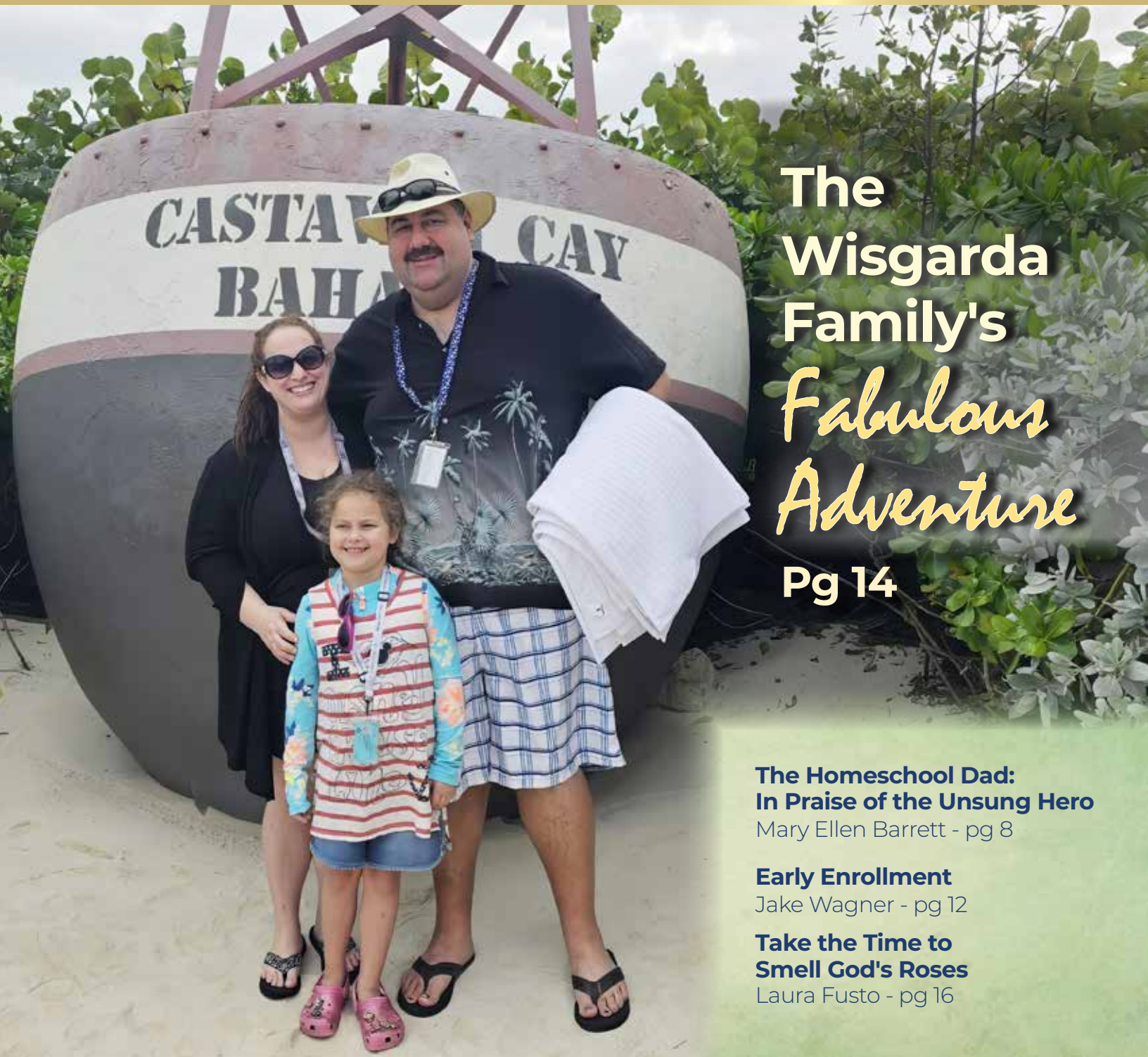


Seton MAGAZINE



Under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church

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The Wisgarda Family's *Fabulous Adventure* Pg 14

**The Homeschool Dad:
In Praise of the Unsung Hero**
Mary Ellen Barrett - pg 8

Early Enrollment
Jake Wagner - pg 12

**Take the Time to
Smell God's Roses**
Laura Fusto - pg 16



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,

I must confess that I feel very sentimental at this time of year about the past celebrations of my children receiving the sacraments, graduations, recitals, sports, and other occasions that mark the spring season. While it was happening, I was harried, but looking back, I can now see how very joyous it was. Seeing Ella Wisgarda (page 14) in her beautiful communion dress brought back those memories.

Let me draw your attention to the article regarding enrolling early. There are many advantages to doing so before the rush of summer. Jake Wagner, one of Seton's Admissions Counselors, answers common questions about early enrollment, and the whole department is available to help through our live chat, email, and phone.

I know many of you have had the pleasure of speaking with Laura Fusto, one of our Academic Counselors. Laura's gentle demeanor and deep desire to help every Seton family have the best homeschool experience make her a perfect person to share her thoughts with us on occasion, here in the magazine. Her article is a perfect reminder in this busy season to look for the roses in your life.

Finally, by the time you read this issue, we may have a new Holy Father. I know you all join me in praying for the repose of Pope Francis and the Cardinals in the conclave. These are historic times, and may the Holy Spirit guide us all.

May God bless and keep you all in these busy times.

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!

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The Wisgarda Family

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Enroll Early!

It's like gaining a four-month head start!

Between early-enrollment and your chosen start date (up to four months later) you have full access to your MySeton account.

You can still:

- **Submit this year's work**
- **Contact counselors**
- **Finish assignments from the previous year**

All while easing into the next grade level.

**Go to ►
enroll.setonhome.org**



"We LOVE when our new books arrive!"

- Stefanie Ebelke

8



14



16



Contents —

6 Your Questions Answered
For Homeschooling Families

8 The Homeschool Dad:
In Praise of the Unsung Hero
Mary Ellen Barrett

10 Ask The Experts:
*What Has Been the
Biggest Blessing of Homeschooling?*

11 This is Why We Homeschool
The Gomez Family

12 Enroll Early -
Get a Head Start on the Year
Jake Wagner

14 The Wisgarda Family's
Fabulous Adventure
Melanie Wisgarda

16 Take the Time to Smell God's Roses
Laura Fusto

18 Booking It:
The Seton Summer Reading Club
Jeff Minick

20 Math, Science, Service, and Success:
The University of Mary's
Hamm School of Engineering
Dr. Terry Pilling

22 Faith, Friendship, and Engineering
at the University of Mary
Matthew Bowes

24 In the Schoolroom:
My First Communion Notebook
Mary Ellen Barrett

25 Preparing Young Catholics for
the Sacraments
Deacon Gene McGuirk

26 Seton Staff Profile:
Jacinta Black - Elementary Grading

27 St. John the Baptist
Saint Poster by Emily Praise

Can students use Grammarly or other proofreading/editing tools for their academic work?

Proofreading tools have been integrated into word processors for a while now. However, some students may be concerned about whether it is acceptable to use Grammarly or equivalent software to help them proofread or edit. These tools can provide recommendations beyond simple spelling/grammar mistakes to make sentences more concise or less awkward. Students can use its simple editing recommendations for conciseness and clarity.

However, using its AI-generation function to generate ideas, analyses, or whole sentences/paragraphs is not acceptable and violates Seton's code of conduct (<https://www.setonhome.org/code-of-conduct/>). The assignments you submit for grading must reflect your original work and ideas. There is a clear, ethical difference between proofreading/editing your work and using Grammarly to write for you.

Sean O'Connor - High School English Counselor

Can I retake a test or redo an assignment?

Yes, usually. There are a couple of exceptions. You may not redo questions that have only two answers (True/False or picking between two choices).

If you take a multiple-choice test in high school, you may only redo it if it has five choices. If it has fewer, you will need to take an alternate test. In the elementary grades (1-8), Seton will count the new grade as your grade. In high school (9-12), your new and old grades will be averaged.

Seton Staff

How do I retake a test?

The most important thing to remember is that you must redo the test like you took the original. If you take an online test, there will be a button for a retake. You only answer the questions that you missed.

If you took a paper test, write down the questions you got wrong on a new sheet of paper and attach it to the original test. Depending on how you turned in the original, you can upload or mail it in.

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

Seton Staff

What's the best way to get edits to you that need to be addressed in the curriculum? (Typos, mistakes, etc.)?

The best way to help Seton resolve miscellaneous errors in the course materials is to report them to our Counseling department. The Counseling department has access to an electronic, error-tracking ticketing system. All reported errors are entered into this system.

The system ensures that the reported errors will be addressed the next time the book or other piece of curriculum is reprinted. If you find an issue that needs to be addressed in the curriculum, please get in touch with a counselor so they can resolve it. Please send your edits to counselors@setonhome.org

John Adams - Seton Curriculum Development

How can we know if our rising sixth grader is ready for next year's curriculum?

Great question! The middle school years—6th through 8th grade—are especially important in preparing students for high school, so it's natural to want to be sure your child is ready.

Seton provides assessment tests to evaluate your child's readiness when you register. These tests cover reading, math, and English, and help identify gaps.

The tests are taken online, take about 2 ½ hours, and can be done with breaks.

For students entering high school, we also request a three-paragraph writing sample based on a book your child has read.

Our academic counselors review the assessments and use the results to make personalized course recommendations. That way, your child's curriculum can be tailored to support their success.

Assessment tests are automatically sent to new families upon registration. Reenrolling families can request them in the **Comment Box** during registration. There is no additional charge for the tests.

For More Information Contact:
Cecilia Sauer, Academic Counseling
csauer@setonhome.org | 540-622-5526



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We're getting ready to reenroll, but if we find that a course isn't a good fit, can we change it?

We're happy to help with that. Our exchange policy and Course Exchange Forms are in the "Introduction" section of your grade-level materials.

The policy and form are also on your MySeton pages. Click the Resources Tab and scroll to Course Exchange Form.

To request an exchange:

1. Complete the "Course Exchange Form."

2. Include the form, the materials you're returning, and the exchange fee.
3. Address your package to:
Attn: Customer Service
4. We strongly recommend using a shipping method with tracking.

Once we receive your package, we'll process the exchange, update your student's records, and send out the new course materials.

Chip Hibel, Customer Service

News from Special Services



The Special Services Department is conducting "Early Bird" phone calls for current Special Services students. These calls are an excellent opportunity to discuss the past year's successes and challenges.

Together, we can plan your child's curriculum for the upcoming school year. This plan will be saved, ensuring that once you're ready to enroll, your books will be sent promptly without requiring an additional appointment.

If your student is enrolled in Special Services and you haven't received an early bird call and want one, please contact us to schedule an appointment.

If your child has completed at least two quarters, you may also choose to reenroll immediately with a modified start date.

Contact Information:

ssdept@setonhome.org | 540-622-5576

Mary Healey,

Special Services 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
ST. THOMAS
HOUSTON



setonhome.org/colleges

Preamble:

Whereas the noble homeschool mom has been lauded in song and story, the homeschool dad often toils in obscurity, his contributions unsung. Let it be known that this injustice shall stand no more!

We, at Seton Magazine, in a spirit of levity and coffee-stained lesson plans, do hereby declare the following:

ARTICLE I: THE RIGHT TO DAD JOKES

- It is the inalienable right of every homeschool dad to inflict puns, wordplay, and groan-inducing jokes upon his captive audience (aka, his children).
- Resistance is futile. Embrace the dad joke. It's part of the curriculum.

ARTICLE II: MASTERY OF MUNDANE MULTITASKING

- A homeschool dad shall be lauded as a master of multitasking, capable of:
- Explaining the Pythagorean Theorem.
- Simultaneously brewing coffee for an exhausted mom.
- Mediating sibling disputes without really knowing what the fuss is about.
- And fielding work calls, all while maintaining a semblance of sanity.

ARTICLE III: THE GREAT OUTDOORS

- We believe that education extends beyond the four walls of the home (and the occasional trip to the library). Therefore, all efforts of the homeschool dad to incorporate nature walks, camping trips, and impromptu building projects accompanied by the occasional "field trip" to the hardware store into the curriculum shall be encouraged.

ARTICLE IV: THE ART OF WINGING IT

- No homeschool dad shall be expected to have all the answers. Indeed, the ability to creatively "wing it," turning a failed experiment into a valuable lesson in humility (and the importance of following instructions), is a core competency. Let it be known that he shall also oversee the cleanup of such messes derived from these winging-it experiments, including, but not limited to, repainting a ceiling covered in baking soda lava.

ARTICLE V: THE SACRED MAN CAVE (OR SHED)

- Every homeschool dad, no matter how much he loves his family, requires refuge, a sanctuary, a place of quiet contemplation. This space, be it a garage, a shed, or a corner of the basement, shall be respected by all members of the household. Any snoring you may hear is merely a figment of your imagination.

ARTICLE VI: THE PROVISION OF SNACKS

- It is the duty of the homeschool dad to ensure a steady supply of snacks.
- These shall be healthy snacks, of course (mostly). But his real gift to the homeschool is that, on occasion, the snacks are the ones mom does not purchase but make learning more...palatable.

ARTICLE VII: THE TECH SUPPORT

- In this digital age, the homeschool dad is the first line of tech support. From fixing the printer to setting up educational apps to troubleshooting a crashed computer, they are the unsung heroes of the digital classroom. Remember, though, before calling upon his valuable knowledge, turn it off and then back on first.

ARTICLE VIII: THE UNEXPECTED EXPERT

- A homeschool dad must always be ready to become an expert in a vast range of subjects. One day, it's ancient history; the next, it's rocket science, and then you're suddenly an expert on Elizabethan literature. When expertise is lacking, refer to Article IV.

ARTICLE IX: THE KEEPER OF THE SCHEDULE (ISH)

- We understand that a schedule is important but also know that life happens. Homeschool Dads are the masters of the "ish" - we aim for 9 a.m., but we might start at 9:30ish or maybe 10ish, but we will get there...eventually.

ARTICLE X: CELEBRATING THE WINS

- We will celebrate every victory, no matter how small. Aced a math test? Time for ice cream! Finally understood the difference between "there," "their," and "they're?" Break out the confetti! Memorized the Ten Commandments? Movie night, complete with popcorn!



Let it be known that the homeschool dad is more than just a supporting character in this grand educational adventure. He is a teacher, a mentor, a provider of snacks, a teller of terrible jokes, and a champion of lifelong learning. He is, in his own slightly chaotic way, indispensable and for him we are truly grateful.

BY MARY ELLEN BARRETT

THE HOMESCHOOL DAD:

In Praise of the Unsung Hero



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*.





Ask the Experts:

What Has Been the Biggest Blessing Homeschooling?

Three Veteran Homeschooling Moms Share Their Experience

Watching the Little Ones Flourish...



The biggest blessing I've experienced through homeschooling has been time spent with my children. Now that I am the mother of numerous adult children, I know first-hand how quickly time passes and how dear it truly is.

Homeschooling provided me with opportunities to watch my little ones flourish and grow. It afforded me chances to witness the milestones and experience the achievements of my teenagers.

Homeschooling allowed me to be present in the lives of my family members. And that presence led to greater insights into each child's needs, challenges, and talents.

Time in the day-to-day education of my children equated to more chances: to have an impact on their understanding of the world, to direct their education in more effective ways, to provide support when there were challenges, to applaud the victories, and, overall, to show them that learning is about far more than just the memorizing of facts and formulas.

“ *Time is a Fleeting Resource.* ”

Time is a fleeting resource. We don't get to go back. However, we can fully immerse ourselves in each moment as it unfolds, living it to the fullest. Homeschooling offered my family and me that chance. And now that more than half of my beautiful brood have spread their wings and flown the nest, I am eternally grateful for the blessing of time I had with each one.

Tara Brelinsky, North Carolina

So Many Blessings of Homeschooling...



There were so many blessings I had to make a list.

1. The Catholic faith is woven into every subject and every facet of learning.

2. Being able to customize each child's curriculum (I have two who are neurodivergent). I have both had a child master a concept in four days when the lesson plans take two weeks and have had to slow down and work a bit longer for the concept to "click." Homeschooling allows for this kind of teaching.

3. My husband and I are in charge of what is taught, not a school board with its arbitrary calendar, lesson plans, mandatory tests, and values that are directly contrary to my family's.

4. We have so much more time together as a family. This extra time has built a closeness and deep love that would be very hard to foster if we spent all day away from each other.

5. We have more free time, which we can spend serving others, playing games, camping, hiking, or any number of other activities.

6. A truly second-to-none education.

7. Paired with closely monitored electronics and no social media, my kids have enjoyed a peaceful childhood without bullying, peer pressure, and overwhelming stress, which are so common today.

8. Seton especially promotes independent learning. My kids don't wait for me to tell them their next assignment. They are learning how to learn and think critically.

Kristen Brown, Virginia

Blessings Abound Year After Year...



With twenty-five years of homeschooling to reflect on, and to choose my biggest blessings, I can recount so many.

Should I rank my biggest blessings to be the fact that we have been able to go to daily Mass and frequent confession for several years now?

Or should I rank my biggest blessing as the fact that I have been able to choose what and how to teach my children in a way that suits them best? Should I rank my biggest blessing that my children all have good relationships with each other and us, their parents?

All in all, I think it can be summed up that the biggest blessings have been a shared life together. Our daily lives, our faith, our memories, and all that it entails have been shared together for twenty-five years.

*“Grateful for the Choice
We Made to Homeschool.”*

I am so grateful for the choice we made to homeschool our children. The blessings abound year after year.

Susan Brock – North Carolina

THIS IS WHY WE HOMESCHOOL



I love how grounded the curriculum is. Even parents learn how to be better people when teaching the lessons to the children. I also love the flexibility of the schedule.

We finish the lessons in the morning and are free to perform extracurricular activities in the afternoon.

The books are excellent! I also love that we get a new rosary for each student at every enrollment.

The Gomez Family, Doha, Qatar

Enroll Early –

BY JAKE WAGNER

**Get a Head Start
on the Year!**



Seton allows you to enroll your students and receive all your materials up to four months before you begin your homeschooling year—a flexible option with many benefits.

Receive Extra Time

When a student enrolls early, all of your books and materials are shipped immediately—even if the official start date you choose is months away. This extra time, as much as four months if you want, allows families to begin reviewing and working on the new grade's material at their own pace.

During the window between early enrollment and your chosen start date, students still have full access to their MySeton account and submit work, contact counselors, and finish assignments from the previous year while slowly easing into the next grade level.

Choosing the Right Dates

One key detail to be mindful of during the online enrollment process. On the "Student Information" page, there's a dropdown menu labeled "Ship Date." This date determines when materials will be sent—not the student's official start date.

A Key Detail

Leave your intended start date in the "Comments" section on the "Household Information" tab if you'd like a delayed start. Your materials will still be shipped immediately, but the 12-month enrollment period won't begin until your requested start date.

Maximize Discounts

One of the most practical benefits of early enrollment is the ability to receive the multi-student discount, even if not all children are ready to begin the new school year at the same time.

Typically, this discount only applies when all students are enrolled together on a single application. With early enrollment, a family can enroll all children at once to take advantage of the discount, even if some students need extra time to finish the current year. The four-month window gives everyone the flexibility they need.

Avoid the Peak-Season Rush

Seton's busiest enrollment season runs from early July through mid-September, with high volumes of applications and phone calls. Enrolling early allows families to complete the process before this rush, ensuring quicker processing and faster shipment of materials.

Time for Aid Approval

Seton offers financial aid for families in need at setonhome.org/financial-aid. However the approval process—submitting income details and household size and awaiting a response—can extend the time it takes to enroll. When families enroll early, this delay doesn't interfere with their intended start date, removing added stress from the process.

State-Funded Programs

As more families use state funding options to pay for homeschooling, it's important to note that these payments can take two to three weeks (or more) to reach Seton—especially if there are errors or delays by the state.

These delays can significantly postpone the start of the school year. Early enrollment solves this problem. Since the student doesn't intend to begin immediately, any state payment delay is far less disruptive.

Get a Head Start!

Early enrollment provides families with a head start, flexibility, discounts, and peace of mind. It's an effective way to manage your homeschooling year on your terms—and to avoid the delays and stress that can come from waiting until the peak season.

Go to ►
enroll.setonhome.org



Jake Wagner is a Seton Admissions Counselor. He and his wife are proud Christendom College grads and are raising their two young children, the oldest of whom is enrolled with Seton, in Front Royal, VA. His pastimes include basketball and following professional sports.



BY MELANIE WISGARDA

The Wisgarda Family's Fabulous Adventure

We are a small, close-knit family traveling the journey of life together. Our Catholic faith is the foundation of our home, and we embrace a more traditional way of living. We believe in an “old-fashioned” home where the wife is a stay-at-home mother and teacher, and the father goes to work to provide. Our lifestyle allows us to grow together in faith and cherish the time we have as a family.

Melanie, a dedicated stay-at-home mother, keeps the household running and is the main teacher in our homeschool. Dad, Gary, serves as a sergeant in the county jail, and is our math teacher. Ella, is 7 years old and a rising third grader. We do everything together, from prayers to chores, and strive to keep Christ at the center of our daily lives.

Why We Chose Seton

One of the main reasons we chose homeschooling was to fully immerse our faith in our daughter's education. Seton has allowed us to do that, integrating our Catholic values into her schooling to strengthen our unity in Christ.

The curriculum's flexibility enables us to attend holy days of obligation and daily Mass when possible. It also helps us protect Ella from influences that do not align with our beliefs while reinforcing God's presence in her education. Our time on this earth is short, and we treasure spending as much time together as possible.

Strongly Catholic

We specifically chose Seton because of its strong Catholic identity and academic excellence. Many of its students have excelled in their studies, and some have pursued religious vocations, including people we know personally.

Ella is interested in becoming a nun, inspired by her favorite saints, Saint Therese of Lisieux and Saint Faustina Kowalska. Shortly after making her First Communion, she became an altar server at just 6 years old and continues to grow in her faith.

Ella begins her day with her Morning Offerings and the Divine Praises. Before breakfast, she learns about the saint of the day, and then, depending on the schedule, Ella and Melanie focus on the day's subjects. Afterward, they break for lunch, followed by hymns and listening to *Christine in Action*. She especially loves listening to Fr. Chris Alar and his *Explaining the Faith* series.

When Gary gets home, it is time for math. After math, we spend time together as a family. Thursdays are particularly special, as we attend Adoration, Holy Hour, and Confession at Saint Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Church.

Flexibility of Seton

By far, the greatest benefit of homeschooling has been the ability to be together as a family and share the love of God. We can also create a schedule that works best for us and includes field trips. The flexibility allows us to take advantage of days when Ella is highly motivated while providing the time needed to focus on more challenging subjects.

One of the most significant challenges in our homeschooling journey has been maintaining focus some days.

Keeping a 7-year-old engaged at home can be challenging, especially when tackling tougher lessons. At times, the home atmosphere can be distracting. When Gary was on the night shift, balancing his work schedule with teaching responsibilities was difficult. However, despite these challenges, homeschooling's flexibility allowed us to adapt our schedule as needed, ensuring that learning remained a priority without sacrificing family time.

Strength in Prayer

DON'T GIVE UP! There will be difficult days when homeschooling feels like a heavy cross to bear. Your child will succeed, struggle, lose focus, and succeed again. In the moments of challenge, I find strength in a special prayer card with pictures of my grandparents. They were my greatest teachers in academics and faith. I remember their unwavering patience and dedication, and it reminds me to persevere. As Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it."

We are incredibly grateful for the Seton Home Study Program. The integration of faith throughout the curriculum is outstanding, and the program remains affordable for families. We look forward to continuing our journey with Seton, knowing it is helping us provide Ella with a strong foundation in both education and faith.



Take the Time to Smell God's Roses

BY LAURA FUSTO

WHEN I was asked to write an article for this month's *Seton Magazine*, my first thought was, "I am too busy!" My desk was cluttered with projects, and there were what seemed to be a million phone calls and emails to be answered. It was 3 p.m. and I had not even had lunch. I politely answered that I would think about it and went right back to work. I did not willingly accept the rose that God had offered me.

Writing is a rose in my life. It allows me to reflect on all that is going on in my busy existence. I enjoy it. It calms my soul. It allows me to breathe.

Roses are a gift from God. They take us away from a moment and give us a time to rest and reflect on the important things in life. God's roses call us to reconnect with someone or something that brings joy to our lives. They remind us about God's purpose for us on earth.

**God gives us
roses everyday.**

God gives us roses every day. It is our job to recognize and accept them with joy.

ENJOY THE ROSES

So many times in life, we forget to take time to enjoy the roses. Sometimes, we even refuse them when given to us. The nagging agony of a busy life strips time away from the people and things most important in our lives. We swallow the guilt felt when we do not accept the roses.

The times we feel bad when our four-year-old asks to play a game and is rejected once again because dinner must be cleaned up. When a call from an aging relative is cut short because our child needs help with math. When a spiritual book given to us by a priest is put aside to be read "when I have time." When an invitation from a friend to take a walk is rejected.

When we homeschool, it often feels difficult-impossible-to find time for the roses. Sometimes, roses are offered when we are most stressed in our lives. These are the times when accepting God's roses is most important. Roses are God's way of telling you to take a break.

**Make time to find and accept the
roses that God gives you in life.**

On a day when your temperature is at the boiling point, take a trip to a museum to admire art, to a park to explore God's creation, or to anywhere else that will cool your mind. Everyone needs to step outside of "everyday life" once in a while. If the water seems to be consistently boiling, give our counselors a call to talk things out and refresh your mind. These roses are being extended to you if you need them.

FINDING ROSES

Today, a week later, I accepted the rose that God gave to me. When I finally accepted this rose, God gave me another-the words I have written here today. I took time out of my busy workday to write this. The interesting thing is that I did not have any interruptions while writing this. God knew that I needed a break from the usual. My soul is quiet and happy.

Make time to find and accept the roses that God gives you in life. Willingly embrace them. Smell their sweet fragrance touched by angels' breath. With proper tending, their precious velvet petals will bring you greater peace in a moment and closer to God's Heavenly garden.



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.



Booking It

The Seton Summer Reading Club

BY JEFF MINICK



There is no frigate like a book,” Emily Dickinson wrote, “To take us lands away.”

Summer is the perfect time to jump aboard that frigate.

Think about it. For many of us, summertime summons up thoughts of vacation. We’ll spend a week at the beach, make our way to Iowa to visit Uncle Bud’s farm, head for the mountains of North Carolina to beat the heat of Atlanta, or set out on a driving tour of the American West.

We venture off on these excursions for all sorts of reasons: to relax, to escape our routine, to get a change of scenery, to discover new places and seek out adventure.

All to the good. But as Dickinson suggests in her poem, books and reading also can sweep us off to strange lands and grand adventures. From the comfort of a backyard hammock or a sofa in the den, we can explore faraway countries, meet with heroes and villains, solve mysteries in fog-bound London, fight with dragons and monsters, walk with the saints, go back in time to Classical Rome or spring forward a millennium to battle alien invaders on Mars.

Summer is the perfect time to grab some books and set out on an adventure, especially for students who are unburdened by the demands of school.

Which brings us to the Seton Summer Reading Club.

Seton Home Study School, like most schools, recognizes the importance of reading over the summer. Seton’s counselors and teachers, like their counterparts in other schools, know that reading well is a vital life skill, that good books not only add beauty and wisdom to the storehouse of our souls but also expand our horizons and make us more fully human.

Unlike many other schools, however, Seton’s Summer Reading Club offers one more reason for reading: sheer pleasure.

Many teachers assign certain books to be read over the summer, a burdensome task for students who may dislike the mandated titles. In the Seton Summer Reading Club, however, under the guidance of their parents, students are free to read whatever books they wish.

Joining the
club is easy!

Go to ► SetonBooks.com



In his marvelous *Book By Book: Notes on Reading and Life*, literary critic Michael Dirda reminds parents to “encourage any reading interest—no matter how frivolous or unacademic you find it...The child who hunches over the Hardy Boys today will read Agatha Christie tomorrow and *Crime and Punishment* a few years after—if he or she is encouraged.”

By allowing its students the liberty to select their own books for reading, Seton hopes to reinforce that parental encouragement suggested by Dirda.

Seton does provide its students with a list of suggested books compiled by several counselors. Chip Hibl, Director of Seton Educational Media and the creator of the Summer Reading Club devised the Club for two reasons: to encourage reading at all levels throughout the summer and to make people more aware of the fine collection of literature available from Seton.

This year’s recommendations include Jan Brett’s *Annie and the Wild Animals* and classics, such as *Anne of Green Gables* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Check out the best-selling series *The Gospel Time Trekkers*, which is a delightful journey that immerses the young reader in Bible times and the story of the Gospel. Don’t forget Fr. Hardon’s *Christopher Columbus: The Catholic Discovery of America* and the dozens of saint biographies for all ages—pre-k to adult.

Joining the Summer Reading Club is easy.

You can simply go to setonbooks.com/summerreading, where you’ll find everything you need: instructions, reading lists, and more. The official start date is June 1st, but you can go before then for an early start!

You then read six books. After completing each book, you write a short summary describing its contents or deliver a similar oral report to a parent. When you finish the six books and your reports,

*There is no frigate like a book
to take us lands away.*

-Emily Dickinson

you send your list of titles to Seton. At this point, you’ll receive a Certificate of Achievement, which you may then add to your portfolio. (Mr. Hibl reminds parents that they might offer their student readers other incentives, such as an ice cream treat for each book read.)

So there you go. It’s time to hoist the sails of Dickinson’s frigate, weigh anchor, and set out on your summer adventure.



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. A frequent contributor to *Epoch Times* and *Intellectual Takeout*, today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, VA.

Math, Science, Service, and Success:

The University of Mary's Hamm School of Engineering

BY DR. TERRY PILLING



Step foot in the Hamm School of Engineering, and it is no wonder why the University of Mary's engineers are in high demand. The windows of every classroom are covered in dry-erase equations and project notes.

Inside the classrooms, students are collaborating and eagerly piecing together an apparatus. Machines are buzzing and creating round-the-clock to keep up with the accelerated pace of rigorous classes. Professors are encountering students and beaming with pride. While our high-achieving program is alluring in and of itself, it is the servant leadership instilled in Mary's engineers that proves excellence.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae

In a secular industry that can be known to pull away from the faith, the University of Mary's engineering program grounds itself in truth and ensures Catholic identity. Leaning into *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, we prepare students to solve real-world challenges while upholding Catholic social teaching.

We integrate theology and philosophy courses into our graduation requirements so that students critically evaluate the relationship of technology, society, and the environment. It is this emphasis on virtue and moral understanding that awards our engineers distinction. Rather than focusing on "What can I get?" our students ask, "How can I give?"

Service is at the heart of our engineering education. The Hamm School of Engineering came to be after recognizing a need for an engineering school in western North Dakota. Following the spirit of our beloved sponsors and founders, the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery, we heard the call and sought to break ground.

Now, service structures our curriculum through partnerships and projects. Students participate in paid internships starting their sophomore year, gaining real-world experience. We seek out local firms and community needs to design service-learning projects so that our students exercise their technical skills while contributing to the common good.



Cutting-Edge Research

Designing an engineering curriculum is the art of balancing consistency in an ever-changing field. Our aim is to allow students to explore cutting-edge research while excelling in core competencies.

The Hamm School of Engineering's hands-on laboratory makes learning practical. It is in spaces like the lab that give students the permission to play — learning in the most effective ways. While the end goal is to create servant leaders in engineering, we realize each student will have a peculiar path to that result.

Some engineering schools will push back on scholar-athletes due to the conflicts in demanding course requirements and intense athletic schedules. We welcome scholar-athletes and encourage our students to be involved in campus activities and events. We want students to become who God meant for them to be — listening to the still, small voice amid the booming world of engineering.

To foster their discernment, students take ownership of a real-world senior design capstone project in partnership with industry experts and engineering companies. Our seniors work alongside global corporations like Continental Resources, Marathon, and Doosan Bobcat.

Mary's Engineers

Showcasing their expertise, Mary's engineers are gaining exposure to the workforce and traction in the job market. Each project is assigned a project manager from the partnering corporation — someone with direct experience and an invested interest in the project's success. Our students cultivate life-long relationships with project managers who provide expert mentorship.

What makes the Hamm School of Engineering distinct is not the product but the people. Our faculty is keeping the Catholic identity alive and well. We hold our students to the highest academic standard while celebrating their unique gifts and God-given abilities. Mary engineering courses have a maximum class size of 20 students, so professors can intentionally serve their students and meet individual learning needs. Students rave about the one-on-one mentorship opportunities this provides.

Benedictine Value of Hospitality

Our faculty fosters the Benedictine value of hospitality as we strive to “receive all as Christ.” Because our professors create spaces that warmly welcome students, conversations, and questions that fill the Hamm School of Engineering. I firmly believe this emphasis on personal engagement paired with expertise drives our success.



I am proud of how far we have come in just ten years. We earned full accreditation from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) in 2023 for our Bachelor of Science degrees in civil, mechanical, and electrical engineering, and now offer world class-programs in environmental engineering, construction engineering, construction management, computer engineering, and computer science.

Graduates of the University of Mary's Hamm School of Engineering currently sport 100% job placement and internship rates. But I am most proud of our engineers, who are faithful servant leaders using their skills to mold our future world.

Here at the University of Mary, engineering is more than a profession; it's a vocation. If you feel called to study engineering and want to be prepared for the workforce while flourishing in your Catholic faith, I'd love to chat with you!

For more information about UMary's Newman Guide Recommended accredited engineering programs, visit:
umary.edu/engineering



Dr. Terry Pilling is the Dean of UMary's Hamm School of Engineering, which has 15 faculty members, 300 students, and 8 engineering and computer science degree options. The school has a 100% internship and job placement rate and over 95% first-time pass rate for the National Fundamentals of Engineering exam required for licensure. Dr. Pilling is also an Oblate of the Order of St. Benedict at Assumption Abbey in Richardton, ND.



Faith, Friendship, and Engineering at



My name is Matthew Bowes. I am a Seton alum who will graduate from the University of Mary in April with a degree in mechanical engineering.

The University of Mary caught my eye because it is a Newman Guide-recommended school with an accredited engineering program. I loved the campus's vantage point overlooking the Missouri River and the city of Bismarck. My tour was one-on-one when I visited, which I hadn't experienced at any other school.

School of Engineering

My tour guide not only showed me around campus but also shared the Benedictine values of the university. When we walked through the Hamm School of Engineering, it was the most recent addition to campus, full of new machines and state-of-the-art classrooms. The University of Mary had just celebrated its first class of engineering graduates, and I knew I wanted to be part of this pioneering program with its small class sizes.

My time at Mary has been filled with faith, fun, and rigorous coursework. There's always something to do on campus, from daily Masses to sporting events to board games in the 24/7 campus restaurant. I regularly pray novenas in our scenic Marian Grotto and stop by Benet Chapel to sit in the silence of perpetual adoration. Luckily, I don't have to go alone; a friend is always willing to pray with me.

A Caring Faculty

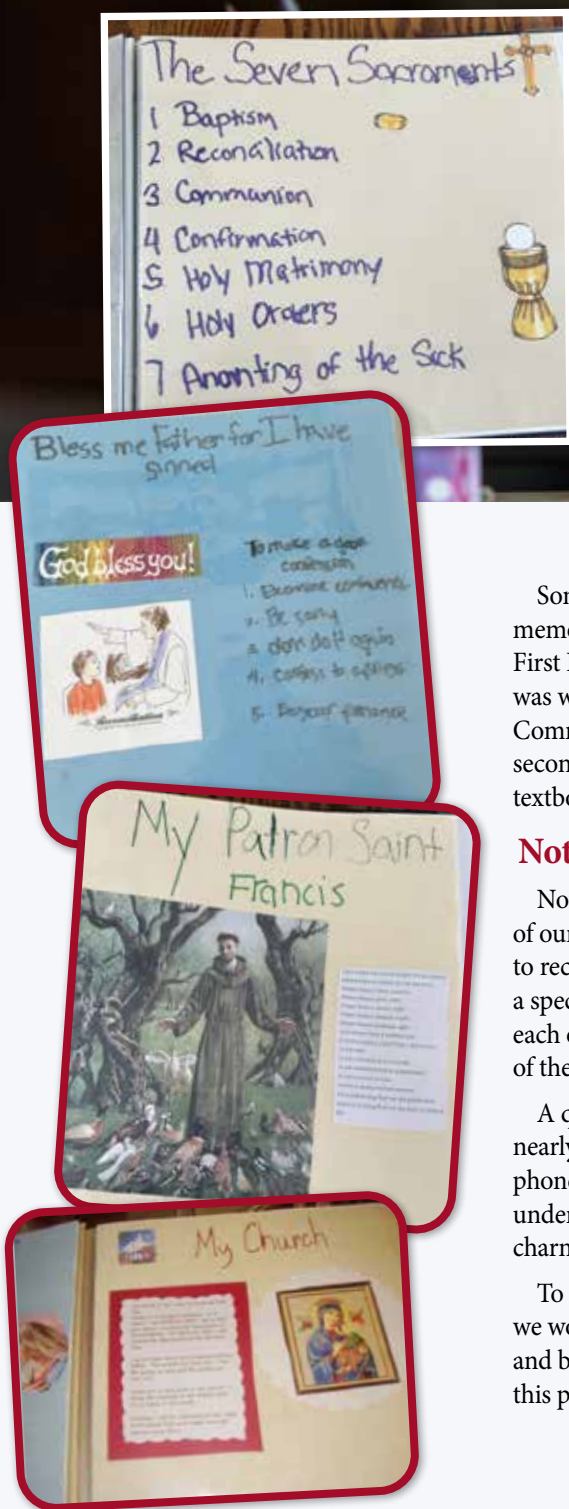
The University of Mary's Catholic curriculum gives me the opportunity to study virtues and the lives of the Saints. Throughout my coursework, I find myself growing in my faith and going beyond problem-solving. I now wonder, "Why does this problem exist?"

Engineering is tough work, but it's rewarding. Thankfully, the Hamm School of Engineering has knowledgeable professors who strive to make personal connections with students. The faculty cares beyond performance in the classroom, helping me with employment opportunities and preparing for the career fair. The career fair allowed me to network and land a paid summer internship with my friends Mike and Ben through Watford City McKenzie Electric. We made the best of our summer in the Badlands.

Seton Home Study School enabled me to succeed in Mary's engineering program. I took advanced courses at my own pace and dove deeper into my love of mathematics. Through these higher-level courses and Seton's flexible, faith-based structure, I found my vocation in engineering.

In the end, words don't do the University of Mary justice. If you're a Seton student looking for somewhere to expand your horizons, create lifelong relationships, and immerse yourself in the Catholic faith, sign up for a visit and come see the campus for yourself!

My First Holy Communion Notebook



Some of my fondest homeschooling memories are preparing my children for First Holy Communion. A special one was when my oldest and I created a First Communion Notebook alongside Seton's second-grade religion book, my favorite textbook we publish.

Notebooking

Notebooking was a fun, creative part of our homeschool. To help Katie prepare to receive Our Lord reverently, we made a special notebook together—a tradition each of my children later enjoyed as part of their second-grade religion studies.

A quick note about the photos—they're nearly 20 years old, taken long before phones had fancy cameras. Thanks for understanding the nostalgic, pre-digital charm!

To begin with, I made a list of the pages we would include. Keeping this simple and being flexible is the key to success in this project.

Here is the Basic List I Worked With:

- Parish
- Godparents
- Patron saint
- Prayer
- Angels
- Eucharist
- Pope
- Sacraments
- Mass vessels
- Act of Contrition

Some notebooks included more or less content, especially from boys less interested in the craft—and that's okay. The pages use *St. Joseph's First Holy Catechism*, reinforcing key concepts for First Communion.

Start by gathering materials. I spread the project out over a few weeks, doing a page every few days. Eventually, I kept everything in a basket for easy access when it was time to create.

For some of the projects, I used a 12x12 scrapbook; and for others, I used a one-inch binder and 8.5x11 paper with page protectors. Either will give you a lovely book.

Here are the Materials You Will Need:

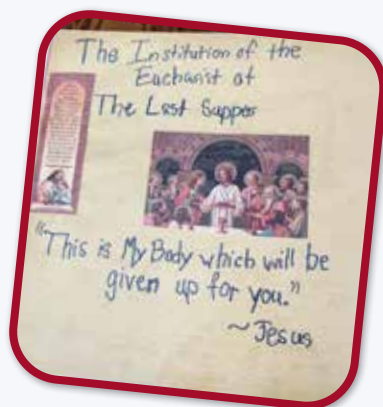
- Copies of some of the images from the Catechism and Fr. Lovasik's books.
- Pictures of our church (cut from the bulletin)
- Pictures of our Pope, Pastor, and Bishop
- Coloring pages of patron saints and other images.
- Glue stick
- Markers
- Stickers
- Scissors
- Holy Cards

For each page, we'd chat about what they wanted to include, and I'd share a few ideas too. Then, we'd come up with a design together. On the angel page, for example, I'd ask them to say the guardian angel prayer, then they'd either copy it, write it themselves, or glue on a printed version. We'd color an angel, cut it out, maybe add some stickers—and that was it! Most pages took about fifteen minutes. Helping with the writing kept things from feeling overwhelming and let them focus on the fun and the meaning behind it all.



On the big day, we displayed the notebook with their baptismal candle, flowers, prayer book, and other accessories of the day. Relatives celebrating with us enjoyed looking at the book and admiring the pages. It is a happy memory.

If you create your own First Holy Communion notebooks, we would love to see pictures of your project. Send your photos to: rhibl@setonhome.org. You might see your project in an upcoming issue of the *Seton Magazine*.



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*.



BY DEACON GENE MCGUIRK

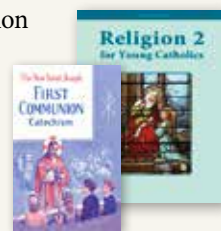
Preparing Young Catholics for the Sacraments

At Seton Home Study School, religious education is central to our curriculum from Pre-K through 12th grade. Our courses are comprehensive, faithfully grounded in the teachings of the Church, and enriched by the insights of the Second Vatican Council and the full tradition of Catholic doctrine.

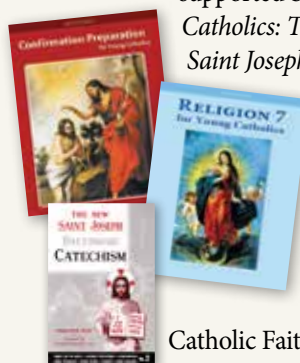
Pope Leo XIII wrote in the 1897 encyclical *Militantis Ecclesiae*, *The Church Militant*, that Religion must not be taught to youth only during certain hours but must permeate the entire system of education with a sense of Christian piety. The whole Seton curriculum follows the pope's teaching.

Sacramental Preparation Programs

We offer strong sacramental preparation programs. First Holy Communion preparation is found in our second-grade curriculum, using our own *Religion 2 for Young Catholics* (bearing both Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur), alongside *The New Saint Joseph First Communion Catechism*.



Confirmation preparation is provided in seventh grade with *Religion 7 for Young Catholics* as the core text, supported by *Bible History for Young Catholics: The New Testament* and *The New Saint Joseph Baltimore Catechism No. 2*, all with ecclesiastical approval.



These trusted materials offer one of the best sacramental preparations available in the English-speaking world, faithfully passing on the riches of the Catholic Faith to the next generation.

STAFF SERIES

*A chat with those
who serve you!*

Jacinta Black – Elementary Grading

In 1984, while attending Christendom College in Front Royal, VA, I was introduced to Kevin Clark, the son of Dr. Mary Clark, through his future wife, my dormmate, Laura Hibl. Not long after, I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Clark herself, which led to a job opportunity at Seton. Throughout college, I worked for her during the summers, assisting with answer keys, lesson plans, and other tasks.

After graduating, I spent a year in Seton's grading department before teaching in Gallup, NM, for another year. In 1990, I returned to Seton full-time—and I've been here ever since.



The Happiest Times

I am happiest working with the parents, ensuring papers are graded, and working through the challenges that sometimes arise with tests and assignments. I help find lost papers, ensure certain work is graded on time, work with the elementary graders, update answer keys, write new answer keys when needed, and often give small seminars on different aspects of grading, such as grading book reports.



The best part of my job is talking to the parents – helping them through any crisis they may encounter, and hearing those words, “I didn’t understand, but now I do - thank you so much for helping me!” I also enjoy talking with the students, assisting them with their assignments, and helping them understand why an answer is incorrect and how to find the right one.

I live in Woodstock, VA, with my husband and eldest son, who is studying for his Master’s in history. My middle son was in the Marines, is now in the reserves, and lives in VA. My youngest daughter lives and works in Florida. I enjoy engaging with my adult children. I love crocheting, hiking, and being outside. I love to read, and my favorite genre is historical novels.

Have Patience

If I could offer parents one piece of advice, it would be to have patience—with their children and, most importantly, with themselves. Many parents feel they need to get everything right from day one—that every assignment must be completed perfectly and on time. They worry their child’s education will suffer when things don’t go as planned. But this simply isn’t true.

You love your children, and that love is what truly matters. Be patient with yourself as you grow into this new lifestyle alongside them. No one is perfect. Above all, place your trials, struggles, and worries at the feet of Our Lord, always praying for His guidance and grace in your homeschooling journey.



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REQUIESCAT IN PACE

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and may
perpetual light shine upon him. May our
Holy Father Pope Francis rest in peace.



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