St. Elizabeth is waiting in Heaven for prayers from Catholic homeschooling mothers.”*

There were also plenty of challenges as in every school dealing with students and families with different issues and learning problems.

Nevertheless, she and her sisters stayed in continual prayer as they braved the cold weather, the almost-constant lack of heat, and the daily classroom difficulties.

As a Catholic mother and teacher, surely St. Elizabeth Ann Seton is waiting in Heaven for prayers from Catholic homeschooling mothers. Our Lady certainly joins St. Elizabeth to intercede and to provide teaching moms with the gift of patience, the gift of understanding how our children learn, the gift of insight regarding teaching difficult lessons, and the gifts of love and determination.

Catholic homeschooling is not as much about reading, writing, and arithmetic as it is about living the Catholic holy lifestyle Jesus calls all of us to live. We home schooling parents should start the home schooling day in prayer with our children, attend daily Mass if possible, or watch the daily Mass on EWTN.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, please pray for us to be patient as our children learn, please pray for us to be able to explain the lessons to our children, and please pray for us to be the Catholic family Jesus wants us to be.



Dr. Mary Kay Clark has been the Director of Seton Home Study School for more than 30 years. She writes columns for the *Seton Magazine* and is the author of *Catholic Home Schooling*.



## — Four Veteran Homeschooling Moms — Speak to a New Mom's Concern



### *Marianna Kasprzak*

A morning routine helps to establish expectations with little learners, and for parents it can be a refreshing and peaceful moment to ask for God's grace.

I try to wake up before our kids and say a quick prayer over my morning coffee. It is a great way for to thank God for another day with a fresh outlook.

*“We start our day  
with breakfast and prayers...”*

When the kids wake up, we start our day with breakfast and prayers, usually praying for special intentions. Our kids have become accustomed to the expectation of doing their morning work independently (Handwriting, Spelling, Vocabulary, Reading and Religion reading). Our Religion questions or discussions are done as a family with dad at the dinner table.

Setting up this independent work in the morning can give the kids a sense of accomplishment and gives parents time to work one on one with a child on tougher, meatier subjects.

When you start with a good routine and have expectations in place, homeschooling tends to have a rhythm and smoothness to it. Always remember that if the day feels lost or out of sorts: stop and say a prayer, regroup, and know that tomorrow is another day for learning and loving God together.



### *Mary Beth Balint*

Imagine everyone eating breakfast, completing chores, and ready to start school at the same time each day. While there may be times we accomplish this dream, we also have times when our children have other ideas.

We have babies who want to be fed at four in the morning, toddlers who are more interested in running around and being adorable, and teenagers who slowly descend the stairs still in their pajamas. The idea of ever having a morning routine may seem impossible, but it does not have to be!

Children of all ages need structure and starting the day with specific goals is necessary to help them develop good habits.

*“Remember to praise  
their morning accomplishments!”*

Taking into consideration the ages and stages of our family should dictate how and when we start our day. Develop realistic routines and chores for the different ages of your children, but have flexibility in the timing of when they are accomplished.

If your little ones are up with the sun, let them start their morning tasks and if your teenagers need a little more sleep, have them complete morning chores when they wake up.

Encourage your kids to pray the Morning Offering and remember to praise their morning accomplishments!



# Ask the Experts...

"What is your morning routine like and why is having one so important?"



## Kristin Brown

PRAY. I cannot stress this enough. In the morning, my wonderful husband brings me a cup of coffee before he leaves for work at 5:30 and together we do morning prayers.

After he leaves, I pull out my Bible and Bible study and spend some time with the Lord. Morning offering, rosary, chaplet, what works for you. Even something small, start the day talking to Our Savior. Fill your own tank first and feel ZERO guilt about it. You cannot give from an empty cup.

*"Work in some exercise at some point during the day."*

Get adequate sleep. Make sure you eat a healthy breakfast, and work in some exercise at some point during the day, even if it's just 10 minutes walking with your baby outside. If you are up a lot nursing and feeding an infant or with a sick child, adjust the schedule and sleep.

I get the kids started on morning chores early and regularly. Mine make beds and clean up breakfast, sweep the floor and tidy their rooms. Everyone works better when there is a little piece of order in the chaos of homeschooling life, when they know what to expect. Begin with the end in mind.

I try to make mornings special. Maybe it is a morning basket, maybe hot cocoa out of everyone's favorite mug. With young ones it might be circle time, whatever makes the long day ahead of you a little brighter, just do it. Homeschooling is a marathon, not a sprint. Tweak your plan as your seasons of life change and adjust your little domestic church accordingly.



## Tara Brelinsky

My personal routine looks like an alarm buzzing at 7am. I place my cellphone in the adjoining bathroom before I go to sleep which means I get out of bed to turn it off. I never hit snooze. I go from bed to shower.

*"Starting the day with prayer sets the tone for the day to follow."*

Owning a restaurant means my husband works most evenings; so mornings are my opportunity to have a bit of time sans mothering duties. My spouse agreed to handle waking the children. He ensures they set about their own morning routines.

I use the first hour of the day to wash, dress, fix my hair, put on a bit of make-up, and make our bed. Taking the time for personal hygiene, getting dressed and tidying my bedroom sets me on the path to accomplishment before I have even set foot outside the bedroom door in the morning.

Next, I wrangle up the hampers and deposit them in the laundry room. A cup of black coffee follows and then the rosary. We never skip this last step, even if it means that schooling is postponed. Between 8 and 8:30am we collect around the dining room table (aka breakfast table aka school table) and pray a rosary as a family. Starting the day with prayer sets the tone for the day to follow.

Over the years, my morning routine has changed. Once upon a time (X's 8) my mornings included nursing sessions, diaper changes, and making breakfast for the children. Today, I have a bit more freedom, but then as now, having a routine got my day started off on a firm footing.

# Tips on Prepping for the Test and Staying Calm, Cool, and Collected

**Y**ou've registered to take the SAT, you and a crowd of other students are seated in a classroom, and the woman monitoring the exam is explaining the testing procedures.

Are you calm, cool, and collected, as the old saying goes, a little nervous perhaps, but confident you are as prepared as you can be? Or are you anxious and stressed, terrified by the sudden realization that you are in no way ready for the 3-hour ordeal ahead of you?

If you want to make "No fear" your banner for standardized testing, here are some tips on how to ready yourself for the battle.

## GET READY

First, decide whether you're going to take the SAT or ACT, or both. Google "differences between the SAT and ACT," and you'll find sites describing both tests and the differences between them. The ACT, for example, offers a science section—it's based on critical skills thinking, not on your scientific knowledge—whereas the SAT offers no separate test for science. If you wish to compare the two tests more specifically, the online version of the Princeton Review offers free practice tests for both outfits.

Your next step is to purchase a practice test book. Once again, go to your computer and this time Google "practice test books for the SAT" or "practice test books for the ACT." You'll find lots of choices and reviews of prep books from publishers like Kaplan, the Princeton Review, Barron's, and many others. If you have a large bookstore nearby, visit there so that you can personally browse the various books.

Once you've chosen your guide with its practice tests, carefully read the tips and help sections of that book before taking any of the tests. These advisory sections contain a wealth of information that can help you dramatically improve your score.

## GET SET

Now you're ready to take a practice test, but before moving forward take a sheet of paper, write POE in large letters on it, and place it beside the test book. POE stands for process of elimination, which is how you want to approach the test. Eliminate answers you know to be wrong before choosing a right one. Look at ALL the answers before you make your selection. Many students select an answer they believe to be correct without reading all the possibilities.

Be sure to read the prompts and questions carefully. Students often miss a question because they have too hastily read it and so have misinterpreted it.

Take the test as if it were the real deal. Time yourself. Both tests without the writing sections are three hours long. It's fine if you want a break or can only do one of the test sections, but complete

the entire section. Eventually, you'll want to take an entire test or two in real time. This race is long-distance, not a sprint, and you need to know the demands of that race.

When you have taken the test and marked your answer, be sure to understand the questions you missed. Test guides explain the correct answers. Study your mistakes, as the real test will include similar questions.

## Go!

Now for some nitty-gritty tips to give you an extra boost.

- Do not roll out of bed on test day, grab a doughnut, throw on your clothes, and race off to take the test. Give yourself plenty of time to do the following. Take a shower; it will help wake you up. Eat a healthy breakfast, but in moderation; a huge breakfast of pancakes will have you sleepy in an hour. Read something—a magazine, a book, anything—for fifteen minutes before leaving home; this reading awakens and stimulates the mind.
- To the testing site you should bring exactly those items (like a calculator and pencils) required for the test. Lay these items out the night before the test. To them add a bottle or two of water and a power bar for the break. If chewing gum helps relieve your anxiety, pack that up too, only remember not to smack your gum and disturb your neighbors.
- Just before you take the test, offer up a mental prayer asking for help in bringing all of your talents to the task before you. Prayer is a wonderful way of concentrating the mind.

Of course, the best path to success is to work hard and diligently on your day-to-day Seton lessons. You are enrolled in a program that teaches all the skills necessary for success on these or on other tests: grammar, mathematics, critical thinking, analytical reading, and writing. Apply yourself to your studies and then apply that learning to the test.

One last item: although some schools no longer require standardized tests, nearly all of them look to such tests when awarding merit-based scholarships. With that idea in mind, readying yourself to take these tests is like working a job that can bring big-time financial rewards.

Onward and upward, gang!



**Jeff Minick** has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, NC. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, VA.









# PUSH THROUGH... AND PRAY: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE BAGATTA FAMILY

Maybe you're new to homeschooling and enrolled in Seton, and you're wondering whether the program is preparing your tenth grader for college. Maybe you're a veteran homeschooler, and you're fretting over the same question.

Maybe you're a Seton high school student feeling burdened by your assignments and asking yourself what good will come of so much reading and writing.

Wonder, fret, and worry no more.

Recently, I paid a visit via telephone to Hummelstown, Pennsylvania, where I spoke with Karla Bagatta, wife to Kevin and mother of four sons and two daughters. Kevin's mother, age 90, also lives with the family.

Karla grew up in North Dakota, Kevin in New York, and they met when he was stationed in North Dakota in the Air Force. Later, Karla taught third grade for several years in a Catholic school and like any good teacher, values education: an attitude that she brought to her homeschooling.

Of these children, the oldest, Kevin Jr., graduated from Penn State and is now working in Hummelstown. Patrick just graduated from Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina, where his sister Angela is a sophomore. Seton senior Matthew is off to Ohio's Walsh University.

Still at home are David, currently enrolled as a ninth grader with Seton, and his seventh-grade sister Mary Grace who uses Seton materials in her homeschooling.

After concluding our phone call, I looked over my notes and realized that Karla and Kevin have given their children three precious gifts: the necessity of preparation, the acceptance of responsibility, and the importance of faith.

## *Success is Built on Preparation*

All of Karla's children who have attended college are Seton graduates, and all of them credit Seton for their academic success in these institutions. "Every one of them called me during the first week or two at college," Karla says, "and told me how much they appreciated Seton's academic program."

When Patrick was a senior with Seton, his mother tells me, he spent much of the year bemoaning the workload for the Advanced American Literature course, wondering aloud time and again what the point was for so much reading and writing.

After his first class at Belmont Abbey, for which the students were supposed to read C.S. Lewis's *"The Screwtape Letters,"* he realized how much better prepared he was academically than most of his classmates, and was shocked by how many of his freshman classmates came to class without cracking open the book.





## Take Personal Responsibility

When they had questions about an assignment or a test, Karla required each of her high school children to contact the Seton counselors themselves.

She tells me each of her students was terrified at first to make such calls, but then quickly realized that the Seton academic counselors were in their corner and were there to help them.

These exercises in responsibility paid off when the children went to college. When Patrick first arrived at Belmont Abbey, he attended a meeting in which different department heads addressed the students.

Afterwards, he went to the woman representing “academics for athletes” with concerns about his studies and the time required for his lacrosse—Patrick, Angela, and Matthew all won lacrosse scholarships to help pay their way through college.

“I’m not going home,” he told her, meaning he wasn’t going to flunk out. “So what do I do?” This administrator went over his textbooks and assignments with him, and then said, “Patrick, you’re going to do well.”

“How do you know?” he asked.

“Because you’re the only freshman who came to see me after the talk. That’s how I know.”

Patrick took responsibility for his education.

## Faith is Key

Their Catholic faith lies at the heart of this family and binds them together.

Kevin is the President and CEO of Real Alternatives, a pro-life non-profit charity that administers life-affirming pregnancy and parenting support programs throughout the nation. Real Alternatives contracts with the states to provide taxpayer funds to pregnancy support centers, Catholic Charities, adoption centers, and maternity homes.

The Bagatta children who have gone to college continue to attend weekly Masses and practice their faith. Karla credits the Seton program with helping to strengthen that faith.

She tells me that her oldest son once explained it this way: “The Seton religion classes gave me a deep understanding and knowledge of my faith but also the ability to explain and defend my Catholic beliefs.”

When Belmont Abbey locked down and sent its students home in the spring of 2020, Angela faced a season with only a little time on the lacrosse field. She felt even more sadness for her brother Patrick, whose

team was highly ranked and expected to make the national championship. Angela went to the Marian grotto at the school, prayed, and then texted Karla, “When I can’t be with my mom, I go to my other mama.”

## Other Takeaways

Besides enjoying our conversation—Karla has a vivacious, energetic voice—I pondered a few additional points she made. She kept stressing, for instance, the importance Seton places on analysis in its literature and writing programs. “Writing and analyzing what they read is one of the biggest pluses of Seton for students,” she says.

Given the inability of so many Americans these days to approach life and politics analytically, her words struck a chord with me.

Karla also mentioned several times that Seton Home Study School had challenged her teenagers and regarded this as a good thing. “We need to push our teens,” she said, adding that she might not have done so to the same extent without Seton.

When asked what advice she had for new homeschool moms, Karla thought a moment, then replied, “Just keep pushing through and saying your prayers because the end result is worth it.”

Good advice for all homeschoolers. Indeed, good advice for all of us.







# Preparing for the SAT/ACT: A Practical Guide

BY NICK MARMALEJO

**A**pplying to college is typically one of the most stressful activities a student undergoes in high school. The stakes are serious in every respect, since many vocational, financial, academic, and personal doors are opened or closed during this process.

## MAKE OR BREAK?

One of the most frequent questions we receive from students and parents is how to prepare for the SAT or ACT. Why? Because often a student's ability to enter a four-year college is dependent upon these tests.

Or so it was. In the days of pre-COVID-19, SAT and ACT scores were usually make or break for college acceptance and scholarship/financial aid opportunities. Today, in the wake of COVID-19, many colleges have altered their college acceptance process so that students do not have to take either of these exams in order to gain college acceptance. This is largely because tests have frequently been canceled en masse, so it has been harder for many students to find a seat for the exam.

Based upon the communications I have received from numerous colleges and universities over the past six months, the “test-optional” trend for applications will likely continue into the Spring of 2022. Some scholarships and financial aid packages, however, have not followed suit—they still require an SAT or ACT score for a college applicant to obtain monetary resources for higher education.

The rub is that some students are occasionally left wondering if they should bother taking these exams if they have access to them. In my general opinion, the answer is yes, students should still take one or the other if possible.

In addition to being able to qualify for scholarship and financial aid opportunities, the main reason for this advice is that SAT/ACT scores can give students a competitive edge if they do well. A college application with an SAT or ACT score is stronger than an identical application without it. Not only does it show the admissions counselor that the student made the effort to find and take the test, the counselor will have more assurance of the student's academic ability.





## HOW TO PREPARE

There are many ways to prepare for the exam. Both the SAT and ACT hinge upon academic skill but also an ability to answer questions and think a way that is peculiar to the exam's authors. For this reason these tests are rightly criticized for not being authentic representations of a student's talent or academic ability, let alone their overall personal potential.

It is important for parents, students, and educators to recognize that an average or below average score does not necessarily translate into an inability to succeed in college or life. A poor score does indicate that additional training is needed for the exam, since tips, tricks, and shortcuts are needed in order for a student to maximize their potential scores.

The best times to begin preparing for the SAT or ACT are the second semester of 10th grade or first semester of 11th grade. If you are following the traditional academic year, then the summer can also be a good time to prepare, notwithstanding all of the pleasant distractions that beckon to students and parents alike during this season.

I recommend students give the same amount of time preparing for the exam that they would give to half-credit high school course using, at a minimum, a current book on either test (such as *Cracking the SAT*) and visitation of the test author's website to review practice questions from old tests. Books are updated each year to correspond to the latest innovations and versions of the test. Note that even less current books can be helpful study aids. The more practice tests and questions for a student, the better.

If a student is committed to maximizing their grade and they have the resources to take an in-person class on the SAT or ACT, doing so is usually extremely effective. Classes, free and otherwise, are also available online by a variety of publishers.

## YOUR SETON ADVANTAGE

Seton's curriculum fosters academics and thinking skills that will be useful to a student in and out of the classroom. While Seton's courses are not oriented to teaching a student how to game a specific secular standardized test, they remain advantageous to the student.

The reason is that the college entrance exams are developed with an expectation that the highest scores will only be achieved by students who have the greatest academic depth in addition to the ability to understand the unique test environment.

Specific Seton courses that will help a student prepare academically for both the ACT/SAT are as follows: English 9, English 10, Vocabulary (1/2 credit), Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2.

Unlike the SAT, the ACT has a science section. It covers broadly topics from a variety of sciences. The ability to engage with, analyze, and utilize the scientific process, rather than recall numerous particular facts of specific science, is central to the ACT's approach in assessing students in science. Doing any of Seton's science courses will provide adequate academic preparation for this test.

## FINISHING WITH STYLE

Careful attention to detail in both Seton courses and exam preparation materials will yield a high level of confidence. Steady preparation rather than trying to cram a bunch of facts or tricks in a short period is the way to maximize one's best potential on these tests.

Ideally, a student should feel that test questions are routine and time limits adequate. Remember, too, that there is bound to be a hiccup in life somewhere on test day. Consider it part of the process and don't let it rattle you.

If a student has done their test preparation well, everything will fall into place as it should.



**Nick Marmalejo**, a history major, graduated from Christendom College in 2001. He holds a Virginia Teacher Certification and lives in the Shenandoah Valley with his wife and four children.



**M**any of you students reading this are preparing to take your SAT, ACT, or CLT College Entrance exams—and some of you are panicking about the prospect. As a homeschooling father, I'd like to pass on a tip I give my own kids: Do not—DO NOT—judge yourself by the grade you receive.

To stress the lesson, and to hopefully de-stress you, please keep in mind two points.

First, multiple-choice tests aren't all they're cracked up to be. Due to their relative efficiency, I understand that multiple-choice tests are sometimes necessary in school. But they have become the Final Judgment of the academic world—as though scores precisely indicate a person's intelligence. Nonsense. Some of the most brilliant people I know have received lousy SAT scores.

They have also been some of the most creative.

Socrates, the teacher who raised questions to the level of an art form, would have detested multiple-choice entrance exams.

For Socrates, questions were a launchpad of creativity. For modern educators, multiple-choice exams often stifle creativity, suggesting that students filter reality through false dilemmas of FOUR possible answers.

***"Do not—DO NOT—judge yourself by the grade you receive."***

Had Socrates seen our current education system, he might have made a similar observation to this one penned by playwright David Mamet: "Society functions in a way much more interesting than that multiple-choice pattern we have been rewarded for succeeding at in school. Success in life comes not from the ability to choose between the four presented answers, but from the rather more difficult and painfully acquired ability to formulate the questions."

Second, academics isn't all it's cracked up to be, either.

Saint Bernadette was illiterate. It was said that her only "prayer book" was a rosary. Toward the end of her life, she was asked about what her education had been like when she was growing up. She responded, "I scarcely ever went to the school, and when I did, I learnt nothing."

All Bernadette was, was holy. All Bernadette is, is a saint.

Saint Joan of Arc couldn't read or write. Yet she outwitted every false accuser she ever had—and there were many. If the best military commanders are those who possess purity of action, unshakable belief in purpose, and devotion to a great cause, Joan ranks second only to Michael the Archangel—with whom she forged an alliance of friendship.

Saint Joseph of Cupertino was such a poor and clumsy student that religious orders competed

***"Some of the most brilliant people I know have received lousy SAT scores."***

against each other to not accept him. In the Church's sense of humor, Joseph is the patron saint of test-takers. And it is perhaps God's sense of humor that Joseph was granted the miraculous ability to fly, since he had so much trouble on the ground.

Saint John Vianney was an academic disaster—so much so, that he was nearly denied the priesthood. Writing of Saint John Vianney, Father George Rutler observes, "The greatest confessor possibly in the history of that sacrament and the man who spent three-fourths of his life in the confessional was denied faculties for hearing confessions for several months on account of his problematic academic record."

But so what if Vianney had not been a priest? What real difference would that have made? For an answer to that question, let's turn to an unlikely source: the devil. Speaking through a woman who was possessed before Vianney performed an exorcism, the devil said to Vianney, "If there were three like you on earth, my kingdom would be destroyed. You have taken more than eighty thousand souls from me."

Oh, did I mention that Father Vianney did poorly in class?

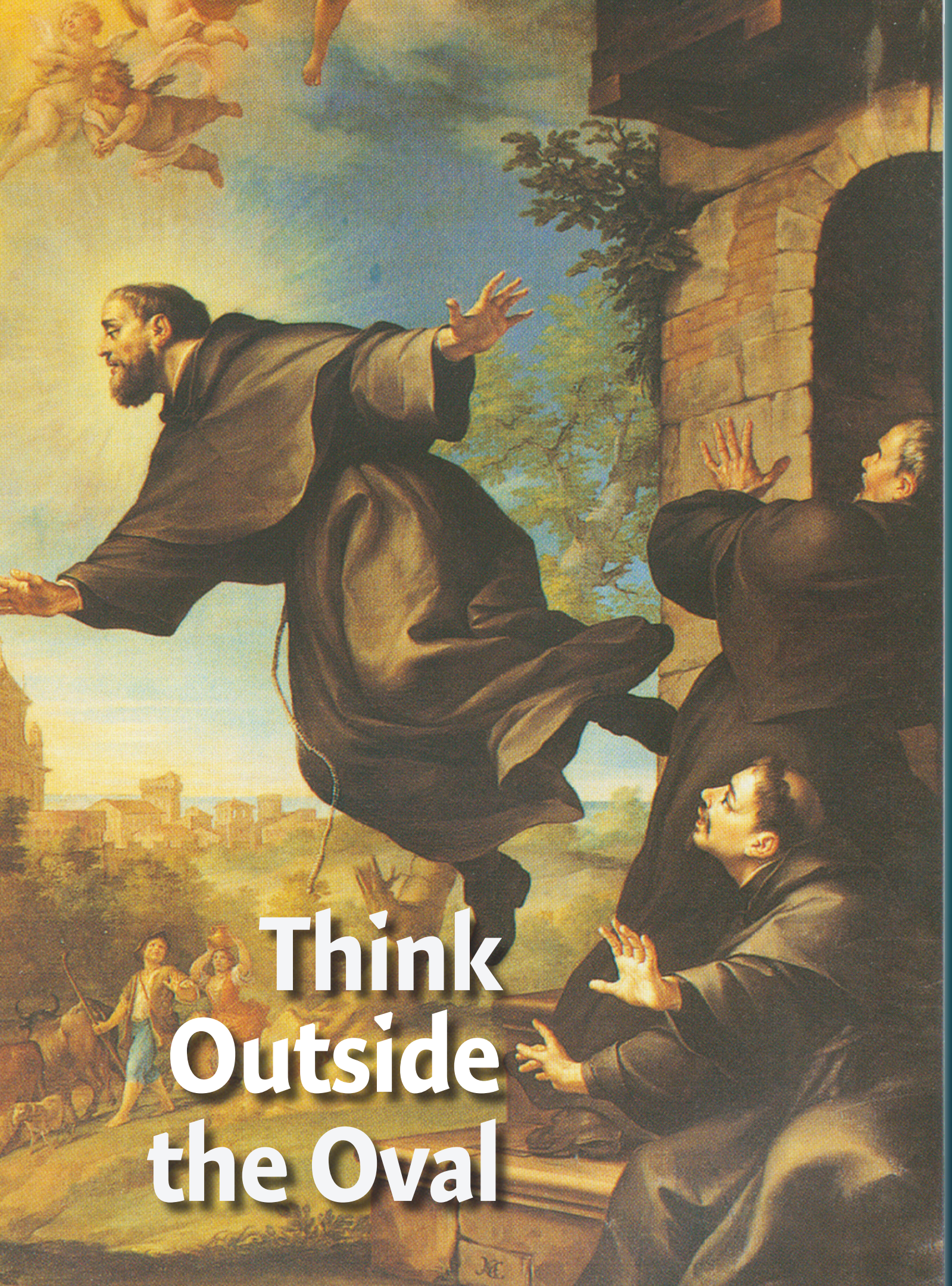
Students, never define yourself by a grade. Doing so tends to involve either pride or frustration, and neither assists you in your journey toward God. Whatever your grade—on the CLT or any other test you ever take—you only have one ultimate boast, and one ultimate comfort: God loves you. That's the lesson of Bernadette and Joan and Joseph and John, four of the finest and most creative teachers—and students—in history.



**John Clark** is a homeschooling father, author of *Who's Got You* and *How to be a Superman Dad*, a speech writer, an online course developer for Seton, and a weekly blogger for *The National Catholic Register*.







**Think  
Outside  
the Oval**



# THANKSGIVING 2020

## From Our Home to Yours...

Thank you to the generous families  
who have shared their  
“Thanksgiving” photos with us!

Find more Thanksgiving photos at  
[www.setonmagazine.com](http://www.setonmagazine.com), at Seton’s  
Facebook and Instagram pages!



Photo on left from the Stolpestad Family,  
Photo above from the Rose Family





**Photos clockwise from top left:  
The Trippeer Krintz Family,  
The Johnson Family, and  
The Rose Family**





# College Partners on SAT/ACT in Time of COVID

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

**E**arly this past summer, a task force of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) issued a report titled *Ensuring All Students Have Access to Higher Education: The Role of Standardized Testing in the Time of COVID-19 and Beyond*.

The report, over a year in the making, was initially supposed to address the inequalities faced by lower income students when preparing for standardized college admissions tests.

The tests are heavily skewed in favor of higher income students whose parents can afford expensive test prep classes and tutors and the NACAC was seeking solutions to bring about changes in the admissions processes of colleges and universities.

While the review of standardized testing was taking place, the COVID-19 pandemic further complicated admissions procedures. These tests are no longer available in many cities and states, and students are being forced to travel hundreds of miles, enduring quarantine restrictions, contact tracing, and travel expenses, to be able to sit for an exam that may be canceled at the last minute anyway.

## THE NEW LANDSCAPE

Never has the college admissions process been under such scrutiny and challenged to change with current conditions. NACAC report does not come out and say that test scores should not be used, but it makes clear that a change is overdue and the global health crisis has pushed that need for change in a drastic way.

The report urges colleges and universities to make decisions that consider the public good, are student-centered, and focus on overall student success.

In this year of limited test availability, the report also asks institutions to explain all exceptions to test-optional policies for both admissions and scholarship opportunities.

While all of this is good, students being considered as whole human beings with gifts and experience beyond a test score, how will this affect the applications of our Seton students?

We asked some admissions professionals at our partner colleges to give us a little insight into their policies in this vastly different year.



## How does the SAT/ACT currently figure into your admissions process with limited access to the tests due to the pandemic?

**MR. PETE HELGESEN,**  
**DEAN OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT, BENEDICTINE COLLEGE**



"It has been a frustrating process for students, and we feel awfully bad for them this year. Students have gone through a lot to try to take the exam and often they just cannot so Benedictine has implemented a test optional process that is user friendly, understandable, and can accommodate scholarships for the applicant."

**MR. SAM PHILIPS,**  
**DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS, CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE**



"Christendom College is still requiring a standardized test for admission. The Classical Learning Test (CLT) is available to be taken online and is therefore a good option for students wishing to attend Christendom. The CLT lines up with our philosophy of education very well and this gives our admissions committee an apple to apple comparison when evaluating a student for admission."

**MS. MONIQUE RIVERS,**  
**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS, AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY**



"We understand the difficulty students are having regarding scheduling the ACT/SAT due to COVID-19. Therefore, the ACT, SAT, and CLT are optional for the Fall and Spring of 2021."

**MR. MICHAEL PROBUS,**  
**DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS, UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS**



"UD uses a holistic review of our applicants, and there is no minimum GPA or test score requirement for admission. We are test optional for admission and test blind for our academic merit scholarship. The academic & personal environment of the student, their writing samples, the rigor of their high school curriculum are arguably more important for us to know during the review process than test scores for this year."

## Do you have any recommendations as to how students should proceed when applying to college without taking the traditional standardized tests?

**Ms. Rivers** - "When applying to Ave Maria University, students should submit all high school transcripts. The Admissions Counselor will determine whether additional documents, such as letters of recommendation, are required based on the student's GPA. However, we do recommend students to take a standardized test if possible, as it can help applicants with both institutional scholarships and outside scholarship opportunities. We also

recommend students who have a classical learning academic background look into the Classical Learning Test (CLT) since it can be administered remotely."

**Mr. Helgesen** - "Benedictine is largely making decisions based upon the high school transcript, but we are encouraging students to schedule interviews (when possible), send in letters of recommendation and even writing an extra essay. We really have the students in mind, and we are trying not to create extra barriers in an already stressful time."

**Mr. Probus** - "If students are unable to take the test, I would highly recommend focusing on your writing samples. This is not a time to be shy, and the context clues you share help admission committees truly understand who you are as a person. Take time preparing your essays, writing supplements and don't forget to list part-time job or club activities."

## Are students who do not take the SAT or other exams looked upon less favorably by the admissions committee than those who were able to sit for the exam?

**Ms. Rivers** - "No applicant is looked upon less favorably for opting not to take the exams. We are happy that we can speed up the admissions process by granting an admissions decision to students as we receive their transcript."

**Mr. Helgesen** - "No, not at Benedictine. Colleges are going to have to be flexible, so they are not going to look less favorably on those candidates."

**Mr. Probus** - "When students are applying to college, we are looking at your high school body of work. The test score, in some ways, represents just a quick snapshot of a point in time whereas a student's high school transcript shows their academic growth over three years."

Mr. Probus continues, "In previous years, the test score would generally line up closely with a student's GPA. A high performing student would normally get an excellent test result and a low performing student generally would receive low marks on their test. The test score isn't going to change who you were overnight. Students who have good study habits, persistence and grit, their application will shine through to admission committees."

## CHANGES AHEAD?

As of this writing, about 1,600 colleges and universities have announced their policy of being test optional for the 2020 admissions season. Many are reviewing admissions procedures going forward based upon the class that will attend their institutions in the fall of 2021. Are they well adjusted and able to be successful? It will be interesting to see how the college application process changes in the coming years, pushed ahead by the pandemic. It might be time to rethink the role of standardized testing in higher education and



**Mary Ellen Barrett** is a mother of seven children and two in heaven, wife to David, and a lifelong New Yorker. She has homeschooled her children for eleven years using Seton and an enormous amount of books. She is the editor of the *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor to *The Long Island Catholic*.



# Standardized Testing for Homeschoolers

## Available from Seton Testing Services

BY JEFF MINICK

Give a standardized test to some homeschoolers, and the veterans of such tests will not blink an eye. “Bring it on,” they might say as they grab their Number 2 pencils, snag a seat at a desk, and attack the test.

On the other hand, rookie test-takers may be overcome with fear and doubt, quaking inside with anxiety and as dry in the mouth as a desert.

In part to help homeschooling students become comfortable with such ordeals, Felicity Smoot, Assistant Director of Testing at Seton Home Study School, recommends taking standardized tests like the IOWA-E Test or the Stanford 10 Online.

Although these tests are not mandatory for enrolled Seton students and some states don’t require them, Smoot, who holds a degree in psychology from Virginia’s Old Dominion University and who has worked for the Seton testing department for six years, points out the benefits for students sitting for such tests. “They become used to the standardized testing process,” she says, “and it will ease their anxieties when they take the SAT or ACT for college admission. Standardized testing can also help boost a student’s SAT or ACT scores.”

Smoot adds that a standardized test allows students to compare their academic standing with hundreds of thousands of peers around the nation. “The tests can be useful for seeing if they are on track,” she says.

### THE KEY TO RAISING SCORES

Statistical evidence exists to back Smoot’s claim that standardized tests can increase scores on the exams required for college admissions.

Researchers who investigated performance on the IOWA Assessments came up with data showing a relation between the IOWA tests and improved scores on the ACT as well as preparedness for college itself. As they write, “College readiness information gives educators and families information they need to determine whether students are on track to successfully complete first-year college coursework upon graduation from high school or whether additional coursework and preparation are necessary.

“It allows families and educators to monitor student progress from middle school through high school and allows flexibility to determine the appropriate improvement and support strategies for students as they plan for postsecondary education opportunities.”

In other words, these tests help determine whether Sam or Mary is ready to head off to university.

Just as importantly, they can act as guides for a student’s academic progress. In the online article “*Complete Guide to Homeschool Testing*,” Tasha Swearingen lists the states along with their testing requirements and then describes how homeschoolers can register for these tests, specifically listing Seton among available resources.

In my own homeschooling days, North Carolina required us to take a standardized test every year, a requirement still in place, and we would order those tests from Seton.

Most often we chose the CAT, though once or twice my wife may have ordered the IOWA-E test. When we received the test scores, we could then decide where a child might need some extra work or help in a certain area, and so better plan our curriculum for the following year.

I remember in particular one of our sons scoring low in a grammar test and reinforcing that subject in the fall in his schoolwork.

Several times, our co-op also ordered our tests as a group from Seton. As Felicity Smoot told me, the two advantages here are the reduced costs—a bulk order of tests receives a 10% discount from Seton—and the social setting of the test itself.

### LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

This last point is important. Unlike many public and private school students, homeschooling students may be unaccustomed to the ordeal of timed tests in a classroom with their peers. By sitting for these tests in such an environment, where others are around them and where they must keep an eye on the clock, our children become much more comfortable with these tests and with the college admissions exams.

Once the scores are sent to the parents, they can use that information in different ways. Some share the scores with their children, going over what the numbers mean and showing them where there is room for improvement. Others look over the scores without giving their kids access to them, but instead use the scores, as mentioned above, to help plan the next year’s curriculum.

Not everyone is a fan of standardized testing. In “Is Standardized Testing Necessary for Homeschooled Students?” Marianne Sunderland, homeschooling mother of eight and creator of the website *Homeschooling With Dyslexia*, argues there are negatives to these tests and then offers help to those whose states require them.

Though I disagree with Sunderland, believing that standardized tests can benefit students, I wholeheartedly approve her recommendations to those who by law must take these tests, given that my wife and I both practiced what she advocates.



She makes five good points to keep in mind when our children are taking such tests:

1. Demonstrate a relaxed attitude about the testing. This will reassure your child and places the appropriate value on the testing.
2. Teach your kids basic test-taking skills like how to handle multiple choice questions and other strategies such as making sure your child has had a good night's sleep, a hearty breakfast, wears comfortable clothing and uses the restroom before the test.
3. Teach your kids the reality that test scores do not accurately assess their full academic ability.
4. Remind your kids that standardized tests don't measure other important things like intelligence, creativity, and compassion etc.
5. If your child has a learning disability such as dyslexia, request accommodations such as extended time or to have the test read out loud to the student.

Good advice all around.

If you decide your children may benefit from taking standardized tests, you may order the following tests from Seton: the Stanford 10 test online, the IOWA-E, the CAT 6/Terra Nova 2, and the CAT Survey.

## SUPPLEMENTAL HELPS

Smoot reminds parents and students that Seton sells test preparation guides for the SAT and ACT: the Princeton guides *Cracking the PSAT*, *Cracking the SAT*, and *Cracking the ACT*, and the Official SAT Guide from the College Board.

Whatever you may decide about standardized tests, I encourage you to use preparatory books like these for the college entrance exams tests. They offer a myriad of tips about the tests themselves and how to do well on them, and the practice tests successfully recreate the actual exams the student will face.

A last thought from Felicity Smoot: She notes that scores on standardized tests tend to rise the more the students take them. She also encourages all students, not just the ones following the requirements of state law, to give these tests a try for the rewards they bring.

No more butterflies in the tummy, gang. Take the tests and strive for excellence.



**Jeff Minick** has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, NC. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, VA.

# TEST FOR SUCCESS

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# in the **Schoolroom**

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

## Where We Share Our Best Tips for Homeschooling with Seton

Brigid of Kildare is one of the three patron saints of Ireland (St. Patrick and St. Columba are the others). She is the patroness of dairy farmers, Irish nuns, newborn babies, midwives and cattle. She was born in 443 B.C. to the slave of a Druid Chieftain. Brocca, Brigid's mother, was baptized by St. Patrick and raised Brigid as a Christian.

Her charity and holiness became well known and she was constantly in trouble for giving away everything she or her owners owned. She was eventually freed at the behest of the king who, seeing her holiness said, "her merit before God is greater than ours."

St. Brigid's life was dedicated to God and the Catholic faith. She founded monasteries for both men and women and was a close friend of St. Patrick's and they were considered pillars of the Irish people.

Tradition holds that Brigid went about the countryside accompanied by a white cow with red ears, blessing households as she went. To make her welcome, housewives would place bread and butter on the windowsill, along with some corn for the cow and rushes for her to kneel upon while blessing their homes.

To celebrate this great saint, set aside some time on the afternoon to feast on St. Brigid's Bread (recipe in the next column) and Irish tea, while reading *Brigid and the Butter* by Pamela Love or *St. Brigid and the Cows* by Eva K. Betz. Having the children color a St. Brigid coloring page (there are many available on Pinterest) while you read is fun.

If you would like to further immerse yourself in some good Irish-themed storytelling, you cannot do better than *The Cottage at Bantry Bay* by Hilda van Stockum.

Today is also a good day to, in Brigid's name, donate food to a local pantry or shelter or to try your hand at butter making (directions in following column).

Beannachtai Lá Féile Bríde!

(St. Brigid's Day blessings to you)



**Mary Ellen Barrett** is a mother of seven children and two in heaven, wife to David, and a lifelong New Yorker. She has homeschooled her children for eleven years using Seton and an enormous amount of books. She is the editor of the *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor to *The Long Island Catholic*.



# St. Brigid's Bread

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup flour
- 1 tbsps. sugar
- 3/4 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 3 tbsps. butter, in small pieces
- 3/4 cup uncooked oatmeal (old fashioned)
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup buttermilk

## DIRECTIONS:

Preheat your oven to 425° degrees Fahrenheit.

Grease a baking sheet.

Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a bowl. Add butter bits and cut in with knife until mixture is crumbly. Add oats and mix well.

Beat the egg with the buttermilk in a separate bowl.

Make a “well” in the dry ingredients, then pour in the egg mixture and mix all with a fork until the crumbs hold together. Form the dough into a ball and knead (on a floured surface, about 20-25 times). Add flour if the mass is still too sticky to work with.

Form the doughball into 8-inch round and transfer it to the baking sheet.

Score a deep cross into the bread but do not cut through.

Bake for fifteen to twenty minutes, or until medium brown and a tester comes out clean.

## HOW TO MAKE BUTTER:

2/3 cup of cold heavy whipping cream

1 cup canning jar with lid and ring

**Step 1:** Pour cream into the jar and screw on the lid. Shake jar until butter forms a soft lump, 15 to 20 minutes. Continue to shake until buttermilk separates out of the lump and the jar contains a solid lump of butter and liquid buttermilk.

**Step 2:** Pour contents of the jar into a fine mesh strainer and strain out the buttermilk, leaving the solid butter. Remove the lump of butter and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate until needed.

**Note:** You can also do this in a blender or food processor, but it is more fun for the kids to take turns shaking the jar.



## ALUMNI PROFILE

### HANNAH TICHY

**Hannah is a senior at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas studying Elementary Education with a minor in Spanish.**

I was homeschooled through Seton for two years, the last two years of high school. I enjoyed the integration of the Catholic Faith in all academic subjects as well as the balance of structure and flexibility Seton provided for me and my family.

Completing discussion questions from literature with my mom and chemistry lab assignments with my dad are some of my best memories from high school because of Seton!

## HOW SETON PREPARED ME FOR COLLEGE

Seton prepared me for writing papers at the college level, reading critically, and managing my time well.

Once classes started freshman year, I found I was able to manage my time effectively and understand the content of my courses well. Seton also fostered a love for learning for me that helps me stay motivated to learn during college.

My love for children and my desire to share my love for learning with them and help lead them to God gives me a passion for becoming a teacher. I hope to become a positive influence in the lives of my future students, helping them know they are loved by God as His children and that they have a unique purpose in this life.

One thing I'd like to share is don't forget to enjoy your time in high school and your time with your family!

Also, hold yourself accountable to the use of good time management skills in a way that works well for you, so that you are prepared to do this later in life.





## Seton Student Achievements

SHARING SUCCESS WITH THE SETON COMMUNITY



**Jonathan** | Jonathan is interested in learning about how hunting helps our wildlife and says that homeschooling helped with his goal of earning his hunter safety card.



**Mariella** | American Heritage Girl Mariella loves nature, gardening, flying planes and making books and she is inspired to be a pilot, engineer, writer or artist.



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## *Children and the Media: A Challenge for Education*

Educating children to be discriminating in their use of the media is a responsibility of parents, Church, and school. The role of parents is of primary importance. They have a right and duty to ensure the prudent use of the media by training the conscience of their children to express sound and objective judgments which will then guide them in choosing or rejecting programmes available.

In doing so, parents should have the encouragement and assistance of schools and parishes in ensuring that this difficult, though satisfying, aspect of parenting is supported by the wider community.

Media education should be positive. Children exposed to what is aesthetically and morally excellent are helped to develop appreciation, prudence and the skills of discernment. Here it is important to recognize the fundamental value of parents' example and the benefits of introducing young people to children's classics in literature, to the fine arts and to uplifting music.

*Pope Benedict XVI - World Communications Day  
May 20, 2007*

