

# Seton MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church SETONMAGAZINE.COM | NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021

*A Beautiful Kind of Crazy*  
The Kuhns Family Pg 8



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*Seton*  
Educational Media

See inside for  
**CHRISTMAS SPECIALS**  
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*First Day  
of School!*

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on Pages 32 and 33!



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**COVER PHOTO**

The Kuhns Family



Dear Readers,

We might all be justifiably sick to death of talk about health. However, our spiritual and emotional health are possibly more important than our physical health. As Catholics we are aware that we are not meant for this world and being prepared for eternal life is a different kind of health discussion. C.S. Lewis is credited with reminding us that we are in fact souls with bodies rather than bodies with souls. An important distinction.

Focusing on spiritual health, John Clark reminds fathers of their importance in the spiritual health of their sons and daughters while Jeff Minick reminds us of the importance of the arts in making us “more fully human”, a very Catholic point of view. I am happy to say that the study of the arts comprises most of our features this issue.

We are also featuring Holy Apostles College and Seminary in this issue. Holy Apostles is part of our College Partner Program and their Take Credit Program will allow your high school student to earn college credit while still in high school.

I would like on behalf of all the staff at Seton Home Study School, to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We are very grateful for each one of you and pray that God blesses you all abundantly in 2022.

Blessings,

*Mary Ellen Barrett*

Mary Ellen Barrett



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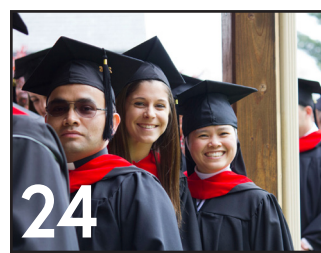
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# MISSION STATEMENT

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



### Why Do We Homeschool?

*We have been using Seton for over ten years and I recommend it to everyone I meet.*

*I love the curriculum and that Seton made it possible for us to go to daily Holy Mass and have a Catholic atmosphere in our home.*

*I love that whenever I encounter a problem Seton personnel are always there for us.*

*The Sousa Family - Tyler, TX*



# your Questions ANSWERED

FOR HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES

## Can I retake a test or redo an assignment?

Yes, usually. There are a couple of exceptions. You may not redo questions that have only two answers (True/False or picking between two choices). If you are in high school taking a multiple choice test, you may only redo the test if it has 5 choices. If it has fewer, you will need to take an alternate test. In the elementary grades (1-8) Seton will count the new grade as your grade. In high school (9-12) your new grade and the old one will be averaged.

## How do I retake a test?

The most important thing to remember is that you must redo the test in the same manner that you took the original test. If you did an online test, there will be a button for a retake. You only answer the questions you missed. If you did a paper test, do the questions that you got wrong on a new sheet of paper and **attach it to the original test**. Mail it in, or upload

it, depending on how you turned in the original. If you are redoing a book report or paragraph, **attach the new one to the old one and resubmit**. More information can be found under "Resources" on your MySeton account: look for "How to Redo an Assignment."

## For 4th grade, I noticed that we do not have to turn in the book report for *The Small War of Sergeant Donkey*. Does this mean that we don't have to do a book report for the 1st quarter?

While you do not have to turn in the book report for *Sgt. Donkey*, we still very much want you to do the book report! In the first quarter of 4th grade, the Seton lesson plans and the *Book Report Handbook* teach you step-by-step how to write a good Seton book report.

There are assignments in the handbook not only on how to find information like the title, author, setting and main characters, but also how to find the main idea, and how to find examples for the

topics. We feel it is very important to actually go through these steps by **DOING** them, and that includes actually writing the book report.

While the assignments that are done for the *Book Report Handbook* are included in the optional parent grades, there is a required Seton test for the 1st quarter that is based on the work done in the handbook. So while the grades are optional, the work is not, because it would be difficult to do well on the test without doing the work.

As you progress through the Seton program, you will be writing 19 more book reports before entering high school. We want you to learn the proper method for doing these so that you will do well throughout your elementary years.

## How do I figure out the grade for my students for Section A on the quarter reports?

Many times, the parent section consists of several specific assignments, so just

The Contreras Family

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See More Great Photos  
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Thank you to the generous  
families who have shared their  
"First Day of School"  
photos with us!



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CHRISTMAS SALE BEGINS ON PAGE 15

put your grade in those places. Often times, it just says "Parent Grade" or "Home Grade." If there are weekly quizzes, you can average those grades.

If there are a couple of end-of-chapter reviews or tests, you can average those. If there are not specific quizzes, but only daily work for a course, then you can give a grade that is more like an overall average of the work done during the quarter. The grade does not have to be exact. For example, if a student generally receives a B on daily work, then give a B for the week or the quarter. You don't need to go through every daily lesson and average them exactly. And remember, attitude and effort definitely count, especially for young students!

The parent grade is one part of each quarter grade. Seton averages the grades of all quarter tests or assignments sent to Seton, along with the parent grade, to get the final quarter grade.

If there are exceptions to this rule, as sometimes happens in high school courses, it should be explained in the introduction section of the lesson plan manual.

**May I have the answer keys to the Seton tests so I am sure my son has learned all the concepts?**

We cannot supply the keys to tests to be graded by Seton. However, as the parent-teacher, you should look over your child's work and encourage him to review his test answers or compositions before sending them to

Seton. In fact, we encourage you to do that, especially to make sure that the student is doing good work.

**My daughter is easily upset by some stories about animals. Is it okay if I don't follow the lesson plans exactly and let her skip these?**

The Church teaches that parents are responsible for the education of their children. If you believe that your daughter would be upset by animal stories, such as of animals being mistreated, then it is your right and your responsibility to do what is best for your child. One benefit of homeschooling is that you can make the best decision for your child and that your child need not be unnecessarily upset. Unless a story is involved with a test, simply skip it. If it is involved in a test or book report, contact one of our counselors for another option.

This leads us to the second part, is it okay if I don't follow the lesson plans exactly, and the answer is always YES! The lesson plans are meant to be a guide. You know best what your child needs and what she already knows. If she is good with a concept, you can skip the drills for it. If she needs additional review with something, pause the lesson plans and gather some supplemental materials to help her learn this concept. Use the Quarter Report Forms or your MySeton page to see what you are required to turn in for a subject, and make sure she is prepared to do those assignments. The rest is at your discretion.



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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BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

## MUSIC, ART AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION - SHARING HOW WE DO IT

**In** the Seton curriculum, the subjects of music, art and physical education are entirely parent-graded. Supplemented by suggestions in your lesson plans and Seton's beautiful art books, parents have the freedom and flexibility to decide how to pursue these subjects.

It may feel easy to gloss over these subjects, but studies prove that children who have a solid fine arts background do better on standardized tests. "Multiple research studies support the notion that students who engage in the study of the arts perform better in math, reading, and writing. The Arts Education Partnership analyzed the results of 62 studies which revealed that students who study music have increased achievement and proficiency in math. Reading and cognitive development were found to increase, as were verbal SAT scores." (*Public School Review December 2020, Grace Chen*)

Clearly, art, music, dance, theatre, and performance are all integral parts of a well-educated person. Aside from the academic incentive, as Catholics we know that the pursuit of beauty is innate and a gift from God. These subjects train our children to see beauty, to know the good of it, and to give credit to the author of all things truly beautiful.

In my home we have approached these subjects in a variety of ways depending on the child's interest, ability, and my workload. It is important to take mom's workload into account when planning for extra activities. Too often parents are enthused about joining a sport or signing up for musical

theatre only to be tearing their hair out a few months later due to an abundance of practices and commitments. Pursuing any of these subjects outside your home can add a great deal of beauty and enjoyment to homeschooling but it should not add too much extra stress or burdens.

I have always found it helpful to hear how other families enjoy these subjects. So we asked some Seton moms to share how they incorporate them into their homeschool.

### MUSIC

We are a musical family. One of my older daughters is an exceptionally talented musician and we began private flute lessons for her at the age of six. In the same way some families pursue competition sports, we pursued music opportunities for her. She played in several orchestras, some quite prestigious, and even played at Carnegie Hall twice. She eventually majored in music education in college and now teaches at a lovely Catholic school. Pursuing those opportunities were time-consuming and expensive but paid off in both scholarships and a vocation to teach. Other children in my home have taken violin, piano, flute, guitar, and voice lessons as well as having to serve two years in church choir. - **Mary Ellen Barrett**

**Theresa Granados** teaches music theory, ear training and basic piano as well as using their gaming system for guitar lessons. That's making good use of resources! Some students in **Leah Ehrichs'** homeschool take violin in a co-op while others take private piano lessons.



**Dana Tafel Nalls** shared, “They all play an instrument. I’m proficient in woodwinds, so the majority stuck with those (flute/clarinet/saxophone). Two take guitar lessons (one acoustic, one electric). We listen and discuss different genres and artists from chant to modern.”

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical fitness is extremely important for young bodies as well as young minds. Fresh air and exercise are the cure for many an ill in society and children should always be encouraged to be up and moving when they are not working at school.

To add gym to our homeschool we signed the children up for karate at a private dojo at which a friend was a member. It was close to our home and affordable. The kids learned and enjoyed the study of Tong Soo Do so much that my husband joined them and this past summer he and my oldest son passed their black belt tests. My younger children are well on their way to that goal.

Other ways we pursued physical fitness were hiking, running, fitness videos, swimming, Irish step dance, contra dance and ballet. - **M.E.B.**

**Sheila Drummer** pursues gym in an unusual and delightful way. “We are currently enrolled in an advanced aerial silks program, think Cirque de Soleil with trapeze, hoop, and silks. It’s P.E., music and art all rolled into one. “

**Jennifer Gonzalez’s** fourteen and fifteen-year-olds are in Civil Air Patrol, which has monthly physical fitness nights and quarterly P.E. tests. In between they work out at the local YMCA.

**Suzan Forestello von Stultz** has had her child taking tennis lessons for four years and last year included horseback riding lessons.

**Katie Peter’s** children take Tae Kwon Do three times a week.



## ART

For art, in addition to our Seton Art books I have used both Pinterest and co-op classes to teach the children some artistic techniques. I have absolutely no talent at this but two of my children have an interest and talent in drawing so I added as many art projects as I could to their weekly lessons. - **M.E.B.**

**Dana Tafel Nalls** has a very creative way of teaching art: she uses cooking (presentation) and baking (decoration). Her children have also taken pottery classes and studied quilting with their grandmother. Taking advantage of the expertise of family members is a brilliant idea. Not only do the children learn a new skill but wonderful memories are made.

**Rachel Kelly** has her children make mixed media Christmas cards and paints a stained glass Easter scene on their storm door using Tempera paint.

Other families find classes at their local library, YMCA, museums, and online at CreativeBug and YouTube.

When pulling together your lessons for these curriculums it is important to expose your children to a wide variety of pursuits. As they get older, their talents and interests will narrow down the activities in which they engage.

The study of the arts and physical fitness will not only broaden their horizons, but will also develop discipline, patience, and perseverance, all of which will serve your children well in their post-homeschool lives.



**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 number of books. She is the editor of the *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor to *The Long Island Catholic*.





# A Visit With the Kuhns Family

WITH JEFF MINICK

## A Beautiful Kind of Crazy

Recently, I got the jab. ❄️

No—I don't mean the COVID vaccine. I got a different medicine: an injection of optimism

We're living through some tough old times right now, when despair and darkness seem as ubiquitous as the face masks some people wear, but every time I interview a mom for *Seton Magazine's* "Featured Family," I spend the rest of the day walking on air.

Over the last three years, I've chatted with women from California to New York, and each time I end those calls in awe of what they are doing for their marriages, their families, their communities, their country, and their faith.

Which is exactly how I felt after speaking with Dr. Clarissa Kuhns of Laredo, Texas.

### Meet the Family

Clarissa is a practicing psychologist who holds a Ph.D. in that subject from Texas A&M University. She's wife to Jesse, a master of Taekwondo who operates a martial arts school, and mother of five children. She also started a homeschooling support group with local Catholic homeschooling families and weekly hosts a Wednesday

evening meeting for women, the Marian Women of Merciful Love.

Clarissa's passion for Taekwondo brought her and Jesse together. They met when both of them were on the team at Texas A&M. Jesse eventually became the coach of that team, and after their marriage, when they moved to Laredo to live near her family, he pursued a lifelong dream and in 2008 along with Clarissa, opened KuGar TaeKwonDo—the name is an amalgam of Kuhns and Garcia, Clarissa's maiden name. There he teaches martial arts daily during the afternoon and into the evening, a schedule that allows him to spend maximum time with his children.

Jesse Junior, age 10, is following in his parents' footsteps and is already a winner of several awards and tournaments. Outside of the classroom and the studio, he enjoys board games and reading. His brother Gabriel, 8, also a student of Taekwondo, enjoys arts and crafts as well as cooking. "He actually cooks breakfast for our family three days a week," Clarissa says. Named for John Paul II, Juan Pablo, 5, is "my dirt and sticks kid." Like his older brothers, Juan Pablo is learning Taekwondo. Clarissa describes him as rambunctious and "our social butterfly."





Two sisters come next. Ana Maria, 3, has just started Taekwondo and loves coloring. “She’s our bossy one,” Clarissa tells me. “She’s always bossing her brothers around.” Also named after JP II, Karolina Maria, age 20 months, “loves to dance to any type of music.”

In addition, the older children are active in 4-H and are raising goats. And when their schedule allows, the family goes elk hunting on land in Colorado owned by Clarissa’s family, where they are often joined by her older brother, his wife, and their nine children, all of whom are enrolled in Seton, and by another brother and his wife, parents of five. “My oldest son has become a proficient bugler,” Clarissa says, “and he attracts the elk.”

“Our life is crazy,” she adds, laughing. “But it’s a beautiful kind of crazy.”

## Study, Faith, and a Sweet Story

Homeschooling grants the family the flexibility to meet these numerous demands. It also allows Clarissa and Jesse “to infuse our Catholic Faith deeply in all that we do.”

Regarding some other benefits of homeschooling, Clarissa stresses the importance of “our growth as a family in our effort to get to Heaven. We learn to love each other better and better. We have an active, close relationship with our children, and we’re not battling for time with them while maintaining two businesses.”

After her homeschooling sister-in-law encouraged Clarissa to teach her own children, she enrolled them in Seton Home Study School

and never looked back. She praises the program for its “incredible curriculum with great flexibility” and its helpful counselors. When asked what she loved most about Seton, she replied, “I am at peace with the education my kids are receiving.”

Here’s one example of learning “to love each other better and better.” Because Clarissa wanted to raise her children speaking Spanish in the home, Jesse acquired Rosetta Stone’s Spanish program, set to work, and taught himself the language before the children were speaking. Now that is one romantic gift!

## Our Lord Provided

Like all of us, the Kuhns family has also faced trials and misfortunes.

As was true of so many businesses across the country and around the world, the lockdowns of the COVID-19 adversely affected Clarissa’s practice and the Taekwondo school. “We took a hit,” Clarissa says. “A really hard hit.” After a couple of weeks of scrambling for solutions, she was able to resume her counseling practice via Zoom, but the KuGar School lost 60% of its students.

Money was a concern, and the future was frightening, but Clarissa and Jesse stayed the course, and today the KuGar School is back in operation and at full capacity. “Our Lord provided, and we made it through,” she tells me. “We’re very blessed to have me and my husband on the same page.”

As we were saying our goodbyes, Clarissa paused and then said, “Just remember—God is in everything.”

For whatever reason, those words hit me like a punch. I’ve written them on a piece of paper, fixed it to my refrigerator door along with the drawings and photos of my grandkids, and will remember them every day.





# Using the Arts to Raise Healthier Kids

Suppose you could augment your child's religious education, boost their intellectual development, enhance their emotional well-being, and help salvage civilization all by embracing just two subjects?

It turns out you can.

The study of music and art in our home schools gives life to all these propositions.

For nearly two thousand years, the Catholic Church has acted as both the creator and the protector of the arts. Singers of Gregorian chant, writers of hymns, composers from Hildegard of Bingen to Palestrina, from Mozart to Henryk Gorecki, painters and sculptors ranging from Fra Angelico to Michelangelo to that ruffian Caravaggio: these and thousands of others left us a treasure house of religious art.

To study their works, to play their music and to model our painting and sculptures on their canvases and statues, can also increase the intelligence of our students.

But what about emotional health? Can the arts make an impact there as well?

## Rest and Recovery

In an online article, *The Science Behind Why Classical Music Is Good For Mental Health*, we read that studies have shown that classical music can relieve stress and anxiety by lowering levels of cortisol, a stress hormone. Google "classical music emotional well-being," and we find similar articles proclaiming the benefits of this music on mental health, blood pressure, and recovery from illness or injury.

Art can bring similar benefits when we contemplate a painting or sculpture rather than merely looking at it. When we Google Moritz von Schwind's *A Player With a Hermit* and then study this painting rather than merely glancing at it, focusing as does the painter on the weary minstrel seated outside a hermitage, like the minstrel we take a few steps out of this world and a few steps closer to heaven. We are reminded of the importance of rest and the need to escape the pressures of the world.

## The Past Holding Hands With the Present

Just as important for our young people are the benefits of emotional intelligence and connections gained from the study of art and music.

**“Studies have shown that classical music can relieve stress and anxiety.”**

When they rest their eyes on Jean-Francois Millet's painting *The Angelus*, for example, they may see a bridge between the prayers of this farmer and his wife, and our own recitation of the Angelus today. When they sing in their parish choir a centuries-old hymn or play the violin in an orchestra, they are connecting across the centuries with a culture that still speaks to them today.

In a world such as our present one, which so often seems broken, chaotic, boorish, rude, and disheveled, these links to the past through the magic of art and music can bring us solace, hope, and even joy. A toddler listening to the *Hallelujah Chorus* from Handel's *Messiah* or to Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* may dance and bounce



all over the living room floor, exhilarated by this magnificent music.

A 15-year-old girl may open a book of Norman Rockwell's paintings and find herself mesmerized by the painter's *Girl at Mirror*, feeling as if she herself is staring into a mirror, as if the painter has perfectly captured her discarding the dolls and crayons of the nursery and the blossoming of womanhood.

At their best, then, the arts act as connectors of human beings. Both the automobile mechanic and the professor can stand before a painting such as Rembrandt's *The Return of the Prodigal Son* or Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The Annunciation*, and be moved by what they see. Both can listen to Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* or Carl Orff's *O Fortuna*, and find themselves profoundly affected by the beauty and majesty of this music.





## The Artist Within

If we broaden our definition of “art,” we see that this creative impulse is a part of our human condition. In the seminars I used to offer to homeschoolers in Asheville, North Carolina, there were artists galore: violinists, pianists,

**“The arts act as connectors of human beings.”**

dancers, and poets. One girl made lovely jewelry, which she sold online, another built ornate gingerbread houses and entered them annually in the contest at the Grove Park Inn, and a middle-school boy carved figures of animals and people from pine.

We see this desire to create all around us. Our four-year-old sits at the dining room table, lips pursed, drawing a

heart on his mother’s birthday card; our seventh grader composes songs and sings them in her church youth group; her older brother plays guitar and loves to belt out Johnny Cash’s *Ring of Fire*.

## Faith and Joy

Finally, art and music can strengthen the emotional health of our young people by arousing in them a sense of joy and an appreciation of beauty. In his 1999 *Letter to Artists*, Saint John Paul II wrote, “Beauty is a key to the mystery and a call to transcendence.” Our young people—and the rest of us as well—need that key and that call to thrive in this world.

So introduce your children to the arts, and make it a joy, a playground, if you will, delighting the ear and the eye. Take them to museums and concerts. Listen to some classical music or bring home

art books from your public library. When you are using the Seton school materials, take a few moments to look at the paintings and pictures you find there. Google the artist and see what other works are available online. If they are so inclined, sign the children up for piano, dance, or drawing lessons.

Catholic writers, religious and lay, are fond of the term “more fully human.” Prayer, the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, and the steadfast practice of our faith help make us more fully human.

And so do the arts.



**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.





BY KARENA TAPSAK


# *Five Ways to Make Music in Your Homeschool*

**You** have perhaps heard some of the research indicating that studying music increases intelligence, creativity, and motor skills, but there is so much more!

Anyone who studies music learns the value of hard work and reward that comes from practice and performance, as well as increased self-esteem. Playing music is enjoyable and brings others joy. Finally, music is something that, once learned, you will have for a lifetime. The best of all? It is easy to integrate into your homeschool. You and your children will benefit, and they will thank you for it!

I have been a musician my entire life. I started piano at age four, and by middle school I was playing several different instruments in the school band and orchestra, as well as

singing every chance I got. I grew up with music all around me. At home we listened to music much of the time, including classical and jazz as well as contemporary.

 **Music is something that, once learned, you will have for a lifetime.**

My parents took us to symphony and choral concerts at a young age, as well as my dad's "dance jobs" where he played traditional German music and his chorale concerts. From these experiences, we learned a lot about how important and enjoyable music can be. You can integrate music into your homeschool in the same ways.

## Private Lessons or Classes

Taking private lessons is an easy way to integrate music into your homeschool. Lessons take little time (perhaps 15-30 minutes once a week for beginners), and practice each day (5-10 minutes for the youngest kids, progressing to more time daily as they get older). Class options could include an early childhood music and movement class or group instrument class for older children.

Many families start formal music study with the piano or keyboard, and there are good reasons to do so. Because of its popularity, piano teachers are relatively easy to find and you only need to buy or lease one instrument if all of the children learn piano.

### Many families start formal music study with the piano or keyboard.

Because playing piano develops many skills at once, learning another instrument is so much easier after having studied piano. Many children can begin piano lessons around the age of five or six. Talk to a piano teacher to determine your child's readiness. Young children are remarkably good at learning the complexities of music at a young age, so start young if possible.

If you choose a band or orchestra instrument, you can often get private lessons through a public or preparatory school or from a private teacher. Most schools begin instrument lessons around the age of ten, simply because the child has to be big enough to hold and play the instrument. With string instruments, one can start younger because smaller versions of the string instruments exist and children trade up in size as they grow.

## Group Performance

After taking lessons for a little while, your child may wish to join a music ensemble. Making music with others further develops what the children are learning in lessons, teaches them how to work with others, and gives them valuable feedback from another teacher.

Plus, it is a lot of fun! Possibilities include local music schools, the public schools, community groups (such as a community band, orchestra or chorus), colleges or universities, or homeschool groups. In some areas of the country where there is a high concentration of homeschoolers, parents have formed their own bands, orchestras, or choruses. Even occasional performances with friends at nursing homes or church events give them valuable experience while also bringing joy to others—perhaps the best reason of all!

## Make Music With Your Children

One way to foster an appreciation for music in your homeschool is to participate with your kids. One of my own earliest music memories is of my father and me singing a duet on the local public radio station when I was about six or seven.

In my own family, we have done many musical activities together, including participating in a local community band, a homeschool chorus, playing at nursing homes and church events, and many others. I accompany my children on piano quite often, which is a lot of fun for me.

Some parents learn new instruments right along with their children (the Suzuki method encourages this). Playing together gets even more fun as your children get older.

Now that some of our kids have become quite proficient on their own, we play occasionally with members of our community, everything from classical arrangements to jazz to Balkan music. There are so many possibilities! Making music with your children both encourages them and shows them that it is important and fun!

## Curricula

There are many options for music curricula in addition to the above. The Seton lesson plans are a good start, as well as software programs that teach both instruments and elements of music, music history texts (for older children), and theory books. One can also find online courses and online teachers of virtually every type of instrument, voice, and music instruction. The public library is a great resource as well.

## Music Appreciation

Finally, whether your child is taking lessons or not, he or she will benefit from music appreciation or music history. The love of music, even as a listener, can be instilled at a very young age. An easy way to do this is to simply play classical music (or jazz, or other genres you prefer) while you are doing your homeschooling lessons.

As the children get a little older, engage them in conversation about what they are listening to. You can also have a more active listening period where you have a series of questions that the children can answer about a particular piece or composer.

### Some parents learn new instruments right along with their children.

Many books can be found in the library to help with this. You can even combine music appreciation and the study of composers with different periods of history. This helps place the development of classical music into a historical frame of reference.

No matter which way you integrate music into your homeschooling curriculum, your children will benefit. More importantly, learning an instrument, singing, or simply appreciating good classical music will bring them enjoyment throughout their lives.



**Karena Tapsak**, mother of six and a veteran homeschooler of 15 years, is Founder/Owner of Mountain View Music in Front Royal, Virginia. In addition to all things music, she enjoys gardening and exploring the outdoors with her family.



# Want to Meet Other Seton Families?

I have used the Seton curriculum and materials since I was homeschooled as a child and am now using it with our own children. I love the beauty and richness they have being deeply immersed in Catholic culture.

We love homeschooling with Seton and meeting up with other Catholic homeschooling families. It's an extra strong connection when we find they also use the same Seton materials.

It's so encouraging to know future generations will have such a strong foundation built through using Seton's authentic Catholic homeschooling program.

*~Elizabeth Anne Leavy*



*The Leavy Family*

“Meeting up with other like-minded families helps fortify our vocational journey.”



## IT'S EASY TO MEET LOCAL SETON FAMILIES!

Families often ask us if there are other Seton families living in their area. With so many families using the Seton program, the likelihood is high there are other Seton families nearby.

You can learn more on your MySeton page. Simply click on the box on the right-hand side of the page titled “Want to Meet Seton Families in Your Area?” Fill out the form and we will do the rest!

We look forward to hearing from you today!

**For More Information:**

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



**FREE SHIPPING**  
ON ANY ORDER OVER \$50

# Seton

## Educational Media

### CHRISTMAS CATALOG 2021

## Advent Activities for Catholic Homeschoolers



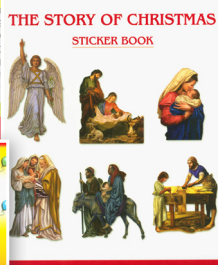
By Mary Ellen Barrett  
200 Ideas, Crafts and Activities  
for your Advent Calendar!

**M-RLCH-60 | \$5.00**

## Christmas Activity Book Set



Need a fun way to help children learn about the true meaning of Christmas?



These activity books are designed to teach children all about Our Lord's nativity using puzzles and activities to reinforce the reason for the season—the birth of Christ. **Recommended ages 4-10.**



- \$17.95 | Christmas Activity Book Set | M-RLCH-24**
- \$8.95 | Christmas Fun Bible Activity Book | M-RLCH-17**
- \$1.95 | Christmas A-Z Activity Book | M-RLCH-22**
- \$7.25 | The Story of Christmas Sticker Book | M-RLCH-23**

## My Nativity Pop-out Calendar

Lovely Advent Calendar to use each day to help prepare your family for the coming of the Savior.



**\$11.95 | My Nativity Pop-out Calendar | M-RLCH-15**



## Jesse Tree Kit

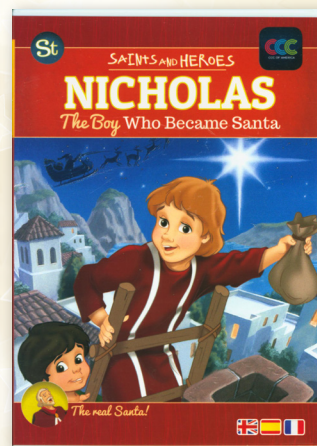
Each of the 28 pre-drawn paper ornaments can be colored by the children for their own personal touch. This kit also includes a short history of the Jesse Tree and a Jesse Tree prayer service. The Jesse Tree is a wonderful reflection on salvation history as a preparation for the celebration of Christmas.

**\$12.95 | Jesse Tree Kit | M-RLCH-12**

## CCC Saints & Heroes DVDs

Catholic, inspiring, and entertaining! This classic video collection from CCC features high quality animated films about inspiring and heroic figures who changed the world forever. Each 30 minutes.

- \$99.95 | SET OF 9 | M-RLDV-40**
- \$11.95 | INDIVIDUALLY**



## Baby Jesus in a Manger & Kneeling Santa

A wonderful way to teach the true meaning of Christmas! These resin figurines help refocus our celebrations on God's greatest gift to us - His Son, Jesus.

- \$14.95 | Kneeling Santa 5 inch Figurine | M-RLCH-19**
- \$4.95 | Kneeling Santa 3 inch Ornament | M-RLCH-20**
- \$11.95 | 5 inch Baby Jesus in a Manger | M-RLCH-29**





# 2020 Best Sellers



## NEW! SET #7 SAINTS OF THE SACRED HEART



### Brother Francis Advent Set

**\$21.95** | M-RLDV-68



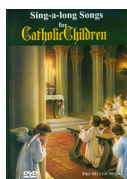
### Christmas/Advent Coloring Book

**\$3.00** | P-RLPK-42



### Saint Memory Card Game

**\$3.95** | M-RLSS-20



### Catholic Songs for Children

**\$12.00** | P-MU01-12 | CD  
**\$19.95** | P-MU01-21 | DVD



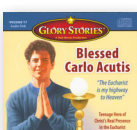
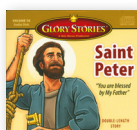
### Chem C1000 Beginner Chemistry Set

**62.95** | P-SCKT-32

### Glory Stories



**\$14.50** | INDIVIDUAL CDS  
**\$216.00** | 17 CDS | M-RLCD-20



**\$14.50** | ST. PETER | M-RLCD-36

**\$14.50** | BLESSED CARLO | M-RLCD-37



- 184 Different Cards
- Each card contains a short biography, statistics, and a brief catechism
- Inspire children to hear their personal call to holiness

## An Excellent, Fun Way to Learn About the Lives of the Saints!

### Holy Traders® Saints Trading Cards

- Each set comes in a hard plastic case
- 184 different cards
- Fantastic stocking stuffers

**\$59.25** | All Seven Sets & Activity Kit | M-RLXX-22

**\$44.25** | Set of 7 | M-RLXX-16

**\$7.46** | Individual sets



**25%  
OFF**



# Melissa & Doug®



## Magnetic Wooden Numbers & Alphabet

**Numbers:** Enough numerals to count from zero through twenty AND five math signs in a convenient wooden case. 37 colorful magnetic pieces.

**\$10.00** | P-MDPK-13

**Alphabet:** 52 brightly colored magnetic upper AND lowercase letters in a handy divided wooden case. Ideal for letter recognition, matching, and stenciling.

**\$10.00** | P-MDPK-14



## Cat Dog

## Play Money Set

With fifty of each denomination, this set includes familiar-looking paper bills and plastic coins in a handy wooden "cash drawer" box.

**\$17.00** | P-MD02-10



See more at:

## Alphabet Express Floor Puzzle

All aboard the Alphabet Train! Familiar objects are featured in each car to illustrate the letter, all pulled by a beautifully detailed engine! Ten feet long when assembled, 28 extra-thick cardboard pieces. It's easy-clean surface keeps puzzle looking new.

**\$12.00** | P-MDPK-18

## See & Spell

Complete a puzzle to spell a word, while developing a sight-reading vocabulary or use the letters for stenciling. Recommended for ages 4 and up. Contains small parts.

**\$17.00** | P-MD02-11



## Shape-Sorting Clock

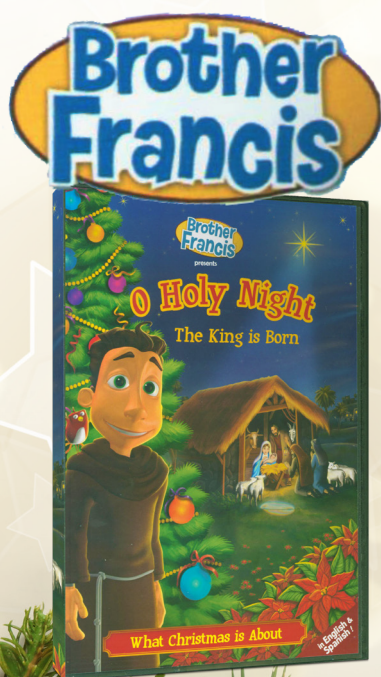
**\$13.00** | P-MDPK-42



## Pattern Blocks and Boards

**\$17.00** | P-MDPK-21

**AGES 3+**



See All  
14 Titles at  
[SetonBooks.com](http://SetonBooks.com)

**\$12.95 EACH**

**SAVE \$20.00**

Join Brother Francis and his friends as they inspire children in their Catholic faith.

This entertaining and instructive series features stories, visual examples, music and more!

**M-RLDV-70 | BROTHER FRANCIS 14 DVD SET | \$139.00**





## Life of a Saint

Their fascinating life stories will help children discover the great adventure of holiness. Hard cover. 32 pp. **Recommended for Grades Pre-K-4.**



- \$82.00 | Six Book Set | P-RD03-60**
- \$14.95 | Francis: The Poor Man of Assisi | P-RD03-61**
- \$14.95 | Peter: Apostle of Jesus | P-RD03-62**
- \$14.95 | St. Thérèse: The Little Flower of Lisieux | P-RD03-63**
- \$14.95 | Bernadette: The Little Girl from Lourdes | P-RD03-64**
- \$14.95 | John Mary Vianney: The Holy Cure of Ars | P-RD03-65**
- \$14.95 | Mother Teresa: The Smile of Calcutta | P-RD03-66**

## Saints for Boys and Girls Sticker Book

Each of these wonderful activity books for Catholic children feature 25 reusable, easy-peel stickers. Children can read the names and brief biographies of the Saints in the book and choose the stickers that fit in the appropriate spaces. They can also use these stickers to make holy cards, greeting cards, or to decorate their own books.



- \$12.00 | Saints for Boys and Girls Set | M-RLBK-E5**
- \$7.25 | Saints for Boys Sticker Book | M-RLBK-E6**
- \$7.25 | Saints for Girls Sticker Book | M-RLBK-E7**



## Mary Fabyan Windeatt Saint Biographies

Beautiful and detailed stories of the saints appropriate for **grades 4-8** but enjoyable for older readers as well. The whole family will enjoy reading these popular stories of the saints.

Entire 20-book set on sale for **\$149!** Save **\$78!** (individual pricing on [setonbooks.com](http://setonbooks.com))

- \$149.00 | Set of 20 | M-RDBK-30**

## Encounter the Saints: Saint Biographies



In the *Encounter the Saints* readers, children experience the challenges, heroism, and holiness of some of the greatest friends of God! Collect them all and meet the saints! These make great stocking stuffers for the young reader! See available titles at [SetonBooks.com](http://SetonBooks.com) **Grades 4 and up.**

- \$149.00 | Set of 22 | M-RDB4-09**
- \$8.50 | Individually**



## Vision Books: Saint Biographies

The Vision Books are one of the most popular and well-written series of saints' lives ever produced for young people. **Recommended for Grades 4-8.**

Entire 24-book set on sale for **\$170!** Save **\$70!** (Sold individually \$10 each)

- \$170.00 | Set of 24 | M-RDST-02**
- \$10.00 | Individually**



## The Adventures of Nick and Sam



Easy-to-read series with simple vocabulary and large print. Perfect read-aloud experiences. Great way to talk to kids about the Faith. **Recommended for Grades 3-6.** 129-167 pp.

**\$49.00 | Set of 6 | P-RD04-70**

**\$8.95 | Individually**

## Gospel Time Trekkers



Perfect for Christmas! In Volume One, meet three siblings as they travel through time and find the stable where Jesus was born.

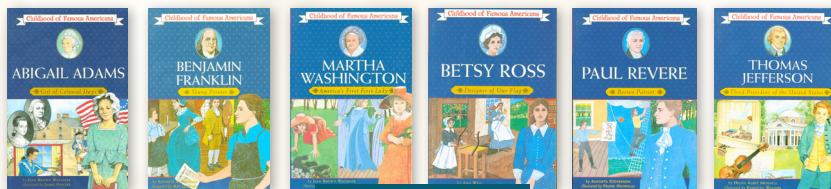
True to Biblical culture and scholarship, *Time Trekkers* are bound to become treasured additions to your family library! **Recommended for Grade K-5.** 70-80 pp.

**\$35.95 | Set of 6 | P-RD03-50**

**\$6.45 | Individually**

## Childhood of Famous Americans

Lively, inspiring, fictionalized biographies sweep kids into the early lives of these great Americans. 192 pp each. **Recommended for Grades 3-6.**



### Founders Set

**\$19.95 | Frontier Adventurer 3 Book Set | M-RDB5-40**

**\$26.95 | American President 4 Book Set | M-RDB5-20**

**\$39.95 | Founder 6 Book Set | M-RDB5-10**

## Young Adventurer's 5 Book Set

This *Young Adventurer's Set* is sure to keep your young reader turning pages! Hand-picked for their action and suspense, these novels give an authentic account of history, while teaching Christian virtues. **Recommended for Grade 6 and up.**



**\$59.00 | 5-Book Set | P-RD07-50**

**\$13.00 | Red Falcons of Tremoine | P-RD06-50**

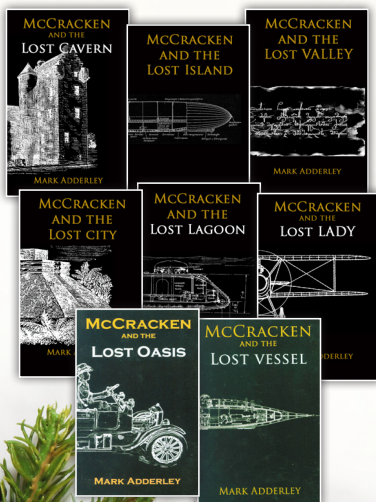
**\$13.00 | Big John's Secret | P-RD05-23**

**\$13.00 | The Reb and the Redcoats | P-RD07-23**

**\$14.00 | Enemy Brothers | P-RD08-22**

**\$13.00 | Son of Charlemagne | P-RD06-19**

## The McCracken Adventures - Eight Book Set



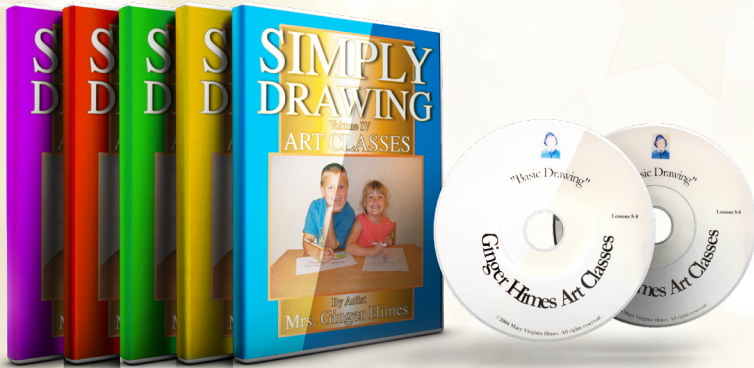
If you weren't aware of McCracken, you should know that he's been described as "Indiana Jones with a Rosary."

The McCracken books are written so that you can read each one as a stand-alone. But if you really want to read them in the order that they happen, this is the chronology: **Recommended for Grades 6-10.**

**\$99.00 | Eight Book Set | P-RD07-70**



## Simply Drawing Art DVDs for Grades K-4



### Homeschool Art Classes for Grades K - 4

**\$165.00 | SIMPLY DRAWING 5 VOLUME SET | M-ARDV-45**

**\$35 | Vol. 1 Shapes | M-ARDV-24**

**\$35 | Vol. 2 Freehand | M-ARDV-26**

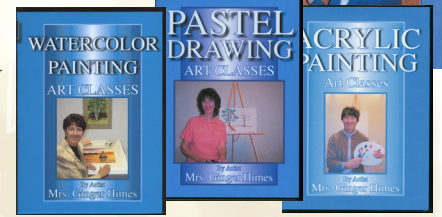
**\$35 | Vol. 3 Noah's Ark & Animals | M-ARDV-27**

**\$35 | Vol. 4 Life of Jesus | M-ARDV-29**

**\$35 | Vol. 5 Bible and Saints | M-RLCL-30**

## Art Classes for Grades 5 to Adult

**Basic Drawing:** learn prep before drawing, how to shade, highlight, blend, and create dimensions. Develop skills to draw and assemble various shapes and explore color techniques.



**\$35 | Basic Drawing DVD | M-ARDV-11**

**\$35 | Portrait Drawing DVD | M-ARDV-21**

**\$35 | Scenery Drawing DVD | M-ARDV-22**

**\$35 | Animal Drawing DVD | M-ARDV-23**

**\$35 | Pastel Drawing DVD | M-ARDV-25**

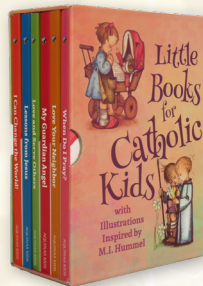
**\$35 | Acrylic Painting DVD | M-ARDV-28**

**\$35 | Watercolor Painting DVD | M-ARDV-31**

**\$35 | Water Mixable Oil Painting DVD | M-ARDV-32**

### Little Books for Catholic Kids

These delightful board books with illustrations inspired by Sister M.I. Hummel® feature life lessons for children, including when to pray, how to help others, being a good example, and more. Ideal for teaching moments. **Recommended for Grades Pre-K-3.**



**\$22.95 | Little Books for Catholic Kids | P-RDPK-40**



### Catholic Children's Treasure Box Sets 1 & 2

Presents a wonderful combination of fun and the Catholic Faith. Filled with stories, poems, games, things to do, and fun things to make. Charming full-color illustrations. **Grades K-2.** Each 32 pp.

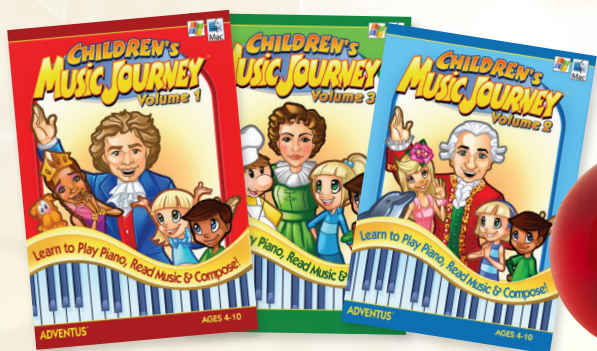
**\$75.00 | 20 Book Sets | M-RDBK-45**



**SAVE \$7.00**



# ADVENTUS™



## Children's Music Journey (3 Vol. Series)

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

By the end of the 3 volumes, children are tuned into music, sight-reading, playing comfortably, and ready for more.

**\$239.95 | 3 Volume Set with Manuals | P-MUMJ-09**

**\$89.95 | Volume 1 Set | P-MUMJ-11**

**AGES  
4-10**

## Piano Suite Premier

Designed to follow the *Children's Music Journey* series and for students of all ages with no piano background, the Piano Suite Home Study Program is motivating, effective, and fun! Set includes Software and Manual. **Ages 10 to Adult.**

**\$109.95 | P-MUPS-11**



## MIDI Piano Keyboard

Easy to use 49-key USB Piano Keyboard - Turn your computer (PC or Mac) into a music learning station. This synth-action USB MIDI piano keyboard makes playing and learning music on your computer simple.

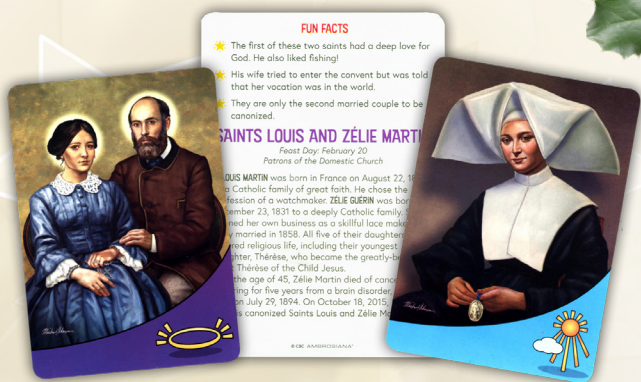
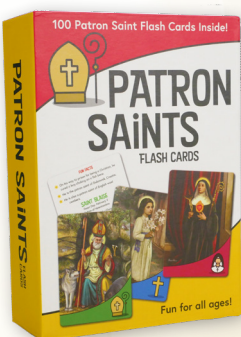
**\$109.00 | P-MUPS-31**



## Saint Flash Cards

A fun way to help disciples of all ages learn more about the Saints. Each full color card includes a short biography on the back and three "Fun Facts" prompts to help in the identification of each Saint. Cards come in a sturdy gift box.

**\$14.95 | Saint Flash Cards | M-RLBK-D7**



**100  
Full Color Cards!  
4 x 5.75 inch**

## Devout Decals

A great decoration for Children's Bedrooms or around the Family Altar! Helps foster love for our favorite saints and devotions. See all our titles at [SetonBooks.com](http://SetonBooks.com)!

- Removable, reusable
- For use on painted walls
- Vinyl and laminated to prevent fading



**\$24.95 | Sacred Heart & Immaculate Heart Set | M-RLCL-70**

**\$14.95 | Sacred Heart Set | M-RLCL-71**

**\$14.95 | Immaculate Heart Set | M-RLCL-72**

**\$14.95 | St. Michael Set | M-RLCL-80**

**\$14.95 | Guardian Angel Set | M-RLCL-82**

**\$9.95 | St. Joseph | M-RLCL-77**

**\$9.95 | St. Elizabeth Ann Seton | M-RLCL-78**

**\$9.95 | St. Thérèse of Lisieux | M-RLCL-84**

**\$9.95 | St. Anthony | M-RLCL-85**

**NEW!**





# Prayer Pillow Cases



**\$12.95 EACH**

Prayer Pillowcases are a delightful new way to learn Catholic prayers, remember to say prayers, begin and end each day with a prayerful heart!

- M-SSCP-11 **Guardian Angel**
- M-SSCP-12 **St. Michael**
- M-SSCP-13 **Act of Contrition**
- M-SSCP-14 **Mysteries of the Rosary**
- M-SSCP-18 **Hail Mary**

## Nativity Magnet and Sticker Sets

These nativity magnet and sticker sets are great fun for kids of all ages to learn about the birth of our Savior. Each magnet set comes on a lift out sheet and includes 11 pieces for recreating a full nativity scene. The sticker sheets have 16 separate images. They make great stocking stuffers or Christmas gifts!



- \$2.95** | **Nativity Magnet Set** | M-RLCH-44
- \$1.50** | **Nativity Sticker Sheet** | M-RLCH-45
- \$5.00** | **Nativity Sticker Sheet 5 Pack** | M-RLCH-46



- \$1.95** | **Nativity Stable Christmas Auto Magnet** | M-RLCH-43

## Flexible Saint Magnets



This **Saint Magnet Assortment** capture the imaginations as they teach Saints to the children. Each pack of magnets features 10 different Saints, and there are two of each Saint in each set. These magnets are fun, educational, and spiritual.

Each Flexible Magnet is 2-1/4 x 3."

- \$6.95** | **Flexible Saint Magnets** | M-RLSS-21

## S.H.S.S. Knit Beanie with Cuff



**\$5.95**  
M-SSAC-06

# Homeschool Spirit Wear

## Seton T-Shirts

"Seton Home Study School Est. 1982" T-Shirts  
Also available Class of 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024

**\$12.99 Each**



**Draw String Tote bag**

**\$7.99**  
M-SSBA-03

**Canvas bag**



**\$14.99**  
M-SSBA-02





# Alumni Profile: Br. Edmund Maria, F.S.S.R.



Holy Apostles  
College & Seminary

Fifteen years ago I began my junior year at Seton Home Study School, resolving to manage my time better than the year before. Living on a 36-acre farm just outside Kansas City, I was the eldest of six children of the DeMoss family and a full-time Seton student from kindergarten onward (I still find myself humming catechism songs from Seton's cassette for Kindergarten Religion.)

As I began my junior year, little did I realize that fifteen years later I would be a professed monk of the Sons of the Most Holy Redeemer, a missionary-monastic Congregation in the spirit of St. Alphonsus de Liguori and St. Columba of Iona. Nor did I realize that I would be living on a monastic island off the north coast of Scotland and beginning my second year of philosophy with Holy Apostles College and Seminary.

Holy Apostles has provided the Congregation with an excellent opportunity to provide in-house seminary studies, enabling me and my confreres to prepare for priestly ordination while continuing to live the monastic horarium.

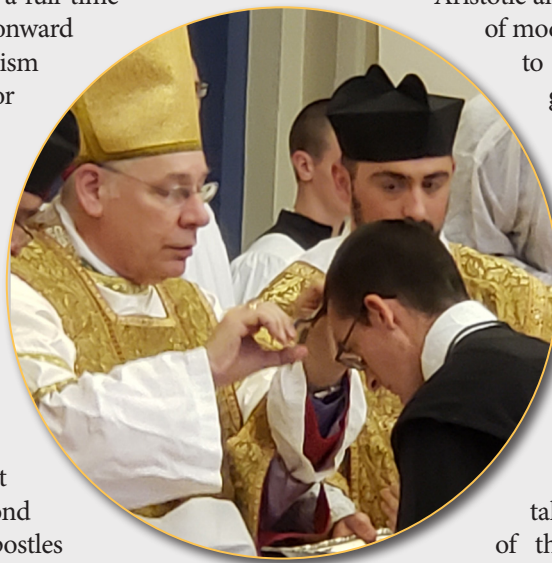
In my final year of studies with Seton, I was first exposed to philosophy by a very short but informative first chapter of Anne Carroll's book *Following Christ in the World*, introducing me to Parmenides, Heraclitus, Aristotle, being and change, substance and accident. I found it fascinating, and I have found philosophy fascinating ever since.

Now at Holy Apostles I am really enjoying wrestling with the challenging philosophical questions that come up in courses such as Ethics, Philosophy of Nature, and Metaphysics. I greatly appreciate Holy Apostles' emphasis on the teachings of Aristotle and St. Thomas while also raising awareness of modern philosophy and issues with it. Thanks to Seton's rigorous writing and English grammar courses, writing discussion posts and papers at Holy Apostles has been a breeze, enabling me to focus on seminary studies.

The flexibility of studying with Holy Apostles has allowed me to continue participating in the common prayers of the monastery. I have begun gaining experience in the apostolate by broadcasting notices and devotions on the Transalpine Redemptorists live stream mission on YouTube. I also enjoy taking an active part in the manual labor of the monastery – maintenance, farming, repairing machinery, cooking...you name it!

***In the family photo are my parents, my five younger siblings, three of their spouses, and my five nieces and nephews. All of my siblings were also homeschooled using the Seton program. I received my clerical tonsure at the hands of His Excellency Bishop Robert Finn on September 24, 2021.***

Devotedly,  
Br. Edmund Maria, F.S.S.R.  
Seton Home Study School graduate – Class of 2009







Holy Apostles  
College & Seminary

# Aspire Higher at Holy Apostles College & Seminary

BY JACQUELINE REISS

**H**oly Apostles College & Seminary, located in Cromwell, CT, was founded by Very Rev. Eusebe Menard, O.F.M. in 1956 as a seminary for “late” vocations. Since that time, we have been recognized nationally and internationally for our fidelity to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church and for our academic excellence as a Newman Guide “Recommended College.”

All of our faculty make a profession of faith and take an oath of fidelity. It is our mission to form faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ through the promotion and accompaniment of youths and adults to the priesthood, and other ministries and apostolates within the Church.

Our convenient 100% online learning environment attracts lay and religious students for its flexibility and affordability. The program is fully accredited, and students receive the same rigorous Catholic liberal arts education, and extracurricular opportunities, as our on-campus students.

With six unique majors that encourage students to relentlessly

pursue the truth, a liberal arts education at Holy Apostles also develops and refines key competencies associated with career readiness (critical thinking/problem solving, clear communication, collaboration, personal motivation, and a strong work ethic).

## *Flexible and Affordable*

Through asynchronous engagement, students enjoy the unsurpassed flexibility to study on their own time and from anywhere in the world. Many students utilize this convenience to work while in college or pursue a personal passion such as starting their own business or traveling. The 15-week summer semester is an option that allows students to study year-round and graduate early!

Holy Apostles recognizes that financial burdens hold many back, not only from higher education, but also from pursuing their vocations after college. Our tuition is therefore one of the most affordable in the country, because we believe it is in the best interest of each student, as well as that of the Church, to provide a debt-free or low-debt education.

The student body is very diverse at Holy Apostles. You will find classmates from all over the country and the world; cradle Catholics, reverts, converts, and non-Catholics alike all seeking





the Truth; lay students, seminarians, religious brothers and sisters, priests, first-time undergraduates, transfers, and non-traditional students.

In the words of our Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Andrew Blaski, "It is a small sampling of the diversity found within all of the many members of the Mystical Body of Christ. It is in and through Christ that the diversity we see around us finds its unity." United in Christ, we each seek to faithfully follow Him where He leads!

## Dual Enrollment Option

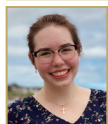
Besides our Undergraduate degrees, we also offer additional programs for students. Our Take Credit! dual-enrollment program is especially attractive since it allows high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school. Take Credit! students can enroll in select undergraduate courses and they also receive a tuition discount.

Transfer students are welcome at Holy Apostles and we seek to make the process as straightforward as possible.

The Personal Interest program is another for students to enroll in courses at Holy Apostles and then matriculate into a degree program here or transfer to another institution.

The Undergraduate Admissions Office at Holy Apostles serves both our freshman and transfer applicants, as well as those applying to our Take Credit! and Personal Interest programs. We review applicants holistically, recognizing that each student at Holy Apostles is on a unique journey on the road to Christian perfection.

To learn more about Holy Apostles, our academic programs, and admissions requirements, we welcome you to visit our website at [www.HolyApostles.edu](http://www.HolyApostles.edu). We would love to hear from you by phone or email as well. Aspire higher at Holy Apostles College & Seminary!



**Jacqueline Reiss** is the Director of Undergraduate Admissions at Holy Apostles College & Seminary where she also earned her degree in English. A proud homeschool alumna, she enjoys discovering new coffee shops and ice cream parlors and deep conversations especially about the Catholic faith.



## Get a Head Start on College!

The Take Credit! Program at Holy Apostles College & Seminary is a dual-enrollment honors program available to current high school and homeschool juniors and seniors. The program provides the opportunity to earn college credit before high school graduation.

## Advantages of the Take Credit! Program

- Graduate from college sooner
- Affordable tuition at a faithful Catholic college
- Credits earned can be transferred to Holy Apostles or another college or university

*See the Holy Apostles' Take Credit! Admissions page for details and deadlines.*



**Michael Wnek**

Hi! I'm Michael Wnek, a Seton Home Study School senior. I have been taking classes through Holy Apostles' Take Credit! Program for a semester and a half.

I've found the Take Credit! courses interesting, carefully planned, and full of amazing resources. The courses can add more information to the work you have completed with Seton and give you a head start and a taste of what will be taught in college.

Based on my experience, the workload, though rigorous when added to regular high school courses, can help you learn how to manage your time most wisely and better prepare you for college.

I strongly recommend the program to high school juniors and seniors looking to earn college credit (and of course gain extra knowledge) before college.

# Take Credit! Program



**Holy Apostles**  
College & Seminary





## Ask the Experts:

### What are You Grateful for?

*Three Veteran Homeschooling Moms Share Their Experience*

#### *Be an Example of Thankfulness*



***“When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude.” - G.K. Chesterton***

Life is filled with many blessings. We live in a free country with a roof over our heads, food in the pantry, shoes on our feet, and freedom to worship where we choose.

We should be thinking constantly of how very blessed we are, but how often does that happen? Do you find yourself complaining about doing the laundry instead of being grateful there are clothes to wash? Do I grumble about having to cook dinner rather than thank God that there is food?

A countenance of thankfulness not only has the power to change our households, but it also has the power to change the world. A grateful, thankful world. Consider the possibilities.

As parents we should strive to make our entire lives a testament of thanks. We have been abundantly blessed with

children and the ability to keep them home and guide them in the way they should go. We have been blessed by the foresight of our founder Dr. Mary Kay Clark and her colleagues in providing us the means to give our children a truly Catholic education.

***“To be grateful is to recognize the love of God in everything.”***  
- Thomas Merton

When we take moments throughout the day to recognize these blessings and praise God for his kindness, the difficulties of the day are instantly diminished.

In the spirit of the season, I asked our expert Seton moms to reflect on what they are grateful for. I invite you to spend some time in the coming days to deeply, prayerfully reflect on thankfulness and to thank God for your blessings. We at Seton thank Him each day for each of you.



## Grateful for God's Gifts



*"The secret of happiness is to live moment by moment and to thank God for what He is sending us every day in His goodness."*  
- St. Gianna Beretta Molla

To say the last eighteen months have been difficult would surely be the understatement of the millennium. Life is changed, perhaps never to be the same again. There seems to be nothing but hurt and pain and suffering and death and change and anger all around us. Still, as Scripture and the saints tell us, there should always be gratitude in our hearts.

I am grateful my family is still together, I am grateful I have always homeschooled my children, so there was no disruption on that front at all. I am grateful my husband got a new job recently, and I am still able to stay home with my children. My oldest two were confirmed during this pandemic, and one chose the saint whose quote appears at the beginning of this piece.

## Guided with Love



As a Christian, when times go crazy, I think that can give us an opportunity to look for what is right, peaceful, and good. As parents, we have raised our children to be surrounded by what is good, true, and beautiful, and in this crazy time in history that we find ourselves, I think those things have become even more evident.

Our family is blessed to live in a diocese that is filled with devout priests and laity and led by a solid bishop. Not much has been affected in the sphere of spiritual life in our community, and I am so grateful for that, because in trying times, faith is what will see us through.

## Grateful for Prayer



I've been thankful for prayer for many years, but these crazy days have deepened my appreciation for the open channels of communication between Jesus, Our Lady, the saints, and my family. I don't know how anyone could survive this turbulence without a daily prayer regimen.

Prayer stabilizes me when I feel unsteady. It inspires me when I am unclear. It brings me peace when strife erupts. If I had only one piece of advice to offer fellow homeschoolers, it would be to make praying as a family THE priority every day.

Even if praying together means starting schoolwork a little later than planned, even if it means praying through a hundred distractions, even if it requires Herculean patience and sacrifice, just pray and don't give up. Start the day with prayer. End the day with prayer.

God's mercies are new every morning, and it was WONDERFUL to help them prepare for this once-in-a-lifetime sacrament and have such joy in such a time of uncertainty. I am profoundly grateful to be able to go to Holy Mass once again, and worship with my church family.

*"As Scripture and the saints tell us, there should always be gratitude in our hearts."*

Through all the sorrow and storms, He has been here, and inviting my family to keep our eyes on Him, not the horizon. I have never been particularly good at this, as I like control, and I like to know what's coming next. For the chance to be utterly helpless and have to sit and TRUST, I am profoundly grateful.

**Kristin Brown, Virginia**

I'm also grateful for a husband who has led his family with strength, truth, and grace, and has not succumbed to the fear that is being propagated recently. He has been a fine example to our six sons and two daughters of how a man should act during adversity.

*"In trying times, Faith is what sees us through."*

I could probably write a book on all the things I am thankful for in these crazy days, since everything is a gift from God, whether it is pleasing or not. His hand guides us with love.

**Susan Brock, Virginia**

Teach your children to pray through dryness, restlessness, joy and pain. Additionally, remember to offer prayers of thanksgiving because gratitude unlocks hardened hearts.

*"We know how to pray, and for that we can all be deeply grateful!"*

These crazy days are likely to get crazier. Access to the sacraments could be restricted for some. There may be a real temptation to fear or question. However, we already have the answer to all life's ills.

As Catholics, as parents, as homeschoolers, we're already familiar with the remedy that enables us to live through trying times and come out the other side victorious. We know how to pray and for that we can all be deeply grateful!

**Tara Brelinsky, North Carolina**





# Resetting the Scales: Balancing School and Life

**ONE** of the temptations of being a driven student is to over-emphasize the importance of academics to the exclusion or detriment of just about everything else in life.

Certainly not every student has this tendency. For some it's quite the opposite—getting such a student to sit down and study can be akin to pulling teeth. As a homeschooling parent who went only to public and private school all his life, academic motivation for my children in response to complaints can frequently be summarized with the statement, “You just don’t know how good you got it, getting to learn at home and all.”

But whether one's student is motivated to learn or not, one way I have consistently found to help create the right attitude or space for learning is this: get out in nature, ideally with your family, and hike.

I realize this isn't totally doable for everyone and poses numerous challenges, but it is a solution. And no, I am not a “wild schooler,” but I do think that most students will benefit from a little more personal connection with nature and the outdoors in their lives, particularly as it relates to learning.

I am not alone in this thinking. French Dominican A.J. Sertillanges, writing in the 1920s, penned a work akin to a manifesto regarding learning and how he thought the life of an academic should be structured. This book, entitled *The Intellectual Life* and currently published by Catholic University Press, covers everything from “The Virtues of the Catholic Intellectual” to the importance of hygiene and the training of memory.

“Live as much as possible in the open air,” he writes. “Every day you should take exercise. Remember the saying of an



English doctor: "Those who do not find time to take exercise must find time to be ill." Physical exertion outdoors and frequent walks, he relates, will bring clarity to the mind, fill the lungs, and increase your attention to detail in academic work.

## A Clearer Mind

Some years ago I donned a heavy pack and discovered for myself the fruits of Sertillanges' wisdom. I began walking every day down my country lane. The first couple of days were a bit of an adjustment. My motivation was high, and I garnered some strange looks from my neighbors (and still do, although perhaps for other reasons).

In addition to gaining strength, I found how after a time of walking robustly outdoors, the mind naturally clears. It easily finds new perspective and refreshment. Attitude changes. And the things that were once considered important or dire are more easily put into their proper place.

All of this is a long way of saying that regular outdoor exertion chills us out, and it is healthy for both parents and students to be outside to work and play. Modern education in brick-and-mortar schools entirely neglects this reality and fosters the exact opposite paradigm. For example, schools frequently give elementary students a single recess for 20-25 minutes after sugaring them up with absolute junk and then expects them to sit still at their classroom desk and somehow learn. This is foolish, a recipe for academic and personal disaster, not academic and personal success.

Homeschooling fixes this scenario by providing parents with the space and flexibility to make the best decisions about the personal needs of each of their children, rather than plugging that child into a broken system that does not work effectively for every student. As homeschooling parents we can arrange the schedule as needed to create more time for learning or more time for nature and by extension, play.

The mind, while important to cultivate, is not the only part of a student's life. Parents should absolutely not feel that they are doing their children a disservice by allowing them to bounce around outside or by fostering time for them to enjoy the freedom of the outdoors and "live in the open air."

In fact, as homeschooling parents, if we want to teach by example, we need to live by example and should make time to do the same.



**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.



# STAFF SERIES

*A chat with those  
who serve you!*

## Theresa English, Academic Counselor

Theresa English hails from Lancaster, Pennsylvania and is the oldest of nine children. She attended parochial school, homeschool, and boarding school, graduating from Mount de Sales Academy in Baltimore, MD. She earned a BA in political philosophy from Thomas More College, New Hampshire. She returns to New England every year, preferably in the fall.

After working a series of jobs and volunteering with refugees for a few years, she earned her Master's degree in applied linguistics and a TESOL certificate from the University of Pittsburgh, preparing to teach English as a Second Language to adults. Instead, providentially, she landed in Front Royal, teaching middle schoolers at Virginia International Academy.



When the pandemic closed that institution, she moved down the street to Seton Home Study, which was facing enormous increases in enrollment and needed extra help. "I lost one job due to the pandemic," Theresa says, laughing, "and I found another job due to the pandemic."

Today, Theresa counsels elementary students, assists with grading and high school guidance, works on various projects including the introduction of new books for student book reports, and advises parents on numerous issues regarding their children's academic progress.

Theresa pointed out the importance of Seton students sending in their assignments as quickly as possible for grading and feedback. When asked what she most enjoys about her work at Seton, Theresa mentioned the variety of assignments and her wonderful co-workers. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with people, traveling, gardening, and making greeting cards.





# Fostering the Spiritual Health of Our Children

BY JOHN CLARK

**In** the past two years, significant attention has been paid to protecting our physical health. In response to the marked increase in depression, much has also been written about mental well-being.

Yet little consideration has been paid to spiritual health. In fact, spiritual needs are viewed by portions of society as subservient—if not altogether worthless—in relation to physical and mental ones. As the heads of our families, however, we fathers must foster the spiritual health of our sons and daughters.

Fundamentally, spiritual health requires the state of sanctifying grace. No soul in the state of sin could be deemed healthy; that soul is not even registering a spiritual pulse. Yet even the soul in that state can and should—in fact, it is imperative that he must—have hope. Because Jesus instituted a cure that is 100% effective: the sacrament of Penance.

Regardless of the magnitude and number of his or her mortal sins, there is not a single soul on planet Earth who cannot be cured with a good sacramental confession. God's mercy is an ocean, and the sacrament of Penance is high tide.

On this note, it is imperative that parents regularly take their children to Confession. Once a month is often recommended, but parents must also drive their children to Confession—readily, happily, and unquestioningly—any time their children ask. A child's desire to go to Confession (unless there is an underlying scrupulosity problem) is a powerful sign that he or she is receptive to actual grace. Pro tip: follow up Confession with a trip to Chick-Fil-A and/or a game of catch in your backyard.

## A Simple Formula

Spiritual health, however, must go beyond the basic requirement of sanctifying grace. The state of grace is not the finish line of sanctity but rather the starting gate.

From a Catholic perspective, the vague term “spiritual health” is sometimes more concretely expressed as the “interior life.” Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange explains the interior life as the “conversation which, everyone has with himself as soon as he is alone.” A person's interior life is very revealing because, as Garrigou-Lagrange explains, “man converses interiorly with himself about what preoccupies him most.”





You can learn a lot by asking yourself that question: What preoccupies my thoughts? Remember that we're not talking about fleeting thoughts here. In their spare moments, even many saints in Heaven probably thought about how they could putt a golf ball more accurately, or had similar earthly cares. The interior life is about the insistent preoccupations of the mind. If our mind is a city, what neighborhoods do we keep returning to? Is it the vice of fear or the virtue of hope? Is it meaningful things or trifles? Is it to gain more material things or how to increase the extrinsic glory of God?

It becomes obvious that while all of us have an interior life, not all of us have a healthy one.

This prompts the question: how can we fathers foster a healthy interior life for our children? How can we ensure that they remain in the safe neighborhoods of the mind?

The answer is that we must encourage our children to have a conversation with God. Father Reginald explains, "As soon as a man seriously seeks truth and goodness, this intimate conversation with himself tends to become conversation with God. Little by little, instead of seeking himself in everything, instead of tending...to make himself a center, man tends to seek God in everything, and to substitute for egoism, love of God and of souls in Him. This constitutes the interior life."

## ***We Must Encourage Our Children to Have a Conversation with God.***

We fathers must inspire our children to carry on a lifelong conversation with God. Of course, that begins with first having our own conversation with God. It is to have a conversation of love in an elevation of ourselves to God. It is to have "mental prayer," which as Garrigou-Lagrange writes, is a "gaze of love." This is not metaphorical. We must speak to God in our quiet moments. What's more, we must actively and daily seek those quiet moments for conversation with God.

At present, our children live in a world that is terribly fearful. But Jesus has assured us that He has not only overcome the world, but will speak with us as we make our way through it. That conversation should make us brave, just as it made the Psalmist brave: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me." It is impossible to simultaneously converse with God and fear evil. If we fathers can nourish our children in a conversation with God, they will have something that goes well beyond spiritual health. They will have an interior life.



**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*.



### ***Rita Completes Six-Week Run of The Sound of Music***

Homeschooling gave Rita the freedom to pursue her love of music and theater.



### ***1st Place in Showmanship Goes to Adeline***

Adeline wins 1st place at the Calaveras County Fair and Jumping Frog Jubilee.

**Submit your photo, your achievement, and how  
homeschooling has helped you succeed!**

[setonmagazine.com/students](https://setonmagazine.com/students)



# First Day of School! 2021



The Kelly Family



The Palmer Family



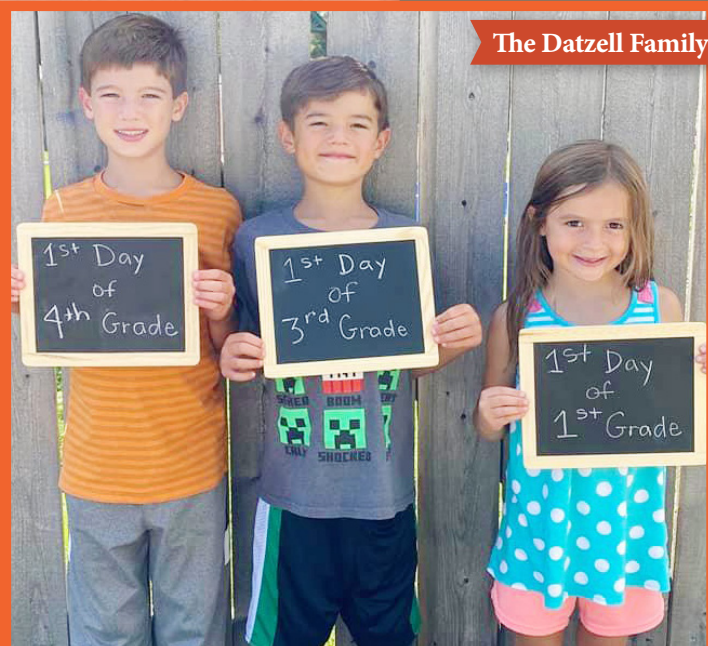
The Lopes Family



The Jimenez Family



The Datzell Family



The Croom Family



The Jalbert Family



The McGuire Family



Thank you to the generous families  
who have shared their  
“First Day of School” photos with us!

Find more First Day of School photos at  
[www.setonmagazine.com](http://www.setonmagazine.com), and  
at Seton’s Facebook pages!



# in the **Schoolroom**

## Peg Dolls For Saint Lucy's Day December 13



Peg dolls are a fun and popular way for children to commemorate saint days. In my house we have a large collection of these little people, built up over the years and much treasured. Even a very young child can be given a peg doll and some paints or markers and allowed to paint to their heart's content.

The tradition of young girls dressing in white robes or dresses tied with a red sash on St. Lucy's day is largely a Scandinavian one. The white dress symbolizes St. Lucy's purity and the red sash her martyrdom. Her crown of candles symbolizes the coming light of the world, Jesus Christ. Even her name, Lucy (or Lucia) means light.

Boys might be more interested in painting Star Boy, a traditional part of the Saint Lucy's Day celebration. Legend has it that a young boy named Staffan was the stable hand of King Herod on the night of the Nativity. When he saw the large burning star in the sky, he declared that a King greater than Herod was coming. Herod's soldiers stoned the boy before beginning the slaughter of the Holy Innocents. Traditionally, Staffan, or Star Boy, leads Saint Lucy and the three kings on the Epiphany Procession. Star Boy wears a cone hat and carries a star.

### FOR THIS PROJECT YOU WILL NEED:

- 3 ½ inch unfinished wooden peg dolls (available at craft stores)
- White, red, gold and yellow paint or paint pens
- White felt scrap or white card stock
- Black Sharpie marker
- Red Sharpie marker

Various decorations such as star stickers, lollipop sticks, Christmas pine, glitter. This can be as involved or as simple as your child would like.

1. For small children it might be less frustrating for mom to draw a simple face with the Sharpie markers on the peg doll. For the little ones keep the project simple.
2. Paint the body white and the hair yellow. Allow to dry.
3. Pencil in arms over the dried white paint.
4. For Saint Lucy draw a red sash using the marker.
5. For Star Boy put a star sticker on his tunic. Or paint a star using the yellow or gold paint.
6. Using either the felt or card stock cut out a cone shape for Star Boy's hat. Glue to his head.
7. Decorate the crown with stars, glitter, and bits of greenery. We made candles from a cut up lollipop stick.



**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 number of books. She is the editor of the *Seton Magazine* and also a contributor to *The Long Island Catholic*.



EARLY CHRISTIAN MARTYR

# ST. LUCY

PATRON SAINT OF THE EYES

Feast Day: December 13

Relying on Your goodness,  
O God, we humbly ask You,  
through the intercession  
of Saint Lucy, Virgin and  
Martyr, to give perfect  
vision to our eyes, that they  
may serve for Your greater  
honor and glory.

Saint Lucy, hear our prayers  
and obtain our petitions.

Amen.





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See inside for **CHRISTMAS SPECIALS**

*Veni ad Salvandum Nos!*  
**Come to Save Us!**

*This is how Christ is invoked in an ancient liturgical antiphon: "O Emmanuel, our king and lawgiver, hope and salvation of the peoples: come to save us, O Lord our God". Veni ad salvandum nos! Come to save us!*

*This is the cry raised by men and women in every age, who sense that by themselves they cannot prevail over difficulties and dangers. They need to put their hands in a greater and stronger hand, a hand which reaches out to them from on high.*

*Dear brothers and sisters, this hand is Christ, born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary. He is the hand that God extends to humanity, to draw us out of the mire of sin and to set us firmly on rock, the secure rock of his Truth and his Love (cf. Ps 40:2).*

**Pope Benedict XVI**  
*Christmas Message, Urbi et Orbi*  
25 December 2011



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