

Seton MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church SETONMAGAZINE.COM | SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021

Should We Continue to Homeschool?

The Pitchford
Family
Pg 16



A Gift To The World: OUR GRADUATING SENIORS

BY JEFF MINICK
Pg 8

Why is Grammar so Difficult?

Theresa English - pg 14

Classical by Design - Benedictine College

Megan Fassero - pg 20

The Key to Successful Classroom Management

Nick Marmalejo - pg 24

A Diploma in Lifetime Learning

Laura Fusto - pg 28

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Dr. Mary Kay Clark

EDITORS

Mary Ellen Barrett
Kevin Clark

MARKETING DIRECTOR

Jim Shanley

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Robin Hibl

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Mary Ellen Barrett
Tara Brelinsky
Susan Brock
Kristin Brown
John Clark
Theresa English
Megan Fassero
Laura Fusto
Nick Marmalejo
Jeff Minick
Tammy Pitchford
Emily Prause
Luke Seymour

COVER PHOTO

The Pitchford Family

ADDRESS

Seton Home Study School
1350 Progress Dr.
Front Royal, VA 22630

CONTACT INFO

Phone: (540) 636-9990
Fax: (540) 636-1602
info@setonhome.org
www.setonhome.org
www.setonmagazine.com

SETON EMAILS

CUSTOMER SERVICE
custserv@setonhome.org

COUNSELORS
counselors@setonhome.org

ADMISSIONS
admissions@setonhome.org

GRADING
grading@setonhome.org

GENERAL INFORMATION
info@setonhome.org

MY SETON
myseton@setonhome.org

STANDARDIZED TESTING
testing@setonhome.org

SPECIAL SERVICES
SSDept@setonhome.org

SUBSCRIPTION INFO:

Subscription is included with your enrollment. Subscription price for non-enrolled families is \$15 per year or \$25 for two years.



Dear Readers,

Twenty-six years ago, as a nervous new mother I took my newborn to the pediatrician for a well visit. He cried and fussed and was unhappy with the whole thing. As an (overly) emotional new mother, I too cried because my baby was unhappy. My mother gently explained to me that from now on I would often have to see my own child be unhappy to ensure his well being or safety. They were unwelcome but very wise words.

Disciplining a child often falls into that category. We want our children to be happy, so we try to make all their days enjoyable and the workload light for them, but it does not serve them well to think that work is easy and should be fun.

For this reason, some features in this issue focus on discipline. It can be difficult to insist that work be done in a timely and correct manner, to set consequences and oversee them, always feeling like the bad guy, but it is a necessary part of parenting. For children to grow into responsible, hard-working, devoutly faithful adults, good habits and discipline are essential.

My favorite feature in this issue, and honestly, it's my favorite every year, is the graduation spread. This year presented so many challenges, coordinating around so many ever-changing restrictions, but the Seton Staff managed to do it and it was a joyful, wonderful day. We had over 130 graduates join us from all over the Continental United States and Puerto Rico!

Congratulations to the classes of 2020 and 2021!

Blessings,

Mary Ellen Barrett

Mary Ellen Barrett

SETON PHONE DIRECTORY

SETON HOME STUDY SCHOOL
540-636-9990

SETON EDUCATIONAL MEDIA
540-636-9996

STANDARDIZED TESTING
540-636-1250

ADMISSIONS
540-636-9990, ext. 1

GENERAL COUNSELING
540-622-5526
Cecilia Sauer

ELEMENTARY COUNSELING
540-636-1429
Cecilia Sauer

Christina Nutt
Theresa English
Laura Clark

Heather Hibl
Laura Fusto

ELEMENTARY GRADING
540-622-5569
Jacinta Black

TRANSCRIPTS, RECORDS, &
EXTENSIONS
540-636-1324
Joseph Strickland

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION
540-635-4728
Deacon Gene McGuirk

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC
COUNSELING
540-635-4728
Deacon Gene McGuirk

HIGH SCHOOL COMPUTER
COURSES
540-622-5536
Kevin Clark

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH
540-622-5560
Sean O'Connor
MaryRita Gies

HIGH SCHOOL GRADING
540-622-5525
Rhonda Way

HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY,
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT &
GEOGRAPHY
540-692-7023
Aidan Callegari

540-622-5571
Bruce Clark

HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE,
COURSE APPROVAL,
INDEPENDENT STUDIES
540-636-2238
Nick Marmalejo

540-622-8478
Bob Wiesner

540-635-4728
Deacon Gene McGuirk

HIGH SCHOOL LATIN
540-692-7023
Aidan Callegari

HIGH SCHOOL MATH
540-622-5557
Tom Herlihy
Vasily Vasilyev
Manuel Vicente

HIGH SCHOOL RELIGION
540-692-7023
Aidan Callegari

540-622-8478
Bob Wiesner

540-635-4728
Deacon Gene McGuirk

HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE
540-622-5537
Manuel Vicente
Tom Herlihy (Physics)
Deacon Gene McGuirk

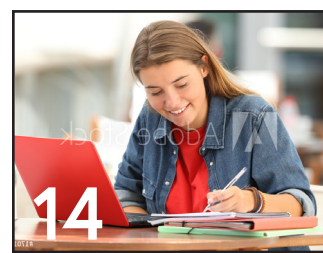
HIGH SCHOOL SPANISH
540-622-5537
Manuel Vicente

SPECIAL SERVICES
540-622-5576
Stephen Costanzo
Kathleen Hunt
Joshua Butek

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.

- 4** Congratulations Seton Graduates!
Dr. Mary Kay Clark
- 6** Questions and Answers
For Homeschooling Families
- 8** A Gift to the World: Our Graduating Seniors
Jeff Minick
- 10** Ask the Experts
Seton Panel of Moms on Discipline
- 12** 7 Tips to Get Your Seton Papers Returned Quickly
Jeff Minick
- 14** Why is Grammar So Difficult?
Theresa English
- 16** Should We Continue Homeschooling?
Tammy Pitchford
- 18** Building Saints: Importance and Practice of Obedience
Jeff Minick
- 20** Classical by Design - Benedictine College
Megan Fassero
- 22** Staff Profile: Bob Wiesner
High School Counselor
- 23** Student Profile:
Luke Seymour
- 24** The Key to Successful Classroom Management
Nick Marmalejo
- 26** Encouraging Perseverance
John Clark
- 27** Student Achievements
Briscoe & Marco
- 28** A Diploma in Lifetime Learning
Laura Fusto
- 30** In the Schoolroom
Mary Ellen Barrett
- 31** Saint Lorenzo Ruiz
Saint Poster by Emily Prause



THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL

“ Why Do We Homeschool?

*I enjoy the time with my children
and the ability to infuse our Catholic Faith
deeply in all that we do.*

*I am a psychologist in private practice,
and together with my husband we own
and run a martial arts school.*

Homeschooling makes it all possible!

The Kuhns Family - Laredo, TX

”

Congratulations Seton Graduates!



Seton Home Study School Class of 2020-2021



“*Congratulations Graduates!*

And congratulations to your parents!
They have worked so hard to help you succeed
in your academic lessons along with the
Catholic Faith.
May Jesus and His Blessed Mother bless
you students, you parents, and all your
family members.

*Dr. Mary Kay Clark
2021 Graduation Speech*

your Questions ANSWERED

FOR HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES

We just got our curriculum boxes. What do we do first?

First, go through your box with the packing list that came with it and make sure you have everything!

Some moms write the grade level in which the books are used on the book spine or cover – especially helpful with book report books!

Many families put the lesson plans in a binder, but see the next question for other ideas on what to do with them.

Finally, visit your MySeton account and take a look at the resources available for the various subjects in each grade. You can access your MySeton account from the top right-hand corner of the Seton website.

What's the best way to organize my Lesson Plans?

If you think you will be looking at the lesson plans frequently, as opposed to downloading and printing out personalized lesson plans, make sure they are in a nice, sturdy binder.

I suggest a large binder for the lesson plans and a smaller one for the answer keys. Color-code them by child, and you can tell at a glance which one you need.

A pocket folder for quarter report forms and tests, divided by quarter, will help too.

Some parents organize everything as they want and take it to a copy shop and have it spiral bound. It might cost around \$5-\$10 but it is easier to handle than the big binders. Some parents organize each subject separately in smaller binders, with lesson plans, tests, answer keys, all together by subject.

When do we start? When are the deadlines for turning in our work?

As to when you start and when you turn things in, that is entirely up to you! Seton lesson plans are scheduled to run for four 9-week quarters. However, it's up to you when you want to start, and if you want to stick with that 9 weeks, or if you want to double up some of the review work at the beginning, or take extra time to finish a quarter.

When you enroll, you have a full calendar year plus two months to finish – how you spend that time is up to you. Some moms do year-round school, taking short breaks between quarters; others get it done by working consistently, breaking only for holidays and vacations. Flexibility

is one of the main reasons many people begin homeschooling in the first place!

Do I need to rewrite the lesson plans for my children or give them my copy?

If you have young elementary students, you could write the page numbers of the books they had to do for each day in the *Teacher Plan Book*. If there are longer assignments, you might write something like “work on paragraph; see Lesson Plan week 5 day 1” and they will know to check their lesson plan binder.

The children can work with their planner and check things off as they finish them. When the column is all checked off, they are done!

If your students are older, you might want to use the automatic lesson plan generator. ***Details on the next page.***

That will give you printed lesson plans that you can highlight so your child knows what they need to do, and they can check it off after it is completed. This could work for 5th-8th graders. You can also generate a weekly lesson plan and do the same highlighting or you can edit it so that it only shows what they need to do.

HOW CAN I DECIDE BETWEEN TEACHING TEXTBOOKS AND SAXON MATH?

This is a question we get often, and understandably so! The two programs are actually quite different. Seton has been using the Saxon math program for grades 6 and up for many years. However, last year, because the book became more difficult to come by, the curriculum and math departments at Seton chose to make Teaching Textbooks their new default Math course for grades 6 and up. However, if you have the Saxon book you may still choose Saxon.

Which one to choose is up to you and your family's learning style. The Saxon program is done with a textbook, and the Teaching Textbooks program is done on a computer.

There is also a big difference in philosophy between the two programs. The Saxon books have many small easy lessons—the student learns one small thing at a time, and then practices that and what was taught before it. It is called an incremental approach.

Teaching Textbooks has a more traditional mastery approach—the student studies multiplication, for example, then moves on to another concept. Of course there are periodic reviews of previously learned concepts.

TT is online with the concepts taught through animations and voice-overs. When a problem is presented to students, they input the answer online, and it tells them

immediately if their answer is right or wrong. If wrong, it gives them another opportunity to try. This immediate feedback helps reinforce the concepts leading to greater understanding. TT is done on the computer, but once downloaded, you don't have to be online to use it.

Saxon does offer the opportunity to purchase additional CDs to help explain the lessons, but these do not have the same level of interaction that the TT software has. Both programs have optional parent-graded tests (in TT, it's actually graded by the program). There are also required Seton-graded tests to be turned in.



Why I Love Seton's Online Printable Lesson Plans

Over the course of 25 years we have enrolled our nine children with Seton Home Study School, with five graduates. That tells you we are big fans of the excellent curriculum Seton provides.

I would encourage you, if you are not using this feature already, to take a peek and maybe just try it this year, and see what you think. They are simple and easy to use.

- **Go** to your **MySeton** page, click on the COURSES tab, and then on the PRINT LESSON PLANS tab.
- **On** the Daily Lesson Plan Creator, you can choose to print either weekly plans or daily — just click on the tab you would prefer.
- **Select** the courses to be printed (and the week you would like), select 'Create Lesson Plans'
- **You** can edit and customize the plans for each student before you print.

Check it out at and see how they might help you this new school year!

Cheryl Hernandez, Dade City, FL

Editor's Note: See more about printable lesson plans at:
www.setonmagazine.com/printablelessonplans

CONSIDERING CHANGING MATH PROGRAMS?

The following are equivalent courses:

Teaching Textbooks	Saxon Math
Math 6	Math 65
Math 7	Math 76
Pre-Algebra	Math 87 or Alg. 1/2
Algebra 1	Algebra 1
Algebra 2	Algebra 2



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



Belmont Abbey
COLLEGE



BENEDICTINE
COLLEGE



CHRISTENDOM
COLLEGE



JOHN PAUL THE GREAT
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY
OF STEUBENVILLE



MAGDALEN COLLEGE
OF THE LIBERAL ARTS



THOMAS AQUINAS
COLLEGE



OUR LADY
SEAT OF WISDOM
COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY
OF DALLAS



WALSH
UNIVERSITY
A Catholic University of Distinction



Holy Apostles
College & Seminary

setonhome.org/colleges



A Gift To The World: OUR GRADUATING SENIORS

BY JEFF MINICK

No rain, temps in the 70s, pony rides and bounce houses for the young ones, boxes of cheese and veggie pizzas, popcorn, lots of juices, sodas, and Italian ices. Add scores of proud parents, their kids playing Frisbee football and cornhole, and a boatload of graduating seniors from the classes of 2020 and 2021, and you have a picture of the grounds of the Seton Home Study School on the first Friday in July.

130 young people from 35 states and Puerto Rico gathered that weekend to receive their diplomas for their years of hard work and study. Among them were Joshua Arriola of New Jersey, off to college to earn a degree in computers; **Rose Sulik** of Connecticut, who will enroll in a computer-aided drafting design program for building houses; **Carly Richards** of Kiln, Mississippi, who won three scholarships to enroll in the theater program at Rollins College; and **Christina Colombo**, who is following her sister and Seton graduate Isabella to Long Island's Hofstra College, where she intends to major in classics and Italian.

FIELD OF DREAMS

Over the years, I have covered several graduations for the *Seton Magazine*, and listening to young people talk about their hopes and aspirations always fills me with enormous joy. This year, for example, I learned that **Rachel Swasso** plans to apprentice herself to an artist in the Diocese of Tyler in Texas, where she will acquire the basics of traditional religious painting. **Erin McLaughlin** wants to major in history at Christendom College and then study in Europe, and her long-time friend, **Mary Rose Berquist**, will attend Thomas Aquinas College and hopes to pursue a religious vocation with the Sisters of Life. **Nate Bracy** told me he'll be studying liberal arts at Thomas Aquinas College in Massachusetts with an eye toward becoming a software engineer.

The "Commencement Exercises Program" I have at hand lists the accomplishments and future ambitions of other graduates. Leilani Kathe, who currently lives outside of Boone, North Carolina, hopes to become a professional midwife. Johanna Jaracz is taking EMT courses and is already a volunteer firefighter and first responder. Elise Viles is off to the United States Air Force Academy, and Sean Connacher has earned seven certificates from the National Institute for Metalworking Skill and hopes to find work as a machinist. Other students plan to earn degrees in everything from electronic engineering to business, to enter the trades, or to work in the Church.

And when I asked the graduates I interviewed the same question, "In what ways did the Seton program help you prepare for your future?" almost all of them answered, as did **Carly Richards**, "It made me self-motivated and an independent learner." **Christina Colombo** gave a second popular answer to my question, mentioning that she qualified for Latin III as a first-year student at Hofstra because of "Seton's rigorous training."



THE BIG DAY

By early afternoon on Saturday, these seniors, their family members and friends, and many on the Seton staff had gathered for the graduation ceremony at Skyline High School near Front Royal. The graduates were soon decked out in blue and gold mortarboards, gowns, tassels, and stoles. After a brief practice in an adjoining room, the graduates marched into the gymnasium to Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance," and then joined their families.

Father Daniel Gee of Front Royal's St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church delivered the invocation, followed by "Welcoming Remarks" from Seton Board member Mary Ellen Barrett. She led the audience in applauding the moms and dads who had "prayed and toiled" for these students, and because it was Independence Day weekend, she then asked veterans and first responders to stand and be recognized. She also graciously thanked Skyline High School for allowing this ceremony, mentioning that this was the first large indoor event at the school since March 2020, when COVID-19 restrictions came into play.

THE SPEAKERS

Next up to the podium were Seton students **Maude Cloutier** of Ohio and **William Caffey** of Texas. Originally from Canada's Quebec province, Cloutier spoke of her early struggles to learn English while she studied with Seton and how the freedom given her by homeschooling had allowed her to become an accomplished classical violinist. Caffey described how his parents had refused to allow him to be aborted because of supposed disabilities, briefly told the story of his family's conversion, and urged his fellow graduates to follow the mottos of the US Marine Corps special operations units: "Always faithful—always forward" and "Today will be different."

Seton's founder and director, Dr. Mary Kay Clark, next addressed the audience. She reminded students to remember all those who had helped them in their educational journey: their parents and mentors, the saints, Mary and Jesus. She stressed the importance of daily Mass and prayer, particularly the Rosary, and ended her address by having everyone rise and join her in singing "Immaculate Mary."

Dr. Ray Guarendi, author and radio and television host, then took the microphone. With his customary blend of humor and truth, he reminded the graduates to "give up the self-esteem" so prevalent in our culture and to practice humility. "The God of the universe says you are infinitely valuable," he told the graduates, "and



you don't need the self-esteem promoted by society." He also asked them to "be unoffendable," meaning that most of the supposed offenses touted by individuals and by our culture are bogus. "Treat the people closest to you with kindness" was the third main point of his address.

To the cheers and applause of the audience, the graduates then received their diplomas from Dr. Clark, followed by Deacon Raphael Goldsmith's moving Benediction. Families then left the gymnasium to take pictures of their graduates in a special area set up in the lobby or to partake of the shrimp, sandwiches, barbeque, and other treats provided by a local outfit, Downtown Catering.

PERSONAL TAKEAWAYS

This graduation touched me more deeply than usual. Like others around the world, Seton families had lived through a pandemic for the last 16 months. Whatever our politics, whether we were living in the United States, Canada, the Philippines, or elsewhere, most of us would agree that the last months of pandemic and other chaotic events have been tough on a lot of people.

Yet the young people I met this weekend and, I am certain, those Seton students who couldn't attend graduation in person, provide an antidote to the pessimism, cynicism, and doubt of our present age, a tonic against the despair that sometimes seems endemic in our modern world.

With their faith, their knowledge, and their dreams, these teens deliver hope and the promise of better things to a fallen world.



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.





Ask the Experts:

How Do You Discipline Your Child?

Four Veteran Homeschooling Moms Share Their Experience

Raising Competent, Confident Children



I look back on the decades raising my twelve kids with great joy and satisfaction, remembering our happy home life. We had an occasional show of temper, a little back talk from time to time, and some slacking off, but day-to-day life was marked by good humor, lively sibling banter, laughter, and sincere affection. My kids were respectful to adults, worked hard, and accomplished much. What was our secret?

“Everyone Chips in and Helps”

The funny thing is there was no secret. Dad and I had grown up at a time when these things were expected—just usual. We did not read books or search for enlightened ideas of parenting, we just did what generation of parents, many with just grade school educations, had done before us. Here are a few ideas.

First, we have a simple schedule that is set in stone. Wake up, breakfast, school time, breaks, lunch, play time, and supper all occur on a schedule. The kitchen is closed all other times, so don't ask. And bedtime is non-negotiable.

Second, everyone chips in and helps. With every job. In times past, little kids helped haul wood and water, cared for livestock, and labored in the fields. It is not too much to expect them to make their beds, put their laundry away, and run the vacuum.

There is no reason they cannot follow a recipe and make a meal every so often. Before they leave your home, your children should be competent at every task both inside and outside the house.

Third (could be fourth, fifth and sixth, too!) do not argue with your children! Do not explain your reasoning for every tiny rule or request. That is exhausting for both parent and child.

These rules fostered virtues, including a strong work ethic and self-control, which in turn produced competent adults who were confident in their own abilities. I feel our efforts are being rewarded as I see my kids raise their own children much the same way.

Ginny Seuffert, Chicago, IL

Teach Them Well and Often



One important thing to remember is discipline means “to teach,” not “to punish.” This is an important distinction and mindset when dealing with children. We always want to treat others, including our kids, the way Christ deals with us.

I went to my kids (ages 15, 13, 11, 9, and 7) and asked them what has worked in teaching them, what didn’t, what they have learned. Here is what they said:

1. It helped when I modeled the behavior I was expecting.

It was much easier to follow my lead than it was to acquiesce to my orders. They see me pray my rosary, exercise, make them dinner every day.

2. Build rapport. No one likes a drill sergeant, and our children are not (yet) in the military. Relationships are key to your child understanding that you come from a place of love, even when they can’t see or understand it.

“Hold them Accountable with Logical Consequences.”

3. Teach them well and often. My kids understood from the time they could stand up that they were a needed, loved, and vital part of the family. I would have toddlers “help” me switch the laundry, or give them a child-size broom. I taught them how to do the chores I wanted them to do, I taught them how to study. I communicated clearly what I expect from them, and I asked questions to make sure they understand.

4. Hold them accountable with logical consequences. We once had an issue where a child skipped a subject for several weeks, and I somehow missed it. The child lost all outside play time and screens until the work was completed.

5. Acknowledge the effort, even when it is not perfect. They will mess up. My family is far from perfect. Every day we adjust and reorganize and try again. But I want my kids to say, “I messed up. I need to go to mom and dad so they can help me right my ship.” Not, “I messed up. I need to hide as long as possible because mom and dad will kill me.”

Kristin Brown, Virginia

Behaviors Have Real Consequences



Having well-disciplined children means raising children who can manage their actions and reactions, follow rules and fulfill responsibilities. Well-disciplined children make homeschooling easier and family life, generally, a more pleasant endeavor.

Of course, even well-disciplined children have bad days, but the difference is that they understand their poor choices and know that behaviors have real consequences. I cannot count the number of times doctors, nurses, receptionists, waitresses, and strangers have complimented our family because our children are able to sit patiently, speak kindly, act courteously, and eat without creating a mess or a drama.

Children who are given set responsibilities and specific expectations know their parameters. My children have assigned daily chores. They know mealtimes are not catering events and good table manners are required. They understand that Mass and adoration are times for quietly sitting still.

Having clear consequences which are consistently enforced means children have the freedom to either follow the rules or accept the punishment. In our house, screen time comes only after chores have been done and schoolwork is complete, dessert follows a fully eaten dinner, and playdates and parties depend on cooperation.

“Mealtimes are not Catering Events and Good Table Manners are Required.”

My children know they are free to balk at the spinach on their plate, shove a sibling, fuss in church, or speak rudely, but they most often prefer the benefits of behaving well, as opposed to the punishments for not.

Additionally, well-disciplined children grow up to be self-motivated students, hard-working employees, and responsible adults, who understand choices always have positive and negative consequences and they have the power to choose accordingly.

Tara Brelinsky, North Carolina

“Well-disciplined Children
Make Homeschooling Easier.”

7 Tips To Get Your Seton Papers Returned Quickly

BY JEFF MINICK



Carol Little, whose official title at Seton is Coursework Coordinator, receives those tests and papers physically mailed to Seton by students and parents. She then distributes these hard-copy tests to the appropriate graders, records the assigned grades when they are returned, and mails the tests and the results back to the families.

When Carol began working at Seton 22 years ago, she joined a staff of four others charged with this task. Because of such innovations as online testing, she is now the sole member of the staff in charge of this work.

In a recent interview, she offered these tips to make this process of submissions flow smoothly and to enhance student learning and win them higher grades.

7 Tips for Speedier Service

1. Include Your Student's Name and Number

When mailing in quarter report forms, put the student name and student number—the complete number—on the forms. The same holds true on any student tests that ask for the student's name and number. Failure to do so makes it difficult to track down the student.

2. Send the Quarter Report Form (QRF)

Please be sure you send in the quarter report form with the student's work. When that form is missing, it slows down the recording of grades.

3. Record the Parent Grades

If you are mailing your materials to Seton and want the parent-graded tests calculated in your student's grade, be sure to record them on your QRF.

4. Do Not Send Parent-Graded Tests

Regarding this same topic, parents should not send parent-graded material to Seton. If sending in paper tests, remember to write the parent grade on the QRF.

5. Check the Handwriting

Be sure that the student's test answers are clear and legible. Graders sometimes have trouble discerning answers even on multiple-choice tests because of faint handwriting.

6. Send the Original with Redo Tests

When the student takes a "redo," meaning retaking a test to improve scores, be sure to send both the quarter report form and the original test back with the retaken test. We need the original to record your new grade and "redone" material.

7. Send Quarterly Tests A.S.A.P

Finally, if you submit your tests by mail, you can help your students by sending in the material to be graded by Seton every quarter.

When you send multiple quarters in at the same time, students don't receive timely feedback. They continue to make the same mistakes throughout the rest of the semester. Subjects like math and Latin are particularly dependent on incremental learning, adding bits of knowledge over time.

An example: the first-year Latin student who holds on to her tests throughout the entire year before sending them to Seton for grading has failed to grasp the use of noun cases in her first quarter. Consequently, on the subsequent tests her scores are low because she keeps repeating the same mistakes. Had she sent her first quarter tests back when the test was taken, a grader would have alerted her to her errors.

Seton wants all of its students to excel in their studies. Follow these suggestions, and you'll avoid delays and extra expenditures and help your children achieve academic success!

Ask the Experts: ...Continued



Model Good Habits



Is having disciplined children important to you?

Well, the apple never falls far from the tree.

Having disciplined children first calls for disciplined parents. Anytime I have wanted to work on something I see lacking in my children, I must first look at myself.

After twenty-four plus years of motherhood, I hope I have at least improved myself to the point that my children have a clear image of what a disciplined person should be. I have learned that being on a schedule has helped with discipline.

When things are done at a certain time—wake up—prayers—Mass—school—activities—mealtimes—bedtimes—then the expectations of what the kids should be doing at certain times of the day is clear.

Also, we review habits, and virtues, and where each child can improve if necessary. And I always try to praise my children when they do things well so that they know what is expected of them.

Susan Brock, Charlotte, NC

Why is Grammar So Difficult?

And Why Should I Bother?

It seems that many people approach grammar believing that it will be easy. After all, if I speak English, don't I already know grammar?

This question reveals a misunderstanding of what grammar is. Living on Earth doesn't imply a knowledge of geology. Driving a car doesn't imply mechanical knowledge. Having a body doesn't imply knowledge of anatomy. And speaking English does not imply a knowledge of grammar.

Yet, since we humans are bodily creatures, we know something of anatomy. We know the external parts of our body. We know the names of our major organs. We may know the common names for some of our bones. We know which muscle is a bicep and how to flex it. But we had to learn these things.

Similarly, because we speak English, we know some grammar. We usually know how to match subjects and verbs. We know that adjectives come before nouns. We may even know the names of the parts of speech. We learned these things, even though we may not remember doing so.

So, yes, we approach the study of grammar with some knowledge of it, just as we approach the study of anatomy with some knowledge of it. However, as anyone confronted with a minutely labeled image of the muscular system can tell you, having a body has in no way prepared them for the level of knowledge the discipline demands.

In the same way, as many of those encountering grammar have discovered, speaking English does not prepare one for the level of knowledge that the study of grammar entails. Grammar is difficult because, like anatomy, it's a demanding field.

What is Grammar?

Grammar, like anatomy, is the study of structure, in this case, the structure of language. In science, structure facilitates function. For example, I have opposable thumbs (structure) so that I can grasp things (function). I have different types of joints (structure) so that I can move in the ways that I need to (function). The structure of language, grammar, exists so that we can perform the function of communicating.

Note that a defect in anatomical structure leads to difficulty functioning. Let's say I was born without a thumb. Using my hands to grasp becomes much harder and some tasks may be impossible. This can be compared to a sentence with some minor grammatical errors. It may be understood, but understanding is impeded.

Now let's say I was born without hands at all. The difficulty of grasping things has drastically increased. In fact, I have to resort to using other, less well-suited parts of my body to take hold of things. Similarly, an ungrammatical sentence fails to convey meaning. This can happen, for example, when we are learning foreign languages. Because we do not yet know the grammar, to explain ourselves we may have to resort to gestures and facial expressions, which can only take us so far. It can also happen when we attempt formal writing.

Because we do not have a command of grammar, we struggle to express ourselves clearly and sometimes fail entirely. In both anatomy and grammar, lack of structure leads to a breakdown of function.

Remember, structure → function.

The Function of Grammatical Structure is Communication

Can we communicate without an advanced knowledge of grammar? Of course. Communication can occur without language at all. Animals communicate. Babies communicate. But we are neither animals nor babies. We are men and women training the next generation to be men and women. We adults communicate via an extremely complex system of sounds called language. Language has a breadth, depth, height, and extension that animal communication does not.

For example, animals cannot communicate across time, but written human language allows us to do this. Scripture is accessible to us because of this trait of human language.

While our writing is not likely to perdure through millennia as Scripture has, the proper language that we learn through writing can communicate beauty and goodness and truth, the eternal, to others. When we communicate at this level, we fulfill the highest purpose of language. This communication is not possible without grammar.

The world is a garden intended by humans to cultivate. Language is the special province of men and women that we are called to develop. We cannot all be Shakespeare or Hardy or Donne, but we can improve, growing in our grammatical knowledge and ability, moving from where we stand into the depths of eternal poetry and praise.



Theresa English holds a B.A. in Political Philosophy from Thomas More College and an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Pittsburgh. She enjoys spending time with her numerous siblings, nieces, and nephews and has been known to diagram sentences and peruse the dictionary in her spare time.





BY TAMMY PITCHFORD

Should We Continue Homeschooling?

I love when the Seton books come for the new school year. After 15 years, it never gets old. How I love the smell of the brand new books with fresh ink and crisp pages to flip through.

I adjust the lesson plans each year and add fun and exciting things to do for the year. Everyone is excited and fall is in the air. I try to hold that excitement in them. Everything is off to a great start—then BANG! Life happens!

When “Life Happens!”

I believe God wanted us to homeschool. Our oldest son almost died as a baby. He couldn't be around sick people. We “accidentally” found out about Seton. By the way, I don't believe in accidents. I remember praying every night the Sacred Heart of Jesus Novena for him. I would look at the picture of Jesus in that novena and beg Him to help my son. I remember one day seeing something about homeschooling on

an adoption website. I decided to search the web, and Seton popped up, and somewhere I saw that same picture I had been praying with. I knew it was an answer to my prayer.

Many homeschooling moms wonder every day, did I do enough? We might not have checked off the history test box for the day, or we skipped spelling because the baby kept crying. We will do that tomorrow. How many times have we said that? We have to be easy on ourselves.

Instead of judging yourself on what you didn't get done today, mentally take note of what you HAVE done. Remember the breakfast, lunch, supper, laundry, cleaning, dishes, etc.? That is half of your day right there! Have fun, pray, and love each other!

Do something good for someone that needs help or is sick. Fit the subjects around all of that. Don't be so hard on yourself. I treated lesson plans like a must in the beginning. I have learned to adjust them. Take out the lessons they aren't getting anything out of and have them go to the library and pick out something else to learn.



All of my kids found something fun to learn and to love. You can do it. You are trying to get them to Heaven. Never give up. Tuck them in at night, pray with them, and hug them tight.

Smooth Beginning, but then...

The beginning of every school year starts out so smoothly, but suddenly things get turned upside down. One day, I received a call that my husband was in a terrible accident at work. For two months I couldn't homeschool. I thought God was telling me to stop. Somehow we caught up.

Over the years, we lost three babies, which was heartbreaking. Somehow we caught up.

Something always happens.

My son was in ICU once for severe pneumonia, and I had a newborn at home. No school again for two months. God is telling me to stop, right? All of those days piling up, and the boxes aren't getting checked off. But, guess what? The other boxes were: compassion, religion, and prayer boxes.

Last spring, the kids and I would try to pray the rosary in the afternoon. My kids kept commenting that I was messing up the Hail Mary prayer a lot. I didn't notice it, so I just went on. One morning, I lost the ability to talk. It came back.

Fast forward six months and I had a full-blown stroke in my 40s. My "homeschooled" kids went for help. They were "accidentally" home. If they were at public school, I would have lain there with my baby for eight hours until they got home. I don't believe in accidents.

Again, God is telling me not to homeschool, right? How could I homeschool while paralyzed on the left side of my body?

Seven months later, I am writing this. Since that day, I know what is most important in life.

I thank God I can walk and use my arm again, even though it is harder now. I ordered our new books for the fall and have been working on lesson plans. I like to get an early start so I can enjoy the summer with the kids. So, I got to smell those new books again!

This year school will be different for us. I am grateful for Seton's flexibility! We are going to do quite a few alternative things to keep it fun. Life is so short, it can be taken at any moment. I want our days to be ones my kids are going to remember.

During this time, my kids learned about turning to God in prayer with acceptance of losing Mom as she had been while being by her side through it all and encouraging her.

They were taught the power of prayer from family, church members, and the Catholic Harbor prayer line who prayed together when my life was on the line. They saw the compassion of people who dropped off meals at the door during COVID.

The Real Focus of Every Lesson

I see how blessed I am because over all of these years of homeschooling with Seton, GOD has been the focus of every lesson in our days. My heart swelled when I heard that my kids and parents were praying the rosary as I was being rushed to the hospital. I believe, with all of my heart, that God hears the little ones. Guess what? No amount of science, history, or handwriting could have taught them that. Fill those in when you can. It's love that counts.

When bad things happen, it seems like it would be easier to let someone else teach your children, but my kids told me they are so grateful they get to be with family every day.

Seeing what I have seen now, I know it can be done. You can ALL do it! Just remember, when you put your good-smelling books on your shelf this year, life is going to happen. It happens to us all. But life is where the learning is.



Building Saints: The Importance and Practice of Obedience

BY JEFF MINICK



This is the moment of the school day you dread. You open the Saxon Math book, read through the lesson with 8-year-old Johnny, and then tell him to solve problems 1-15. You're helping the other children with their schoolwork, but every time you glance at Johnny, there he sits, pencil in hand, paper unmarked, staring into space.

You remind him again to do his math, and he writes down a math problem or two on the paper, but then returns to his thousand-yard stare.

How do we instill enthusiastic cooperation in our children and win their obedience?

14-year-old Jennie dislikes writing as much as Johnny does math. She spends more time complaining about why she has to

write this composition that's due at the end of the week than she does working on it, yet she obeys every command from her soccer coach without any sign of resistance.

How do we address these scenarios? How do we instill enthusiastic cooperation in our children and win their obedience when we instruct them to complete a math lesson or finish their paper on *The Bronze Bow*?

The Unfashionable Word...

Obedience is an unfashionable word in our permissive culture, sometimes arousing unease even among the faithful.

An example: whenever that line from Ephesians 5 is read during Mass about wives being subject to their husbands, some congregants shift uncomfortably in the pews, even though Saint Paul's follow-up injunction, that husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the Church, is far more demanding.

It's a Virtue

Among some homeschooling parents, obedience may likewise seem freighted with some heavy cargo. They sometimes find it tough to act as both parent and teacher.

A child in a brick-and-mortar school clearly distinguishes between parent and teacher, but that line is erased for homeschoolers. The 11-year-old who willingly sets the table for supper whines daily about her spelling lesson, something she'd never do in a classroom outside of the home.

But there are ways we can enhance obedience in our children, and chief among these is to first recognize that it is a virtue. In *Character Building*, David Isaacs devotes an entire chapter to obedience, contending that "obedience is not a virtue designed for small children, it is not meant to make life easier for parents. It is a virtue—like all virtues—for one's whole life."

Of all people, Christians should understand obedience as a virtue. After all, Scripture tells us again and again to obey the laws of God.

Justice & Punishment

As Isaacs points out, there is a close correlation between obedience and justice. He explains that as the children grow into adolescence, parents need to explain to them the idea of rightful and moral authority, the need to listen to that authority and carry out its wishes, and the avoidance of a morally corrupt authority.

And if parents must use punishment to enforce obedience, Isaacs believes they should try to ensure such measures will have "positive educational results." He frowns on corporal punishment and even on penalties like "grounding" or other restrictions. Instead, he recommends "it is better to explain, or insist firmly" on reasons for obedience.

Here many of us might disagree. A six-year-old may not fully understand such an explanation, and a disobedient 16-year-old who took the car to the store without permission may close his ears to insistence, firm or not. But if we do punish our children, we should do so prudently and judiciously.

Over the years, I've heard moms make threats that they don't enforce—"If you do that again, you aren't watching television for a week." Incomprehensible threats, like telling a 4-year-old that if he doesn't eat his lunch he can't have ice cream after supper, are also ineffective.

Obedience is a virtue—like all virtues—for one's whole life.

Consistency is also a vital part to this exercise in justice. Mom and Dad need to see eye-to-eye on age-appropriate punishment, and when it involves disobedience, the child must know there will be consequences.

But there are other means by which parents can bring obedience and discipline to their homeschool classes.

Routine

Years ago, when my wife and I were vendors at Catholic homeschool book fairs, parents new to homeschooling often asked for advice about achieving success.

My first response never varied: "Start school at the same time every day." I'd explain that the day might fall apart—some medical emergency, a visit from a relative, an impromptu invitation to join a homeschooling friend at the park—but always try to begin school at the same time every morning.

Children like routine, and a fixed time for breakfast, chores, schoolwork, and daily Mass if your schedule allows. They understand what we expect of them, and so are obedient to the rhythm of the day. If for several years you start school at 9 a.m., the children will be ready to commence at that time. If you do math just before lunch every day, they will obediently open their books when told.

Routine secretly instills discipline and positive compliance in our children.

Incentives

For younger children, some promise of future rewards acts as an incentive to complete their academic studies and to willingly follow Mom's directives. If Johnny knows he can join his buddies at the park after lunch if he first finishes his schoolwork, he will probably work harder at his lessons, including his math. If Jennie understands she must complete her work, including that composition, to join her teammates on the soccer team, she may push herself to get the job done on time.

By the time they enter high school, most homeschool students have grasped the idea of delayed gratification, recognizing that their academic work is preparing them for college, the military, or the work force. Gentle reminders of those goals from time to time will often help keep them on the right track.

A Bond of Love and Respect

Obedience to a duly constituted and rightful authority—in this case, a parent—is a two-way street of love. Parents warn or advise their children out of love for them and to keep them from harm's way; their children in turn recognize this intention, respect it, and try their best to comply with these wishes.

As David Isaacs concludes, "One has to reason with children so they see that they ought to obey because their parents and other authorities have the right to be obeyed. Then they will be able to obey out of love and out of a deep sense of duty."



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.



Chair of the Architecture Department John Haigh reviews the handiwork (pictured below) of Benedictine College junior Luke Seymour.



Classical by Design:

Benedictine's Architecture Program

Espouses Timeless Ideals

By Megan Fassero, Homeschool Outreach Coordinator

Benedictine College
is proud to be a
Seton College Partner!



It may seem ironic that one of Benedictine College's newest majors, the Bachelor of Arts in Architecture, is housed in the oldest building on campus. Added to Benedictine's list of 50 undergraduate majors in 2016, the classical architecture program is built on a timeless foundation: that the ideals of the true, good, and beautiful hold a place of prominence in the art of designing and building for the sake of living well in family-based communities.

"As we began exploring architecture as a new program, we were increasingly struck with the way this field of study is such a natural fit for our mission," says Dr. Kimberly Shankman, Dean of the College. "We seek to educate within a community of faith and scholarship; architecture is the study of how to give concrete expression to the idea of community."

Benedictine's architecture students are prepared to pursue graduate studies or enter the workforce in roles ranging from landscape architecture to city planning and from interior design to historic preservation.

Real Skills for the Real World

With skills honed through Benedictine's liberal arts curriculum, these students are sought after by firms that "value employees who know how to think for themselves, and who tackle problems through the lens of a broad frame of references," according to John Haigh, Chair of the Architecture Department and Assistant Professor. "We take pride that all our architecture courses have been designed to integrate with a singular philosophy that is rooted in the Benedictine tradition and the general liberal arts education."

"Educating future architects who also study theology and philosophy as part of the college's liberal arts curriculum has the capability of producing architects who understand architecture's sacramental and revealing role in the formation of what people used to call the 'good life,'" explains Dr. Denis McNamara, associate professor and Executive Director of Benedictine College's Center for Beauty and Culture. "To let architecture be part of the beautification of the world, and draw people to God that way, that's a really special opportunity, and Benedictine is doing that."

Such a program is exceedingly rare.



Learn more about
Benedictine College's Architecture degree at:

<https://www.benedictine.edu/academics/degrees/architecture/index>

A 'One of a Kind' Program

"What Benedictine has is a classical liberal arts curriculum and a fully Catholic studio design program, which as far as I can tell is the only one in the world. Benedictine's program is the only one that has a 100% classical curriculum taught by people of faith," according to Dr. McNamara.

In addition to the college's general education requirements and courses in art, engineering, math and physics, Benedictine's architecture students are taught time-tested artistic skills and techniques such as drafting, rendering, painting, and drawing by hand.

According to Haigh, "While it's not quite so simple, I have been told by professional architects that all we must do is teach our students to sketch by hand and they will be head and shoulders above their peers. We do much more than that! And we do not discount the fact that the industry runs on the exchange of data and information transmitted electronically."

Haigh continues, "We want our students to be able to think outside the box, literally, and judiciously approach the tools of technology. A hand sketch on a jobsite or in a meeting can save a client tens of hours of back-and-forth, and ultimately many thousands of dollars through the span of a project."

Benedictine's architecture program offers students local field study experiences, a four-week summer study abroad opportunity in Italy, a favorable faculty to student ratio, access to some of today's great figures of classical architecture, and a longstanding relationship with the Institute of Classical Architecture and Art.

And as it turns out, housing a classical architecture department in the oldest building on campus is a pretty good idea.

"Our studios are located in the dormered fifth floor of historic Bishop Finck Hall, one of the original abbey buildings dating to the nineteenth century. In some ways the building has too much character, but it is truly loveable and presents many learning opportunities for the students to compare differences in construction methods and design over the past two centuries. You can see all the structure, you can see the exposed brick, and you can get a sense of how buildings are actually made."

Megan Fassero is the Homeschool Outreach Coordinator for Benedictine College, a Seton College Partner and Newman Guide-recommended college in Atchison, Kansas. She can be reached at megan.fassero@benedictine.edu.



Visit Benedictine College Virtually!



BENEDICTINE
COLLEGE
ATCHISON, KANSAS

*Seton Home Study School Invites
Students and their Families
to Learn More about
Benedictine College on*

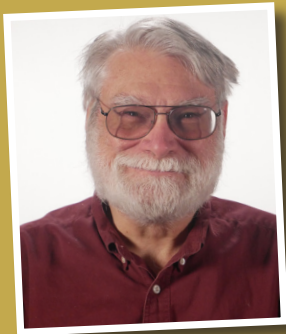
Tuesday, October 19 at 3 p.m. Central



You'll enjoy an overview of Benedictine College with an Admission Counselor, along with some helpful tips for preparing for college admission from Benedictine's Homeschool Outreach Coordinator, Megan Fassero.

REGISTER TODAY AT:

<https://apply.benedictine.edu/register/setonwebinar>



STAFF SERIES

*A chat with those
who serve you!*

Bob Wiesner, Guidance Counselor

“Some students call me and ask challenging questions. It means they’re thinking about things. Sometimes when I don’t know the answer, I even have to tell them I’ll look it up. These are the students who delve into the subject, which is essentially what we want them to do.”

So says Bob Wiesner when asked what he most enjoyed as an Academic Counselor at Seton.

Raised in Boulder, Colorado, Bob attended a Catholic grade school and a Jesuit high school in Denver. He entered Christendom College and graduated in 1981 with a degree in philosophy. Over the next decade, he worked a variety of jobs, including teaching and retail. He also attended seminary for three years with the idea of joining the Society of African Missions, returned to teaching and retail work, and eventually earned his master’s degree in theology from New York’s Maryknoll School of Theology.

The Road to Seton

In 1992, a friend, Rob Jones, who still works for Seton, mentioned to Ken Clark that Bob was job hunting, and he was hired as a grader. He quickly began handling a number of tasks—testing, college guidance, some work as a registrar—and eventually became an academic counselor. Today he advises high school students on their religion courses, grades papers, makes sure that students have the proper credits for graduation, and oversees the distribution of high school diplomas.

In addition to his work for Seton, Bob is active in his parish, Saints Joachim and Anna, a Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. He is one of the founders of the parish—the first meeting to discuss forming this church took place in his home. He remains a leader in the church, which Borys Gudziak, the Archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, has praised as one of the most active and vital parishes in his jurisdiction.

An Iconic Fellow

Bob is also an aficionado of icons. In his younger years he painted icons—“My hands can’t handle the brush anymore”—and today writes a regular column for *Inside The Vatican* about the history and art of this venerable craft. In addition, he is writing a pamphlet about the icons at Saints Joachim and Anna.

When asked what brought him the greatest satisfaction in his work at Seton, Bob returned to his earlier comments about students: “The kids who call up and are obviously thinking about things, who take their studies seriously and want to know more. That’s always a really good sign. It signals to me that this kid will actually do something with life.”



Student Profile: Luke Seymour

Seton Advanced Academic Diploma '19
Benedictine College Architecture Major '23

In addition to majoring in Classical Architecture, I am competing in varsity track and field. I am also a member of the Gregorian Fellows leadership program and the president of the college's Latin Mass Society.

Originally from Dallas, Texas, our family recently moved to Atchison, Kansas, to be closer to the college. My parents started homeschooling my two younger brothers and me with Seton when I was in fourth grade, and it was one of the most beneficial and life-changing decisions we have ever made.

When I first arrived on campus almost two years ago, it immediately struck me how similar college was to homeschooling, even though I was eight hours from home and there was an element of culture shock. The most important factor in this smooth transition was the fact that homeschooling allows for so much flexibility.

Mastering Your Schedule

As a homeschooled student, I was master of my own schedule. This flexibility allowed for many extracurriculars, such as travel, varsity sports, altar serving, cooking, and deepening my love of traditional architecture. College is very similar in this way.

Although you are working on a fixed schedule for the overall semester, you are the master of your day. You choose when to do homework and reading. You choose whether to give everything your A+ effort. You are the one held accountable for all your actions, and in this way, college life is very similar to homeschooling.

One thing that I love about Seton is the solid Catholic foundation it lays. Seton weaves the Faith into every aspect of its curriculum.

As a high schooler, I knew that I wanted to attend an authentically Catholic college, and this led me to the Newman Guide; however, my search was still somewhat vague.

In tenth grade, my search became much narrower when I started to seriously consider studying architecture. I knew that I wanted to study classical, traditional styles (specifically, I want to build churches), and the only schools that have exclusively classical architecture programs are Benedictine College and the University of Notre Dame.



When I visited Benedictine at the beginning of my senior year, the choice was made clear. Benedictine College is unapologetically Catholic from the leadership on down, and you can tell the professors really care.

It is such a special place where, like Seton's curriculum, the Faith is intermingled into every part of life, with processions, public rosaries, well-known Catholic speakers, and easy access to the Sacraments. There are even chapels in the residence halls!

Seton's rigorous curriculum also prepared me well for standardized tests such as the SAT and ACT, and I have made the President's List or Dean's List every semester so far in a very intense architecture program.

What I'd Like to Share...

First of all, work on developing good time management skills. As I said, in college, you are the master of your day, and while this is very freeing, it can also be stressful if you fall behind and very hard to make work up.

Secondly, appreciate the time you have with your family. Homeschooling allows you to develop close relationships with parents and siblings, and it is important not to take this for granted.

Third, develop a strong prayer life. When things get tough, it is important to remember that ultimately, God is in control.

Finally, have fun! Time really does fly, and it is important to hang on to every moment, because this is time you will never get back.

THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

BY NICK MARMALEJO



“Classroom Management” is the politically correct term educators give to maintaining actual student discipline within a conventional classroom. The subject forms its own large section of study within the field of education. My experience has been that the best educators are also excellent classroom managers. Frankly, those that can’t control a classroom don’t last as teachers.

For homeschooling parents, discipline and organization can be, depending on the student, a very difficult path to negotiate. Part of the reason for this is that, unlike students and teachers in a conventional classroom, children

“Discipline and organization can be a very difficult path to negotiate.”

and parents live in proximity. Children typically know the faults and failings of their parents better than most people, even if they do not realize it, and can find or conjure a myriad of excuses to avoid or refuse parental coaxing and direction.

Don’t ask me how I know.

The situation is even more difficult for parents if they have been historically weak in leading their child when it comes to discipline. How such a scenario can arise can be very understandable, but when it is recognized, it is time to rebalance and move forward accordingly.

A THREE-STEP STRATEGY TO STAY ON TRACK

Whether you are a veteran homeschool parent who knows the how and the when of educational motivation or a timid newcomer who recoils at the thought of being hard on your student, here is a 3-step strategy to set a new course, or strengthen the old one, for your review.

1. SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

The best leaders are the ones who, by word or by deed, set clear, consistent expectations for those in their charge. As parents, communicating clear expectations to your students creates accountability in the relationship between you and the students, the students and their work, and the students and their environment. These expectations need to be made known, sometimes more than once. The students need to acknowledge them at the start so that there is some agreement about what they are going to do.

Keep in mind that not all students need to be told the same thing in the same way. With a simple statement, some students instinctively know what to do, are self-motivated, and set about their work.

Others need further stipulations to help motivate them. Here is a quick example: “You don’t get computer time if you don’t do your work.” And yes, I believe in restricting all screen time, but that is perhaps another article for another day.

2. BE HELPFUL

Once clear expectations are communicated, it is important to help students meet those expectations, or at least, to not get in the way. Hovering over your child can be necessary at times, but it can also smother or hinder natural motivation. The art of education is knowing when you need to step in and direct, or to stay back and let students work out their difficulties on their own.

If it is a subject that is out of your league and the student needs help, then finding outside aid is the way to go. If this occurs within a Seton course, Seton has academic counselors (teachers) who can assist. They are only an email or phone call away, and Seton students should not feel any trepidation in reaching out.

Another aspect of being helpful is creating, inasmuch as possible, an environment within the home that is conducive to learning. A cool place for the pursuit of knowledge is ideal, a place to set the tone for educational goals and their importance.

However, for most of us, studying in a medieval library is unlikely. But, simply having a dedicated and pleasant space, one with a hardy table and free of unwanted distractions, will work just fine.

3. HOLD THE LINE

As parent-teachers, our job is to act in the best interest of our students, even if they don’t believe we are doing so. When expectations are communicated clearly and effectively and you have been as helpful as you know how, and the student is checking out, parental-teacher action is required.

The important point is to try and get to the bottom of the lack of progress. Is it too much screen time? Has there been a death in the family? Do the students feel they are being cheated out of the things that are most important to them?

Different situations call for different kinds of approaches. If it’s screens (or any other distraction), they need to go away. If it’s trauma, it needs to be addressed and maybe taking a break is in order. If it’s frustration, finding a compromise solution or re-arranging the schedule should be considered.

The fundamental principle is that correcting back to the line, to our initially communicated expectations, should be the goal. How we go about doing so is just as important as what we are trying to achieve, and our egos should not get in the way no matter how exasperated we may become.

SEEING IT THROUGH

Education is tough business. Those who devote themselves to education deal with the entire gamut of human experience, not just a small segment of knowledge. The mainstream jest that “Those who can, do; those who can’t, teach” was almost certainly coined by someone who never homeschooled.

Indeed, being a homeschooling parent is a sacrifice—a worthy one that requires courage and commitment to see it through. The above three-step strategy is but one way to help you stay on track when things get chaotic.

At Seton we are here to help you achieve your educational goals in both the turbulent and the settled moments of your educational journey.



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.

Encouraging Perseverance



We're in This Fight Together.

During the process of writing a new course for Seton called “Virtue-Based Leadership,” I have spent considerable time reading Aquinas’ *Treatise on Virtues*. In my research, I have come to appreciate the relationship between encouragement and the virtue of perseverance.

When we consider Cicero’s definition of perseverance as “the fixed and continued persistence in a well-considered purpose,” it becomes easy to see the essential role that this virtue plays in the spiritual life. In fact, we must pray not only for the grace for “fixed and continued” but for final perseverance—that is, perseverance in the state of sanctifying grace to the end of our lives.

Of course, being fallen creatures in a fallen world doesn’t make this easy.

The Devil’s Tools

Nor does it help that the devil hates us. Whereas Jesus was a carpenter and used tools to build, the devil uses tools to destroy. If temptations of lust don’t work, he’ll try gluttony. If the tools of gluttony don’t work, he’ll try greed. If that doesn’t get him anywhere, he’ll try anger and envy and sloth. And he’ll mix in a heavy dose of pride along the way. There are those souls who fall easily and eagerly; these are the souls who embrace sin even before the devil has time to unlatch his toolbox.

But then there are those valiant souls from whom the devil can expect a fight. Every. Single. Time.

Armed with grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, these men and women punch well above their weight. These souls may stumble and fall to the ground, but amidst the shouts of the world to “Stay down,” they listen instead to the encouraging choirs of Heaven who remind them the fight is far from over. Saint Francis de Sales commented that if Adam and Eve had immediately repented of their sin, they would have crushed the serpent right there in the Garden—and so they would have pulled themselves up by the ropes of repentance. And continue the fight.



These good souls may fall again, but they get up again. They know that the bell for this fight rings only once, but they have the faith and hope that when it rings, they will be on their feet. They may be leaning on the ropes of repentance, but they will be on their feet.

It is no accident that, in his *First Letter to the Corinthians*, Saint Paul uses a boxing analogy when discussing the spiritual life, writing: “I do not box as one beating the air.” The opponents are not imaginary; the fight is real.

Saint Paul does not tell us about the audience for that match—at least, not at first. But there surely is an audience. Who is it? In my fight, the audience is you; in your fight, the audience is me.

The Christian Response

When we witness another’s soul in spiritual battle, there are three possible responses: first, we can yell at him to “Stay down;” second, we can be silent; third, we can offer prayerful encouragement. The first response is demonically malicious and the second response is devastatingly indifferent. The third response is not only the proper response of a Christian, but the powerful response of a Christian.

Sadly, the third response is uncommon. Many of us go through each day with little encouragement by the “audience.” Instead, we suffer discouragement. And it’s worth noting that discouragement is not only about what we say; it’s about what we don’t say. People are desperately trying to climb back up the ropes, but we can’t find it in our hearts or on our lips to say anything. Maybe we feel like it doesn’t matter. Doesn’t it? As Father Laurence Lovasik writes, “There are few things that resist grace so much as discouragement. Many plans for God’s glory have failed because there was no bright look or kind eye or kind word to support them.”

Scripture agrees. In the tenth chapter of Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews, Paul implores us to “consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together...but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” The message is clear: encouragement is the mother’s milk of perseverance.

In the homeschool life, it is imperative that we encourage each other to persevere in virtue. We must encourage our children, our parents, our husbands and wives, our brothers and sisters, the priests in our lives. We must encourage all those around us. Those mired in a struggle need to hear the cheers and encouragement of the audience.

And the audience is us.



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*.



Briscoe | When not collecting insects Briscoe enjoys hunting, fishing, and working with the livestock on his family’s ranch. He is inspired to have a military career.



Marco | Marco’s main interests are guitar and voice acting. His other interests are skating and art although he is mostly inspired to become a chef or a biologist.

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

setonmagazine.com/students



BY LAURA FUSTO

A DIPLOMA IN LIFETIME LEARNING

As a homeschooling mom for 20 years, I realized from the very beginning the many benefits of homeschooling my three children.

My husband and I were able to spend many more hours with each child, watching them grow academically and spiritually. We were able to spend more time together as a family.

We were able to take our vacations during the off-season when costs were cheaper. We were even able to sleep late on weekdays if we desired.

Now as I come close to the end of my homeschooling career, I have discovered another benefit of homeschooling that I had never really thought about. Strangely, unlike the other benefits that homeschooling has provided our family, this gift was given solely to me. By homeschooling my children, I have been blessed with an additional educational degree (granted, self-imposed) in lifelong learning.

When I chose to homeschool, I was forced, in a sense, to learn about things that I was not interested in as a child. In order to help my children write a book report, I had to read good literature, such as *The Black Tulip*, that I would not have personally chosen to read.

History, a subject I found boring as a young student, came alive with deeper meaning regarding its political and social implications for society. Homeschooling has helped widen my scope of my learning while allowing me to better appreciate things I had shunned in the past.

I have also, of course, learned many new things during our homeschooling journey. Often, I found myself delving deeper into the subjects I was teaching my children, my curiosity driving me to understand more about platypuses, the battle of Gettysburg, and when to capitalize words such as “bible” (not capitalized in this case!).

The Christian Response

Often, I did not choose the new things I learned; they chose me. Instead of choosing to read a book to learn a particular subject, I learned various new things in a spontaneous way. I was constantly hit with a barrage of questions from children seeking knowledge. Sometimes I did not have the answers. When it arrived, the Internet was my best friend.

I have also solidified my knowledge in some subjects. In school, I naturally understood grammar and sentence structure. I did not require much formal teaching from my public school teachers. I enjoyed playing around with words to make the English language sound lovely. I loved the art of writing.

I started teaching my children grammar with the assumption that because I could write proficiently, I knew every thing about English grammar. I was wrong. I discovered this the day I came face to face with sentence diagramming.

Diagramming was a foreign language to me. This was not taught in the public school I attended. Since I had survived thus far without this skill, I did not understand why diagramming was important to learn.

“Seton’s strong grammar program...has helped me to be a stronger writer and communicator.”

Together with my children, I attempted to tackle this daunting task. I have since learned the purpose of this exercise in analytical thinking. Seton’s strong grammar program in conjunction with teaching grammar to my children has helped me to be a stronger writer and communicator.

Building Confidence and Perseverance

Homeschooling has given me the courage to persevere in my shortcomings. I always enjoyed English and writing in school; however, math was a very different animal. By eighth grade, I had convinced myself that I could not succeed in math. The thought of “word problems” would raise my anxiety level. Also, I always wondered how letters could live together in a mathematical world that I only associated with numbers?

“Admittedly, I am still a little shaky with math beyond Algebra I.”

Today, I am teaching Algebra 1 to my daughter and I get it! Admittedly, I am still a little shaky with math beyond Algebra 1, but I now have the confidence that if I applied myself to those disciplines (and had the time!), I could conquer them as well. If I had not homeschooled my daughters, I may have never made this confidence-boosting discovery.

Reading literature along with my children has also turned out to be a great and surprising pleasure in my homeschooling life. While other moms with children in traditional classrooms were reading the latest books on the best-seller list, I was revisiting such classic literature as *Little House in the Big Woods* and *The Scarlet Letter* (which, by the way, I detested in 11th grade and enjoyed as an adult).

Rereading classic novels as an adult has provided insight that I missed when reading these books as a child. I find humor and sorrow where I missed it before.

I even feel compassion for those who did not revisit such wonderful novels as *Charlotte’s Web* and *Anne of Green Gables* as adults (which as a side note, will become part of Seton’s Reading curriculum this year).

As a child, it is difficult to understand what exactly defines good children’s literature. As an adult, I realize that good children’s literature is partially defined by the fact that I can still fully appreciate the value of the book as an adult.

As I enter my senior years, I realize how much homeschooling my children helped to “exercise my brain” (which, despite what this phrase implies, is not a muscle, but an organ). I would not replace all of the crossword and sudoku puzzles in the world with the “exercise” homeschooling has provided my mind. I can only hope that this “exercise” will help with all of the “senior moments” I meet as I journey on to the next stage of my life.

Most importantly, through homeschooling my children, I have a much better understanding of my Catholic faith. As a child of the early 1970s, I received very little formal faith formation.

Growing up in Baltimore, I thought the *Baltimore Catechism*

“Homeschooling my children, I have a much better understanding of my Catholic faith.”

was just one of many Catholic books written for each major city in America. I had never even seen the *Baltimore Catechism* until I began homeschooling with Seton.

Homeschooling helped me to truly learn the Catholic faith as I guided each child through their catechism and religious training. For this blessing, I will forever be thankful to God.

An Extra Bonus

As a schoolgirl, I was one of those children who loved learning for learning’s sake. With the maturity that adulthood brings, the materials that I learned in early life have taken on deeper meaning as I have revisited them while homeschooling my children, and the new knowledge I have gained is an extra bonus.

Because homeschooling has continued to fuel my desire for knowledge, I know I will never lose my love of learning new things. Through my decision to homeschool, God’s grace has intervened in a way I can only now fully appreciate.

I hope to play a role in homeschooling my future grandchildren so that I may pass on this honorary degree of lifetime learning given to me by God’s blessings.



Laura Fusto received her BA in Communications from McDaniel College. She and her husband, John, have been blessed with three daughters. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening, golfing, shopping with her daughters, and playing pinochle with her husband and their friends.

in the **Schoolroom**

Starting Well



Here are a few quick steps to take to begin the academic year well:

1. Envision how you want your days to flow. This is a mental task you should spend some time over, prayerfully. Perhaps over coffee in the morning with a journal, or at adoration. Prayerfully ask God to order your days for the coming year. Discern things like co-ops, sports, lessons, starting and ending times for school. No detail is too small to consider. Write out your thoughts and let them percolate a bit. From there plan your year.

2. When those boxes of books come in and the packing peanuts are all picked up (they multiply, don't they?) organize the lesson plans in a way that suits your style. Some people put their LPs in one large binder, with tabs for each subject and keep the tests and answer keys in another. This is what I have always done; it is less to keep track of. Other families keep smaller, separate binders for each subject. Some people spiral-bind and others staple. Do what suits you but do it right away so as not to lose anything.

3. Figure out where you are going to put all the books and materials. The past three years our home base has been the dining room. I have a wall of cubbies from Target into which the books go at the end of the day. The middle cubbies house the reference books and some games, and then each student gets two cubbies to store their books and materials. The top of the cubbies I use to display their artwork, any supplemental books we are using, and a big basket full of scrap paper.

This system has worked well, since at the end of the day everything goes back into the cubbies and the dining room is once again for eating. The rolling cart houses all the pens, markers, rulers, and that kind of thing. I can roll it out of the room when we have company but mostly it just stays in the corner.



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*.

Patron Saint of the Philippines, Filipino Youth, People Working Overseas, and Altar Servers

Saint Lorenzo Ruiz

First Filipino Martyr

September 28



Painting by Ryan Carreón Aragón

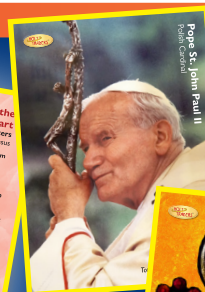
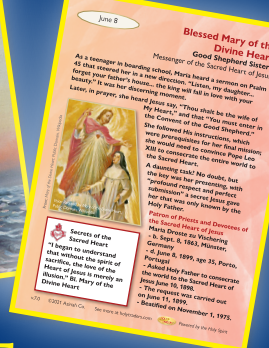
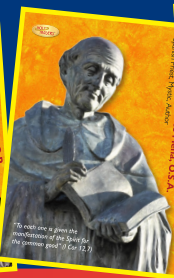


CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NEW!
SET #7

SAINTS OF THE SACRED HEART

HOLY
TRADERS



SAINT TRADING CARDS

The Treasure We Must Pass On

It is no exaggeration to say that providing young people with a sound education in the faith represents the most urgent internal challenge facing the Catholic community in your country.

The deposit of faith is a priceless treasure which each generation must pass on to the next by winning hearts to Jesus Christ and shaping minds in the knowledge, understanding and love of his Church.

It is gratifying to realize that, in our day too, the Christian vision, presented in its breadth and integrity, proves immensely appealing to the imagination, idealism and aspirations of the young, who have a right to encounter the faith in all its beauty, its intellectual richness and its radical demands.

Pope Benedict XVI

Address to the Bishops of the United States, May 5, 2012

