

Seton



MAGAZINE

Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

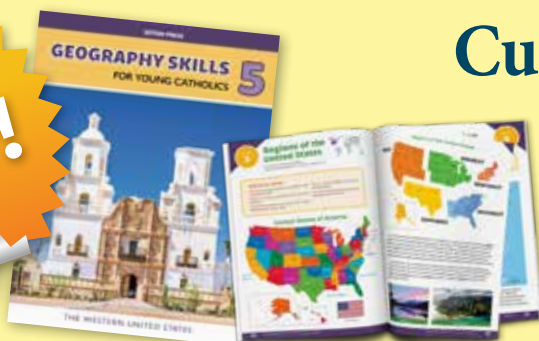
setonmagazine.com | July-August 2024

Life has Been a Blessed Adventure

**-The Bernard Family
Pg 14**



New!



Curriculum Updates

Pg 17

Draper Warren

Teaching History at Home

Ginny Seuffert - pg 8

Catholic Homeschooling: Supported by U.S. and Canon Law

Deacon Gene McGuirk - pg 12

Reverend Nikolai Brelinsky:

Alumnus Profile - pg 22



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.

**LETTER FROM
THE EDITOR**

Dear Readers,

In all the years that I have been the editor of this magazine, I have never been able to show you a picture of a family in a tree. I am happy to be able to do so now. Seriously, the Bernard family knows how to combine faith and fun, and I think their adventures will inspire you. While looking at the photo, you may wonder if they are in the tree or under it.

The big news in this issue is the curriculum updates for the coming school year. There are not many this year, but I know you will all be happy to hear that there will be no tuition increases.

Keeping homeschooling affordable is an important part of our mission here at Seton, and the current economy presents challenges for many families. We want you to know we realize this and are doing our best to help by keeping our prices as low as possible for as long as possible.

Please join me in praying for another Seton graduate who has been recently ordained. We were fortunate to persuade Father Brelinsky, son of our columnist Tara Brelinsky, to write an article for us before he became too busy with his first parish assignment. We would love to hear from other graduates pursuing a religious vocation. We love hearing from all former students, so please encourage them to drop us a line to let us know what they are up to.

As always, you all remain in our daily prayers at Seton. Have a wonderful summer.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Ellen Barrett". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Mary Ellen Barrett

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, pray for us!

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Mary Ellen Barrett

MANAGING EDITOR

Jim Shanley

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Robin Hibl

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Mary Ellen Barrett
 Ingrid Bernard
 Jacinta Black
 Fr. Nikolai Brelinsky
 Tara Brelinsky
 Susan Brock
 Kristin Brown
 Laura Clark
 Laura Fusto
 Deacon Gene McGuirk
 Sean O'Connor
 Emily Prause
 Ginny Seuffert
 Draper Warren
 Esther Williams

COVER PHOTO:

The Bernard Family

SETON PHONE DIRECTORY

SETON HOME STUDY SCHOOL
 540-636-9990

SETON EDUCATIONAL MEDIA
 540-636-9996

STANDARDIZED TESTING
 540-636-1250

ADMISSIONS
 540-636-2039

GENERAL COUNSELING
 540-622-5526
Cecilia Sauer

ELEMENTARY COUNSELING
 540-636-1429
*Cecilia Sauer
 Laura Clark
 Heather Hibl
 Laura Fusto
 Mary Connolly*

ELEMENTARY GRADING
 540-622-5569
Jacinta Black

TRANSCRIPTS & RECORDS
 540-636-1324
Betty Showers

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
 Alex Clark*

HIGH SCHOOL GRADING
 540-622-5525

Rhonda Way

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

Sean Hilbert

GUIDANCE & RECORDS
 540-636-2238

John Thorp

GRADUATION COUNSELING
 540-622-8478

Bob Wiesner

HIGH SCHOOL LATIN
 540-692-7023

Sean Hilbert

HIGH SCHOOL MATH
 540-622-5557

*Tom Herlihy
 Vasily Vasilyev
 Manuel Vicente*

HIGH SCHOOL RELIGION
 540-692-7023

Sean Hilbert

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
 Mary Healey
 Silvia Maresca*

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

Catholic College Scholarships

What Can You Win?

On August 15, Seton is awarding Ten \$1,500 Scholarships to Seton 2024 high school graduates.

Which Colleges Qualify?

Seton College Partners and other Newman Guide Recommended Colleges or Universities.

When is the Deadline?

Apply by August 1, 2024.



Seton
 Home Study School

Details at
Setonhome.org/catholic-college-scholarship



Contents

- 6** **Your Questions Answered**
For Homeschooling Families
- 8** **Teaching History at Home**
Ginny Seuffert
- 10** **Ask The Experts:**
How do You Raise Good Citizens Who Know Their Rights and Responsibilities?
- 11** **This is Why We Homeschool**
The Habana Family
- 12** **Catholic Homeschooling:**
Supported by U.S. and Canon Law
Deacon Gene McGuirk
- 14** **Our Blessed Adventure**
Ingrid Bernard
- 17** **Curriculum Updates**
Draper Warren
- 22** **Seton Alumnus Profile**
Fr. Nikolai Brelinsky
- 24** **In the SchoolRoom**
Mary Ellen Barrett
- 25** **Student Achievements:**
Chelzea, Fatima, Osvaldo, Pablo, Oliver
- 26** **Staff Profile:**
Esther Williams
- 27** **St. Kateri Tekakwitha**
Saint Poster by Emily Prause

Can we enroll and get our books now but start our school year later?

Yes, you can enroll now and receive your books and lesson plans but delay your school start date until later in the year. To delay your start date, when you enroll, enter the date you want to start in the comment box. You may also email counselors@setonhome.org and let the counselors know what start date you would like. They will then set it for you.

Lesson Plans are set up to be done in 36 weeks (a traditional school year), which is usually plenty of time. However, whatever start date you set, you will have 12 months to finish (24 months for kindergarten and first grade). Two additional months can be added as a grace period, and, if you still need more time, you can purchase a 6 month extension by contacting admissions at 540-636-2039.

Laura Clark, Academic Counselor

My daughter doesn't want to complete one of her non-required courses. Can she drop it and have it removed from her transcript? (She's a diploma-seeking student.)

Yes, you can drop the course, and it will be removed from your transcript. We understand this decision might be a bit overwhelming, but we're here to guide you through the process.

A couple of things to keep in mind:

1. We cannot remove a course if there are at least two-quarter grades (e.g., Quarter 1 grade and Quarter 2 grade), but we can award quarter credit for one-quarter of work completed, half-credit for two quarters completed, or 3/4 credit for three quarters completed.

2. You should still have a counselor review your total credits to ensure this course is "extra" since dropping it may mean you would have to pick up another to meet credit requirements for graduation (if you are diploma-seeking).

Sean O'Connor, Academic Counselor

What do I do with my old lesson plans?

When you finish your lesson plans, you can mail them back to us so we can shred them, or you can shred/destroy them yourself. Seton only asks that you return old lesson plans due to copyright regulations. Optionally, you can shred, destroy, or burn them if you like. Let us know by emailing counselors@setonhome.org if you decide to do this so we can note it in our database.

If you mail back your old lesson plans, please include your name and family number and send them to Seton Home Study School, 1350 Progress Drive, Front Royal, VA 22630.

Include a note in the package stating that you are 'returning old/used lesson plans.'

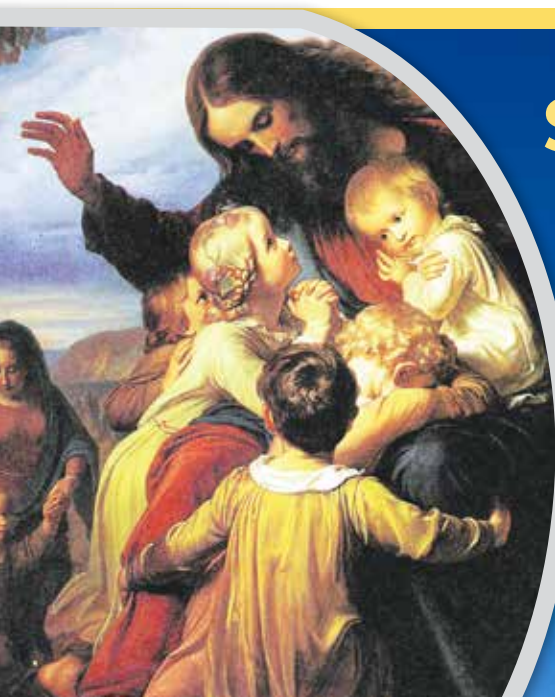
Seton Customer Service

Should my middle school student be able to complete schoolwork on her own?

Some middle school students can take on this responsibility, but most still need a good amount of guidance. These years, students are building the skills needed to work independently.

While they may be able to complete some courses, such as spelling and vocabulary, they may still need a good amount of help with writing assignments and math.

The middle school years are also when students need to learn good study skills, especially in history, science, and religion. These skills will be crucial when students transition to high school, where they may need to work more independently. It is also essential for parents to verify that schoolwork is being completed promptly. A student who claims to be on schedule may be skipping important assignments or, even worse, not completing work.



Seton Scholarship Fund

Support Seton's mission to transform lives through Catholic education by aiding families in need.

Donate online and find more information on our scholarship fund page.

www.setonhome.org/scholarship-fund

Childhood of Famous Americans Founders Set



M-RDB5-40
\$49.95

Fun to read stories about American heroes and heroines “just their age” will keep them turning pages, and bring history to life.
Recommended for Grades 3-7.

www.SetonBooks.com

Also, students left on their own will often complete all the easier school work first and save the more difficult assignments, such as book reports, for the end of the school year.

This may still be true as your student enters high school. Students may be able to work more independently, but it is essential to ensure work is completed. A good motto to remember for high school students is “trust, but verify.”

Laura Fusto, Academic Counselor

How long do I have to finish my Teaching Textbooks course?

A Teaching Textbooks course (license) lasts for 12 months from starting date NOT from purchase date. If you don't finish within the year, Seton students can request an automatic 60-day extension from Teaching Textbooks.

Teaching Textbooks technical support information is available here: www.teachingtextbooks.com/contact-us

You can go to that page and tell them you're enrolled with Seton and would like the 60-day extension.

Seton Academic Counseling

Does Seton issue 8th-grade diplomas?

Yes, we are happy to issue an 8th-grade diploma if all of your student's assignments have been submitted and graded. To request an 8th-grade diploma, please contact our General Academic Counselor, Cecilia Sauer, at csauer@setonhome.org.

*Jacinta Black, Elementary
Academic Counselor*

Does Kindergarten music include CDs, or is this something to purchase separately?

Seton has switched from CDs to downloads. Many people have told us that they don't have CD players anymore, but everyone seems to be able to download music.

You can find the downloads by going to your kindergartener's MySeton page and clicking the “Resources” tab. Alternatively, you can click on the “Courses” tab and then on the yellow notebook on the line for music. You can listen to the songs there or download them.

But remember, anything you do for music (listening to any music in your home, attending an outdoor concert, etc.) can count as music class.

Laura Clark, Academic Counselor



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



JOHN PAUL THE GREAT
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



THOMAS AQUINAS
COLLEGE



THOMAS MORE
COLLEGE



OUR LADY
SEAT OF WISDOM
COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY
OF DALLAS



UNIVERSITY
OF ST. THOMAS
HOUSTON



UNIVERSITY
of MARY

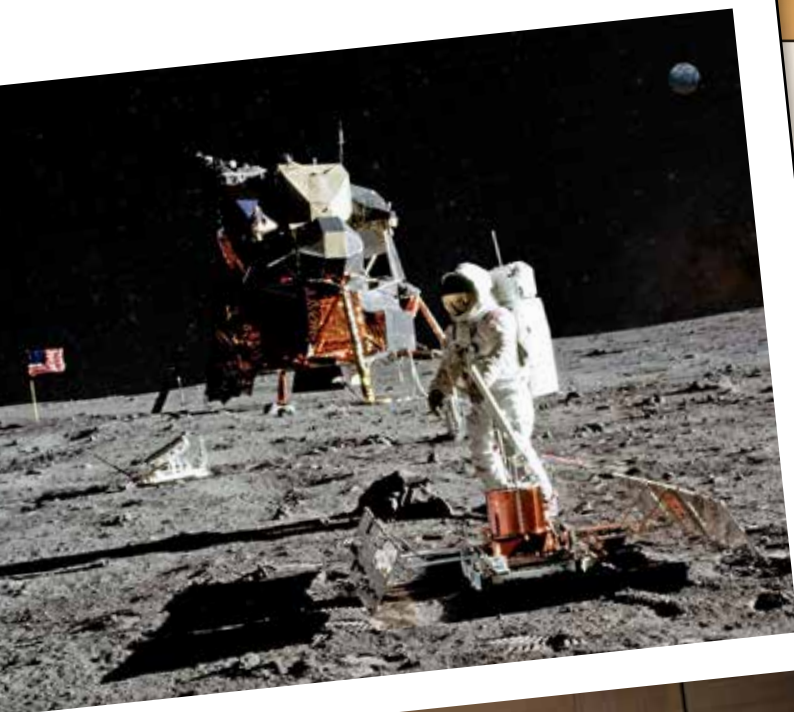


WALSH
UNIVERSITY
A Catholic University of Distinction

setonhome.org/colleges

BY GINNY SEUFFERT

TEACHING HISTORY AT HOME



At one point, my husband and I had three kids in college, all of whom were history majors. Everyone is out of college now, but we are still a history family with frequent kitchen table discussions. We feel we were successful in passing on our love of history. What were our secrets?

STUDENTS NEED A TEXTBOOK

To answer one frequently asked question: Yes, your students do need a textbook. I prefer to think of textbooks as an imaginary file cabinet. Studying Seton's texts, students gain basic knowledge and can put subject "folders" into their file cabinets: Voyages of Discovery, Native Peoples, Civil War, and the Great Depression to name just a few.

Your children have a mental timeline and have heard of the significant places and players. Now comes the fun part. Fill those "folders" with personalities, details, and events.

BIOGRAPHIES AND BATTLES ARE THE WAY TO GO

In the non-fiction section of your local public library, find reading-level-appropriate books to bring textbook chapters alive. Students are often most excited to learn about the places where they live or the circumstances of their own lives.

Growing up in New York, a child can read about the old Dutch patroon system. Massachusetts students might study Massasoit, and South Carolina kids Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox." A child who struggles might want to discover the extraordinary accomplishments of Helen Keller, who was both deaf and blind.



**"AS A LITTLE GIRL,
I DEVoured
LAURA INGALLS WILDER'S
LITTLE HOUSE BOOKS."**

By fifteen, Andrew Jackson was an orphan with no siblings and a war veteran who lived entirely independently. With no money or family support, Jackson became a lawyer, judge, congressman, senator, general, and President of the United States. Catholic children will be captivated to hear why this Protestant president thanked the Ursuline Sisters after winning the Battle of New Orleans. Non-fiction fills your children's "folders" with stories and triumphs from the past.

ADD HISTORICAL FICTION

As a little girl, I devoured Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House books. In my mind, I lived in a log cabin in Wisconsin and a sod house in Minnesota. I witnessed history reading Robert Lawson's fun series featuring events seen through the eyes of famous figures' pets in *Ben and Me*, *I Discover Columbus*, and *Mr. Revere and I*. Your students can fight an imaginary battle against tyranny with *Johnny Tremain* and protect their homes from the danger in *Madeline Takes Command*.

Parents—be cautious about movie content, but there are some excellent choices. Children can learn about space travel from *Apollo 13*, the Battle of Gettysburg from the movie *Gettysburg*, and civil rights in the 1960s from *Hidden Figures*.

DON'T FORGET CLASS TRIPS

We spent leisure time touring battlefields, restored mansions and villages, museums, and historically significant churches. No matter where you live, you can find an old courthouse or one-room schoolhouse.

Reading about the Pilgrims simply does not carry the impact of visiting the recreated Mayflower and touring Plimoth Plantation. It is one thing to learn about Junipero Serra but quite another to visit the missions he founded up and down the coast of California.

On September 11, 2002, my family went to our local firehouse. The fire chief rang the bell and read out the names of all the firemen who perished when the Twin Towers collapsed. Participating in history, even in a small way, leaves an impression.

KIDS NEED CURRENT EVENTS

Until my teen years, my dad worked for the Associated Press, a news service. News stories were a big part of our supertime conversation. Not only did we hear about current events, but they were filtered through the value system of my parents and extended family. We were given points of view and sometimes debated them over plates of pasta.

When your children learn about our founding documents, discuss how these documents continue to influence our daily lives. Where do our rights as Americans come from – the government or our Creator? Should people be allowed to own firearms or is the 2nd Amendment outdated? Was there ever a constitutional right to an abortion?

Discuss the situation in the Middle East, threats from China or Russia, and the implications of a shrinking population worldwide. This will teach your children not only the impact of history on current events but also put them on a path to responsible citizenship.

CHECK OUT OUR PODCAST: STAY-AT-HOMESCHOOLING MOM

Are you interested in learning more about teaching history? Mary Ellen Barrett and I interviewed historian Jerry Lenaburg in *Teaching History the Way It Actually Happened* on July 5, 2023.

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST AT

WWW.SETONHOME.ORG/PODCAST



Ginny Sueffert co-hosts Stay-at-Homeschooling Mom, a podcast for Catholic home educators, with Mary Ellen Barrett. Ginny has written five books for Catholic homeschoolers, appeared on EWTN, and lectured on homeschooling across the United States. She and her husband, Ed, are the parents of twelve children and expecting grandchildren 35 and 36.



Ask the Experts:

How do You Raise Good Citizens Who Know Their Rights and Responsibilities?

Three Veteran Homeschooling Moms Share Their Experience

Include Them in Activities...

Personally, engaging my state representatives felt intimidating once upon a time. Then, I was asked to participate in several petitions and rallies related to homeschooling, home birth, and pro-life legislation.

Those experiences helped me better understand my part in being an active citizen. With that understanding, I started bringing my children to peaceful events. I encouraged them to walk into our state representative's offices and speak with them about the proposed legislation.

My children and I have had many lively conversations about moral issues, rights, and responsibilities. We all learn to think critically, consider different perspectives, and defend our positions. In a time when public discourse deteriorates quickly,

it's important to hone the virtue of charity and the skills of good communication, and that is best exercised first in the home.

“Experiences helped me better understand my part in being an active citizen.”

Most of my earlier reluctance to actively engage in the work of being a good citizen was based on my lack of experience. I didn't grow up seeing adults participate in politics or even local causes, so I felt unsure of myself. Therefore, I've focused on preparing my children to be good citizens by including them in my activities and encouraging them to discuss hard topics.

Tara Brelinsky, North Carolina

Duties, Rights, and Responsibilities...



My kids have grown up watching my husband and I discuss issues, debate policies, and vote. We took them in the stroller so they could see what was happening. Their favorite part was the sticker.

With their Trail Life and American Heritage Girls badge work, reading the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and Magna Carta are all a must. From an early age, we stress the duties, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship.

“I am so glad the U.S. government course is required for Seton students.”

When deciding whom to vote for, it is important to discuss whether their policies align with Church teachings. We discuss elections, party platforms, laws, justice, virtue, and how it fits with Catholic social teaching. I am so glad the U.S. government course is required for Seton students and that they can study what they have heard about for so long.

One item on my bucket list is to take my family to a naturalization ceremony and watch the moment people have worked for and dreamed about for so long become a reality.

Kristin Brown, Virginia

Start Them at a Young Age...



Preparing our children to be good citizens starts at a young age. We teach our little children to share, take turns, speak the truth, and obey Mom and Dad.

As they enter school, they learn the Ten Commandments. Here, the Seton curriculum has been indispensable in its thorough explanations. I have often heard my kids discussing the Ten Commandments with each other.

Learning the Ten Commandments helps to form our children's consciences so they can make good choices in how they relate to others. Discussions with them about friendships and relationships can always be based on those commandments.

All my children have been active in some way with our parish and tithe as they are able to earn money. That lets them know that they are part of a bigger community and to serve and help others.

As my children have become adults, I have heard from their employers about how hardworking they are and what good team members they are. These comments let me know that they have learned what they have been taught at home.

My husband has stepped up to teach them about their rights as citizens. His wisdom and logic have helped our kids understand their rights and responsibilities as Americans.

Susan Brock, Virginia

THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



“

Homeschooling has allowed my children to develop their potential by providing a flexible learning environment.

My boys, who excel in triathlon, benefit from a schedule that accommodates their rigorous training.

I chose Seton Home Study School because it offers a well-rounded Catholic curriculum that aligns with our family's values and beliefs.

Habana Family — Minglanilla, Philippines

”

BY DEACON GENE MCGUIRK

Catholic Homeschooling: Supported by U.S. and Canon Law

Deacon McGuirk makes the case that Catholic homeschooling conforms to Canon Law and the laws of the United States.



Two Pillars of Homeschooling



The Organic Laws of the U.S.A.

An act of Congress in 1873 defined four documents as the Organic Laws of the United States of America.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, organic laws are “the body of laws (as in a constitution or charter) that form the original foundation of a government.”^[i]

In the 1873 Act of the Revised Statutes of the United States, Congress declared the following four historical documents to be the Organic Laws of the United States of America. These four documents are:

1. **The Declaration of Independence,**
2. **The Articles of Confederation,**
3. **The Northwest Ordinance,**
4. **The Constitution of the United States**^[ii]

The Declaration of Independence proclaims the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Under the Constitution, the Supreme Court used this precedent in its ruling on *Meyer v. Nebraska*, 262 U.S. 390 (1923). “According to the Court, the liberty protected by the due process clause includes the right of a person to acquire useful knowledge, to marry, establish a home and bring up children, to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and generally to enjoy those privileges long recognized at common law as essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men.”^[iii]

Notice the important liberties enumerated by the Court that apply to homeschooling. First is the right “to marry, establish a home, and bring up children.” Homeschooling is done by families in their established homes to help them raise their children.

Homeschooling is their chosen way to help their children “to acquire useful knowledge,” especially knowledge about their faith in God and how properly “to worship God according to the dictates of (their) own conscience(s).”

All of this so their family can “enjoy those privileges long recognized at common law as essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men.” It is as if the Court decision was written to protect homeschooling in America.

Editors Note: Footnotes can be found in the online version of the Seton Magazine.



Canon Law of the Catholic Church

The Canon Law of the Catholic Church has even more direct support for homeschooling. Paragraph 1 of Can. 793 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law states, “Parents and those who take their place are bound by the obligation and possess the right of educating their offspring. Catholic parents also have the duty and right of choosing those means and institutions through which they can provide more suitably for the Catholic education of their children, according to local circumstances.”^[iv]

Note that this Canon addresses all parents, Catholic or otherwise: “Parents and those who take their place are bound by the obligation and possess the right of educating their offspring.” This Church law includes all parents and all education. The qualifier of “those who take their place” means official, legal substitutes, like court-appointed guardians. It does not mean the babysitter or the D.R.E. We can be certain of this because the following sentence specifically addresses Catholic parents and the Catholic education of the children. “Catholic parents also have the duty and right of choosing those means and institutions through which they can provide more suitably for the Catholic education of their children, according to local circumstances.”

The Right to a Catholic Education

Canon Law supports the compatibility of Catholic homeschooling with the Organic Laws of the United States. It states that parents have the right and even the duty to choose the means and institutions to provide a Catholic education for their children. This includes the choice of books and school programs like Seton Home Study School.

In the case of homeschooling, the Church and the Organic Laws of the United States align, reinforcing the compatibility of Catholic homeschooling with both sets of laws.



Deacon Eugene McGuirk directs the Academic Counseling Department at Seton Home Study School. Married for over 30 years, he is the father of 4 children homeschooled through Seton. He was ordained a deacon in 1988.

Life has Been a Blessed Adventure

BY INGRID BERNARD

TOUR THRU TREE
KLAMATH.CALIF.



Homeschooling with Seton has been a blessing because, as a super-nomadic military family with five children, we have had much more family time, which we value immensely. Our children, Heidi, 11; Owen, 9; Hannah, 5; Caleb, 3; and Fulton, 1 have had so many more opportunities to acquire life skills, and we have gotten to live more liturgically.

Military Life

My husband is a Commanding Officer F-18 (Growler) Pilot in the U.S. Navy. After a faithful and honorable 20 years of service in the military, Mike will retire in the summer of 2024.

We are so very proud of him and all of his sacrifices and the sacrifices we have made individually and as a family to get here. Because we have had to move every three years, we have traveled all over the country, from the West Coast to the East Coast, several times and all over the place.

Because we homeschooled, we stayed together as a family throughout our moves, even when he had to go away for a long period of training.

Happy Trails

We got an RV and traveled through 11 states from Texas, seeing The Painted Desert in New Mexico, The Grand Canyon in Arizona, The Rockies of Colorado, The Grand Tetons of Wyoming, Yellowstone in Montana, The Red Woods of California, Death Valley in Nevada, through Oregon to Mount Saint Helens, and finally to the beautiful Pacific Northwest in Washington.



Our lives have been such a blessed adventure, and we would not have been able to do it without homeschooling with Seton's consistent and solid academics as an anchor for the children! Knowing that they are learning what they should throughout all our travels and moves brings so much confidence and peace.

Homeschooling has allowed us to stay together as a family, travel everywhere, and make many transitions seamless. Homeschooling has also enabled us to make wonderful friends around the country with similar values who are trying to raise their children in ways similar to ours.

Spending time with our children and family is a priority, and homeschooling is a blessing because we get to spend so much special time together as a family. We love the freedom for our children to be who they are and learn how they learn.

Homeschooling is amazing because we go through life at our own pace. We don't have to wake the kids up super early and rush our lives away. We can stop and "smell the roses" together as experiences come up, always assured that Seton is providing solid academics infused with the Catholic Faith.

Living This Season Fully

Making these memories together and being a part of so much with them, knowing we will be able to look back and feel that we lived life to the fullest in all aspects of this season of life as a mother, as a father, and as a family, is the greatest thing.



Homeschooling gives the kids many more opportunities to learn life skills, which so many children lack in the rat race pace of life, so they go out into the real world and struggle in some of the most fundamental ways. But our kids have more accountability on a wider variety of things throughout the day.

It is such a gift to learn and normalize basic life management skills. It is important to balance time between homeschooling, spending time with the family, our hobbies, and caring for ourselves spiritually and physically.

I am a passionate Catholic artist (www.IngridBernard.com) (www.LivingTabernacle.com) and love that I can do it all with the kids. As adults, we are still learning so much, as we always will be, but we feel it is a gift to help them develop life skills at a much younger age.

Liturgical Living

Homeschooling is the ultimate for liturgical living! (www.LiturgicalLiving.com) We love how Seton Home Study School weaves everything into the Catholic faith through images and art in books, literature, and more.

We love that we can live out our faith and the feast days, talk about the faith, and infuse the faith into everything we do throughout the day! It is so important to us as parents to really try and cement our faith now to prepare them for the world out there, and that is the best thing we can do as parents: try our best.

Seton Homeschool is the best thing in this season of our lives! All we can do is pray and try our best so we can look back and know we gave this season our all!

As a military family, homeschooling with Seton has allowed us to travel and move around seamlessly, have much more family time, and give the kids more opportunities to develop life skills and live more liturgically and intentionally! We feel so blessed for the solid and accredited academics that Seton provides for us to homeschool our children.



New!

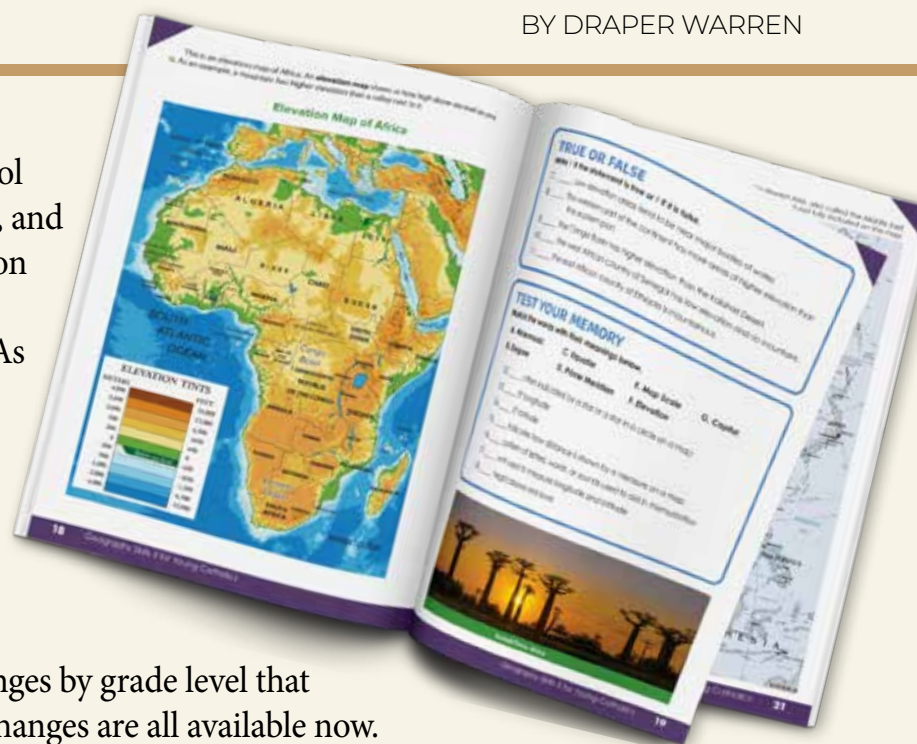


The Excitement Builds... 2024 Curriculum Updates

BY DRAPER WARREN

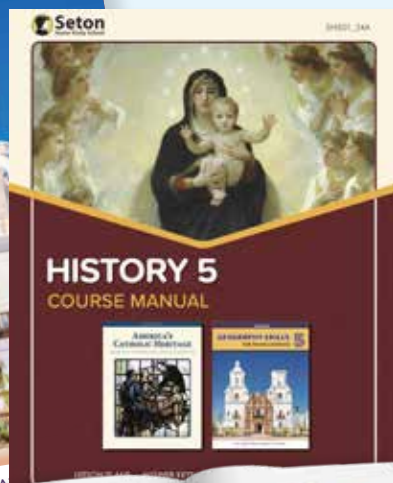
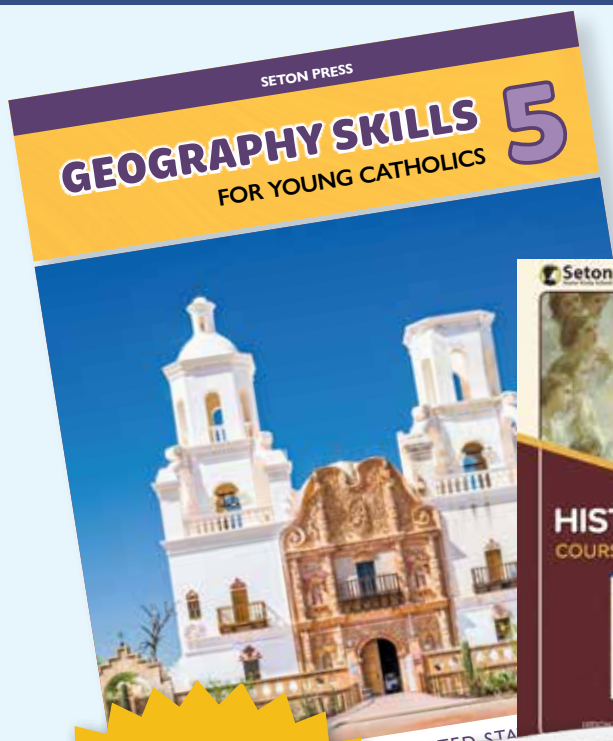
Even the best Catholic homeschool curriculum can always be better, and in this pursuit of excellence, Seton has always placed a heavy focus each year on curriculum improvements. As we continue to replace books from other publishers with our own Seton Press materials, we improve our materials and help keep our costs low, which in turn helps keep our tuition low. In fact, there are no tuition increases in 2024!

The following is a list of significant changes by grade level that parents might like to be aware of. These changes are all available now.

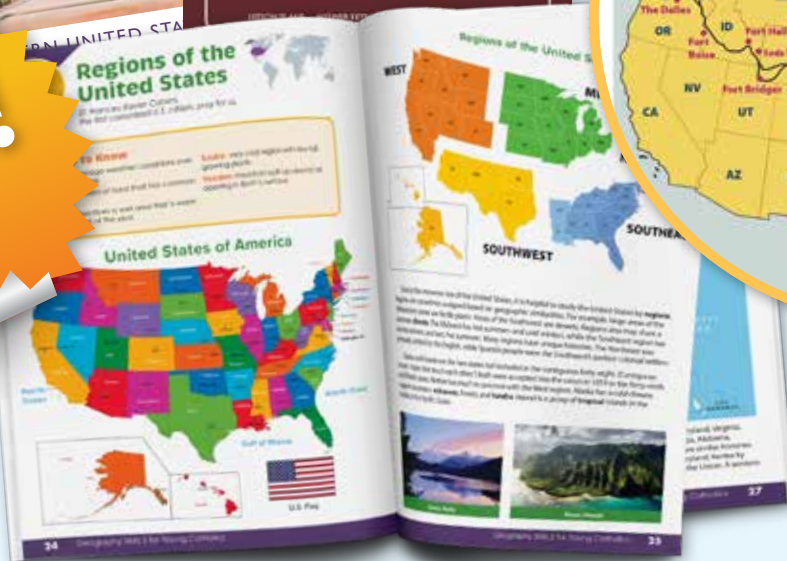


HISTORY

History 5 has a new Seton Press Geography Skills 5 workbook. This is the second half of Geography Skills 4, which came out last year. Both books teach basic map skills, but they also focus on learning about the different states in the U.S. The 4th-grade book covers each eastern state in detail, and this new 5th-grade book covers each of the western states in detail.



New!



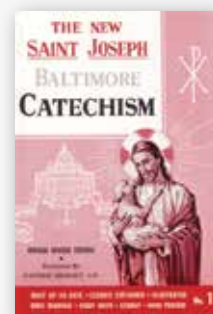
RELIGION

For Religion 4 and Religion 5, which use the *Baltimore Catechism* #1, we have made an excellent older resource available for free for enrolled families.

This resource is a series of video commentaries by the late Fr. Pablo Straub on the *Baltimore Catechism*. Originally recorded at

a television studio in the 1990s, these recordings have been digitally upscaled to preserve the profound reflections that Fr. Straub offers to students.

My mother and I watched these when I was in elementary school with Seton, and I still have fond memories of them to this day. You can find these pearls in the course resources in MySeton.



Geography 5 For Young Catholics:

Reviewed by Seton Academic Counselor Laura Fusto



As a Seton counselor and a former homeschooling parent, I am excited to introduce Seton's new *Geography 5 for Young Catholics* workbook. This fifth-grade book, the third in this series, focuses on the Western United States. This series replaces the map skills books used in the past. After reviewing the new fifth-grade book, I wished it had been available while homeschooling my little ones.

The first thing I noticed when I saw the new book was that it was titled *Geography Skills* instead of *Map Skills*. Why did this name change? This brand-new book and the others in this series introduce an additional discipline to our elementary students: geography.

While map skills tell us where things are, geography "seeks to answer the questions of why things are as they are, where they are," as stated by Britannica. While the old books concentrated only on map reading skills, the new books combine both disciplines. Elementary students will now be better prepared for high school geography. Hurrah!

Reverently Catholic

The most exciting thing about this book and all the books in the series is that Seton writes it. Why is this exciting? It's Catholic! Of course, in true Seton fashion, the book's cover displays a beautiful photograph of a Catholic geographical site, the Mission San Xavier del Bac.

As I turned to Lesson 1, I noticed that a prayer to Saint Albert the Great, patron of the natural sciences, began the lesson. Nice! Then I skimmed through the rest of the book and discovered that all of the lessons begin with a prayer to a saint associated with the lesson being studied—what's not to like about that?

In the workbook activities, students' memory skills are constantly tested based on maps that have been studied. Students



don't just study and locate things on maps; they are also given blank maps to fill in from memory. The book even introduces the concept of mnemonics—an essential skill for memorizing geography concepts and material in many other disciplines.

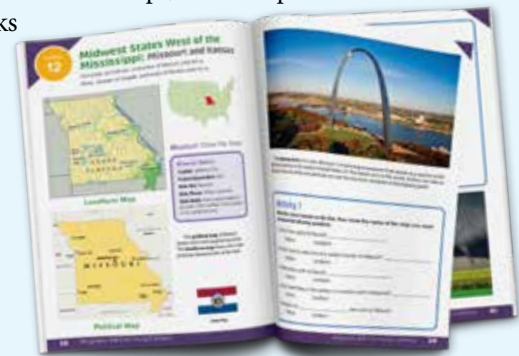
Learning to "Think Harder"

This book also challenges the student's deductive reasoning skills. For example, many map skills books would ask the student to find Switzerland on a map of Europe by telling him that Switzerland borders France, Germany, and Italy.

Seton's new book asks the student to locate Switzerland by only providing him with the official languages spoken there (French, German, and Italian). The book does a great job of making students think. (Don't our kids love it when we tell them to "think harder?")

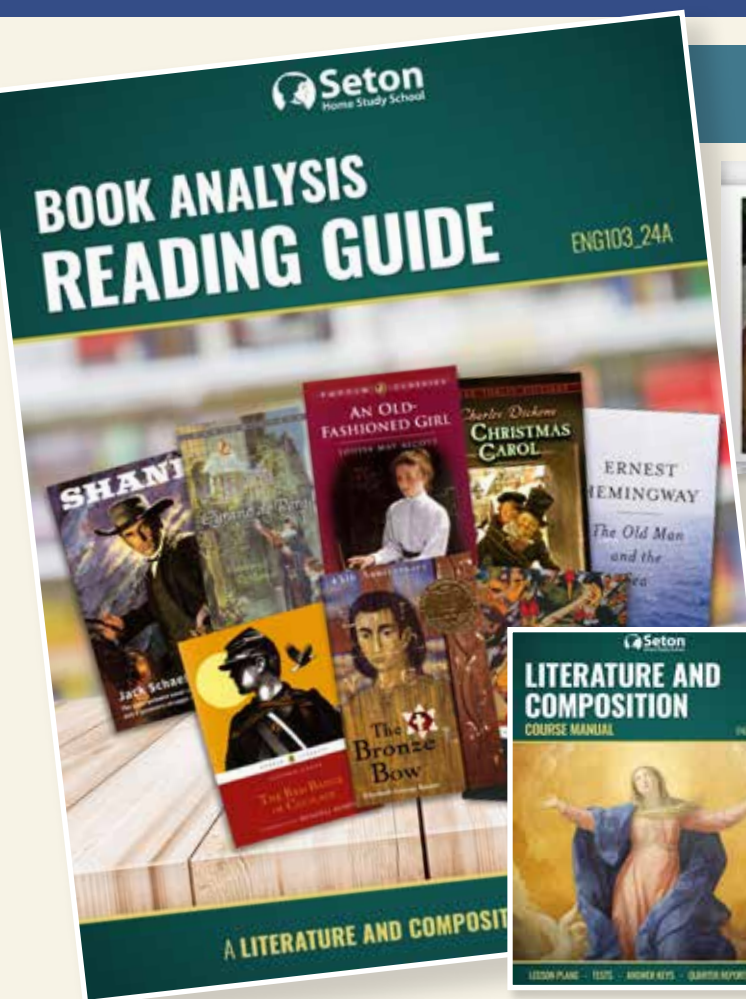
On top of everything else, this book is visually vivid and student-friendly. In addition to maps, there are photos of geographic landmarks throughout the book. Also, there are a variety of short activities in each lesson to help hold the attention of even the most fidgety kid.

I am not the only Seton staff member who loves this book. To quote the sentiments of one staff member after he looked through the book, "Wow! I sure wish I had this book as a kid." I hope your kids enjoy this book the way he wished he had.



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.

High School



LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION



We have added a Literature and Composition Reading Guide, which improves and enriches the book analysis assignments.

The reading guide contains a daily reading schedule, guidance to help students better prepare for book analysis essays, and explanatory enrichment material about the authors and historical contexts to help students better understand and enjoy the books they have chosen.

CATHOLIC APOLOGETICS



We have revised the written tests in *Catholic Apologetics*. It is a slight change in most respects. Still, it improves the students' quality of life, as they are better able to study for the tests, and the scope of the questions is more reasonable. It also highlights the most important Apologetics content from the course.

ONLINE TESTS

Several of our high school courses have weekly tests. Most of our students take these tests online and receive instant feedback. We have previously been in the practice of sending out paper versions of all the tests to anyone enrolled for courses with weekly tests, which are an extra hundred pages that are never used by the vast majority of families.



This year, we will not send out those paper tests by default with four courses: *U.S. History*, *Understanding the Scriptures*, *The Early Church and the Fathers*, and *World Geography*. Paper tests will still be available for any family who requests them at no additional cost, but we estimate this one little change will save a couple hundred reams of paper (over 100,000 sheets). Printable copies of the tests will also be made available online.

U.S. GOVERNMENT ONLINE

U.S. Government Online addresses the theoretical and practical aspects of the United States government from a Catholic perspective. It evaluates America's federal, state, and local governments in light of Catholic morality and social teaching, which means that the way government functions is gauged by its effect on the Church and society.

This course addresses the Framers' intent in creating America's government. It examines what the authors of the Constitution and the other laws that govern our nation meant when they created those laws. The course contains numerous sections of *The Federalist Papers*, which most people consider the finest explanation of the U.S. Constitution ever written. Students will also read sections of Supreme Court opinions that have shaped America's government.

Finally, the course traces the development and growth of government, often contrasting what the Founders intended with how things are today and how they became that way. Students will study the federal government's executive, legislative, and judicial branches and their roles in domestic and foreign policy. Students will also study state and local



government and the relationship of those governments to the federal government and individual citizens.

This course differs from the other U.S. government courses in that it is a ½ credit and only available online. Second, it has 18 chapters, each with a twenty-five-question multiple-choice test. There are no essays. Dr. Paul Clark, who holds both a law degree and a Ph.D. in Philosophy, was the primary course author. This course will become the default government option. It is open only to Juniors and Seniors.

HONORS CIVIL LIBERTIES & CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

This is an advanced course designed for students interested in Political Science, Pre-Law, or American History.

Designed by Dr. Paul Clark, this course examines the most important Supreme Court cases affecting our rights and liberties as American citizens.

Students will learn about the moral, social, political, and economic issues confronting American Catholics.

The course will examine the function of government, the role of the American citizen, and that citizen's civil liberties and responsibilities in light of Catholic social teaching, prominent Catholic philosophers such as Augustine and Aquinas, and contemporary Catholic philosophers and Church documents.



There are written essays for which students are challenged to pick positions on controversial legal questions and be able to support their arguments from the precedents they learned about in the course. Dr. Paul Clark has also recorded eight excellent video lectures for the course.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Our curriculum improvements have not been limited to our standard curriculum. Some of the high school courses in our Special Services program, specially modified for students who need special accommodations, are also being colorized and made available in the SetonOnline format.

Special Services course changes are being made available as they are ready and are not aligned with a June 1st date, as are the standard curriculum updates. Please contact the Special Services Department with any questions.



Photo Credits: Diocese of Allentown; St. Charles Borromeo Seminary; and Mr. Nathan Christensen.



Seton
Home Study School

ALUMNUS PROFILE

FATHER NIKOLAI BRELINSKY

Celebrating the Joy of My Ordination Day

I can hardly believe the day has come: the day when I receive the honorable title of “Father” as a priest of Jesus Christ. It seems like I was only recently attending the Seton graduation in Front Royal (class of 2015). My short blurb in the program said something to the effect of “Nikolai plans to study at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary this fall.” Nine years have gone by, and the completion of my studies has brought me to the joy of my ordination day.

My Seminary Experience

My experience in the seminary was generally very good. Between classes, sports, social activities, and the life of prayer, my time in formation was full and often fruitful. Still, making the transition from homeschooling to college seminary was challenging.

Waking up each morning for chapel and sitting in classrooms for several hours demanded wakeful attention. The schedule was

not mine to decide and regulate. This structure helped me to mature in how I used my time.

The Homeschooling Advantage

An area where homeschooling with Seton gave me a great advantage was incorporating our Catholic faith into the course material. Having studied History, English, Science, etc., in light of the faith, it was not difficult to study Philosophy, Rhetoric, Psychology, etc., with a similar outlook.

These courses—along with the explicitly faith-centered subjects like Scripture and Theology—each helped form my faith life as well as my intellect.

A fantastic aspect of the seminary has been the diverse group of men studying together. In my experience at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Pennsylvania, I shared brotherhood with men from very different backgrounds.



While some of my classmates were likewise homeschooled, others grew up in the inner city, came from suburbia, or came to study from other countries. They hailed from Catholic schools, as well as private and public schools.

I came to appreciate that God does not call only one type of person or another. Rather, His grace is superabundant and mysterious. Men of all sorts find unity in the shared purpose of discernment and formation.

***I know my vocation
because I know Him who
gives it to me.***

The work of discernment and priestly formation is not necessarily easy. The process can be long and often bumpy. The process of being formed into a virtuous man and disciple of Jesus Christ involves self-denial and sacrifice.

The work of prayer demands dedication and perseverance. Sometimes eight years turn into nine or ten – and even eight years can feel like forever!

Looking Back

Yet, looking back, I wonder where the time went. I mostly remember the goodness and the blessings I have experienced through the years. And I have trust and confidence in the

priests who formed me and the Bishop who called me to the priesthood. In the end, all the difficulties have led to something joyful.

I have referred to the conclusion of my time in seminary as “the end,” but it is more truly a beginning. I am beginning my life as a priest of Jesus Christ, as a minister of the Church, and as a spiritual father. The details of what lies ahead I do not know.

What parishes I may serve, people I may meet, places I may go – I can only imagine! Yet, no matter the setting, I have already received my identity in my relationship with God. He has called me and given me the grace to answer. I know my vocation because I know Him who gives it to me.

May we all strive to incorporate our faith into every aspect of our lives and to know, love, and serve God with our whole hearts!

About Father Brelinaky

Reverend (Father) Nikolai Romero Brelinaky is a priest of the Diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania. He is the second of eight siblings, all born and raised in North Carolina.

Fr. Brelinaky learned to love reading and writing in the homeschooling environment provided by his parents. He continues to love writing and frequently looks for opportunities to publish reflections, poetry, or essays.

in the **Schoolroom**



Summer is for the Birds

ONE OF THE BEST PARTS of summer is that we homeschool moms can easily sneak in a lot of learning disguised as fun. If you take a break in the summer months or have a lighter schedule, it is easier to explore this beautiful world. I suggest bird watching as a great way to engage with nature.

Bird watching in the summer offers a fantastic blend of fun and education for children. It is an engaging way to explore nature and learn about the environment. This activity encourages kids to spend time outdoors and fosters a connection with the natural world that can inspire a lifelong appreciation of wildlife and conservation.

Did you know that there are over 11,000 known species of birds? In the United States, the average backyard is visited by up to twenty-five species over a year, so your backyard is an excellent place to start. Hanging a tray feeder will immediately attract many birds to your yard and having a few feeders with different seeds in each will attract a great variety of birds.

Once you have a good number of birds visiting, invest in a local bird guide (Sibley's are the gold standard) to look up those birds you are unfamiliar with.

Many families keep a notebook to note the day and time of bird sightings. You can also download the free eBird app to your phones to share sightings and get information about the birds you observe.

One of the most enchanting benefits of bird watching is that you can become familiar with the different songs sung. Birds generally sing for one of three reasons: to call out when there is danger, for courtship, or to converse.

Each bird species has unique calls, and, with enough birds around, it is mind-blowing to compare how diverse the songs are. God is indeed good in His creation.

To encourage more birds to come to your yard this summer, why not have your children make a few feeders to draw them in?



A Bagel For the Birds Feeder

- Slice a bagel in half.
- Cut four lengths of twine, about 10 inches each.
- Thread each piece of twine through the bagel hole on the top, bottom, and sides.
- Gather the ends at the top and tie them together.
- Cover your bagel in peanut butter and top with a generous helping of seed.
- Hang it up.
- You could also use a pinecone, a rice cake, or citrus fruit. The birds will love it, and the kids will too!

"Orange" You Glad to Have a Feeder?

- Take an orange and cut the top third off.
- Hollow out the orange.
- About halfway down, poke a hole in each side and thread twine or ribbon through the holes to make a holder.
- Fill your orange feeder with food and hang it up.



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



Chelzea Wins 3 Silver Medals in Swimming

The UAE Swimming Federation recognized Chelzea's achievement. She wants to represent her country, the Philippines, in world swimming competitions someday.



Fatima, Osvaldo, Pablo and Oliver are Inspired to Dance

Fatima, Osvaldo, Pablo and Oliver are interested in Mexican Culture and homeschooling gave them time to practice for the Cinco de Mayo parade.

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

setonmagazine.com/students

STAFF SERIES

A chat with those who serve you!



Esther Williams
Testing Department

I was born on the tiny Catholic island of Malta in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, where St. Paul was shipwrecked and brought us the faith. My family immigrated to the U.S.A. when I was two.

My parents wanted to give us a better future, as did so many immigrants who make up our great nation. My father joined the family business in Michigan and worked in the automotive industry. In 1984, my family moved back to Malta. In 2003, I met my American husband, and God brought me back to the U.S.A.

Bill's job move brought us to Virginia and closer to family. I am blessed because my deep Catholic roots and opportunities to work internationally in Europe and the U.S.A. have strengthened my skills in working with other cultures and languages. I think international experience requires adaptability and resilience, challenging your willingness to step out of your comfort zone.

Serving Seton Families

During my nine-year tenure here at Seton, I have worked in several departments. These different positions have given me a well-rounded understanding of how all the departments contribute to and aid homeschoolers and their families. I began as a Conference Coordinator then as a Customer Service representative at Seton Educational Media.

Currently, I'm serving in the Seton Testing Department, where our team aims to deliver sterling service. I try to handle customer questions with ease and clarity. I love knowing and aiding families in choosing the proper tests that measure their students progress to succeed in school or college. It brings me great satisfaction and allows me to use my talents.

My favorite compliment is "You've been extremely helpful; thank you." That thank you is a small gesture that holds great power. I would encourage students or parents to ask for help when needed. There is no shame in seeking help. People are always willing to assist or direct you in the right direction.



What We Love to Do

I love to hike, enjoy the outdoors, and travel. Volunteering brings me joy and satisfaction, whether creating altar flower arrangements with our parish flower guild, cooking someone a meal, or hosting our monthly home neighborhood rosary. When we give, we receive much more than we have given. Bill and I also volunteer with the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington, DC and are secular Carmelites.

PATRON SAINT OF INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES, ECOLOGY, THE CARE FOR
CREATION, AND CANADA

SAINT Kateri Tekakwitha

JULY 14

LILY
OF THE
MOHAWKS,
PRAY FOR
US

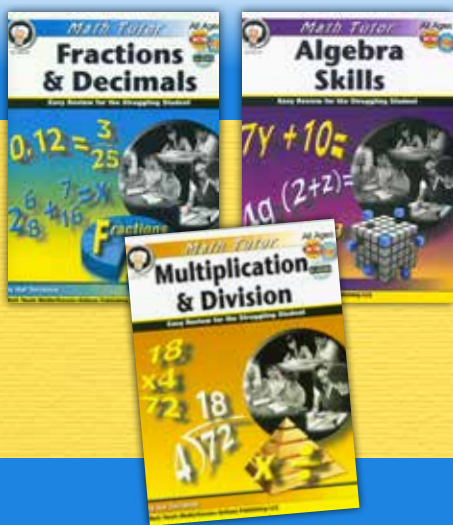


Seton Home Study School

1350 Progress Drive
Front Royal, VA 22630

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 35
Front Royal, VA

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Math Tutor Workbooks

Easy to use workbooks with step-by-step instructions, highlighted key items, and vocabulary definitions make these perfect remedial or supplemental resources. **Grades 4-12.**

\$8.95 - \$10.95

48-80 pp.

SetonBooks.com



The Family's Ministry of Evangelization

The family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates.

In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them.

And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighborhood of which it forms part.

Evangelii Nuntiandi

On Evangelization In The Modern World

Pope Paul VI

December 8, 1975

