



Seton Home Study School

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Lent

Sacrifice is the word we think of most often during these Lenten weeks. And home schooling does demand sacrifice from us, sometimes tremendous sacrifice.

It would be easy if all we had to do was abstain from meat or give up desserts. But we find as we grow spiritually, we need to give up ourselves as well.

We need to give up our own desires and wishes and wants to draw closer to Jesus. Sometimes we choose to give up temporarily even what we need, such as sleep or exercise.

Sacrifice out of love for God involves not only giving up, but it also involves giving to, giving of ourselves to others. Most of all, it involves giving of our time, both our quality time and our quantity time, for our family out of love.

As any child will tell you, time is a precious gift to receive. By taking time and by making time with our children, we are giving our very selves, the gift of our personality. When we home school with our children — talking about history, listening to a story being read, working on a science project, designing a May altar — we are giving of ourselves through spending time.

God decided to send His Son to come into this world as a Man and to spend 33 years of time interacting with people. Then He decided to spend the rest of time, until the end of the world present with us on the altar, in the tabernacle, and in our hearts.

The Incarnation means many things to us, but what we may consider now is that He cared so much about us to spend time with us, giving us Himself, showing us by example how to sacrifice, how to fast, how to give so completely out of love.

Unless we are really ready to die to ourselves, and to give completely to those whom we love, and to those who need love, for His sake, we cannot be sacrificing according to the example given to us by Jesus.

During Lent especially, we cannot deny Jesus anything He asks. We want to sacrifice, to fast, and to give to others not only because we owe it to Him Who has done so much for us, but also because we love Him Who has so loved us.

In a spirit of Christ-like sacrifice, we can actually become happy in explaining a concept again and again to our child, in reteaching that lesson for the fiftieth time, in working alongside our children as we clean up the basement from the mud and dirt tracked in by the neighborhood boys.

We can have joy in our headaches while we teach math as we unite that suffering with Jesus as He was crowned with thorns out of love for others. We can have joy in the pain of our feet as we walk with the children to church as we join in the pain He felt in His feet from the nails, for the sake of His children.

We can finally come to understand the joy of those saints who were called to give more. We can finally understand those saints who joyfully begged God to send them to some hostile and pagan land so they could give even more to Christ through increased trials and tribulations, for the sake the souls of His children.

We may even be able to say with the saints, “Thank you, Jesus, for giving me these opportunities to sacrifice for You. In joy, I offer this up for You. Help me, Jesus, to teach my children and my spouse the joy of sacrifice for You. For now I know that sacrifice for others out of love for You is true and everlasting joy.”

Inside . . .

<i>Teaching Ninth Grade ..</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Breaking News</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>The Rest of Your Life ...</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Coupon Shopping</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>News and Notes</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Called to Married Love .</i>	<i>7</i>

Teaching Ninth Grade

by Dr. Mary Kay Clark

High school! As some parents begin home schooling in the early years, they cringe when they think about home schooling at the high school level. Yet the ones most successful in teaching high school students are those who started their home schooling when the children were in the elementary grades.

When students begin home schooling at the high school level, parents are hopeful their children have the study skills to work somewhat independently. However, in many cases, students are lacking both study skills and motivation. They miss their friends, sports activities, music, etc.

Not only does the new beginning home schooling student at the high school level suddenly come face to face with serious academic work (paragraphs, essays, reports, critical analysis, and research reports), the student also must face himself, his own inner strengths and weaknesses. A new student may need extra time to finish his work while he grows spiritually and emotionally. Sometimes parents discover more disciplining is needed than they thought necessary.

In General

All students experience a certain amount of anxiety as they enter high school. It helps if parents take the time to go over the materials with the student in a fairly thorough manner. Before beginning the course, parents should take time in each subject to locate the lessons, survey the structure of the course, notice where assignments, keys, quizzes, tests, discussion questions, and quarter report forms are located.

Parents often feel they do not need to help their high school student very much because he already has his study skills. We recommend that for the first month or so, parents work closely with the new student to make sure that the study skills really have been attained.

Purchasing a computer is almost a necessity for high school. The amount of work which can be done and the easy high-quality output which can be achieved with a computer helps the independent learner to be proud of his accomplishments.

Daily Mass is so important for the high school student to help him deal with his own spiritual questions, his own personal development, and his academic achievement. Frequent confession is also necessary in the personal spiritual growth of a young person at this age.

English

Seton's English curriculum is challenging but rewarding for the Catholic high school student and his parents. In ninth grade, the student takes a semester of Grammar followed by a semester of Composition. English 9 covers more grammar, as well as spelling and vocabulary. The emphasis, however, is on analyzing good literature.

The literature selections are chosen for their literary quality, their potential to sustain interest, and their potential to contribute to the growth of the student's moral character. Discussion questions are included for each chapter, as well as more in-depth and thought-provoking questions encouraging critical thinking.

Students are encouraged to learn both writing and thinking skills. Several of our graduates in college have told us that our high school English courses make college courses easy to handle because they can concentrate on the content material rather than on writing skills.

In English, a student should be able to read the literature selection by himself. There is nothing difficult about *Lilies of the Field* or *Where the Red Fern Grows*. The problem is that because the books are easy reading, the student may gloss over the character development. Character development is emphasized in the first two titles so the student will be ready to analyze the more complex character development in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

In the English curriculum, we usually require a book report for each quarter. A list of approved books is listed, both a fiction list and a nonfiction list. Sometimes students want to read other titles, and while we are happy students want to read other books, these cannot replace the over 200 classic or semi-classic titles we have listed for more in-depth reading, thinking, and analyzing.

Students sometimes may be able to skip some of the assignments, particularly in the spelling and vocabulary. If you are convinced that your child knows the spelling words, or the vocabulary definitions, you should certainly cut down on the work assigned. If a student has been with Seton for a few years, some of the grammar assignments may not be necessary, though we do encourage you to keep the composition assignments.

Literature quizzes and discussion questions may be answered orally, or on a tape recorder if there is a time problem. However, writing out answers, and even saying them aloud, strengthens concepts in the brain. This is one subject which should be done

every day, even if briefly, to keep the concepts fresh. It is more difficult to answer the literature questions if the chapters are read over a long period of time.

In the poetry sections, we especially encourage parents to be more involved in the lessons because students of today see poetry as a sort of foreign language. We need to help our children to read poetry while applying their thinking skills. It is amazing that Catholic students can read G. K. Chesterton's "The Donkey," for instance, and completely miss the deeper meaning.

Siblings who study together certainly may and should discuss the questions and answers as well as the readings. However, each student needs to be responsible for his own original work which is to be sent to Seton. Our English teachers have read enough literature that they recognize writing from a published author or critic. Copied work will be returned.

Religion 9

The ninth grade religion course takes the student through the Baltimore Catechism Number 3, which has summaries and study helps by Father Connell. It is considered a catechism classic.

In addition, the syllabus itself offers supplementary apologetics lessons, which help the student of this age who is asking deeper questions about what he believes and where he is going. The apologetics material covers proofs for the existence of God, proofs for the divinity of Christ, proofs for the One True Church, proofs for the Resurrection, and so on. There is a lengthy section on the Mass, both the old Mass and the new Mass, of the Latin Rite.

This is one subject in which we encourage parents to work with the student as much as possible. Emphasize, as Father John Hardon so often

points out, that it is important to memorize, but it is also important to understand what is being memorized. Doctrines and prayers, reasons and explanations all need to be understood and internalized so that they can be lived.

The important thing for our students to remember is that it does not do much good if one memorizes the doctrines but does not live the Faith. We need to constantly bring our children back to the reality of what it means to live a good Catholic life.

Our children should be attending Mass every day, if possible. A student at this age, going through some important questions in his life, needs to have the daily grace of the Blessed Sacrament. We believe that students of this age should be going to frequent confession because of the daily temptations of our society for a young teenager. It is helpful for a teenager to have a specific priest who can act as confessor and counselor on a regular basis.

Science

Students in ninth grade can choose between Earth Science and Physical Science. The physical science course concentrates on physics and chemistry, and is more difficult.

While the content in the science courses is important, the study skills learned are even more important. This is one subject in which a student should be encouraged to memorize spellings and definitions, and should struggle intellectually to grasp the workings of things. Students who sweat to understand science will be richly rewarded in their own pride of accomplishment.

Science is a good subject for students to practice note-taking skills in preparation for college. If a student wants to highlight or write in the margin, the text may be purchased.

The science book, as perhaps some others, should be read aloud. Some students may actually find they learn better if they stand and walk around while they read their science. This physical activity keeps the blood flowing and helps the reader to concentrate better on the new, sometimes difficult concepts.

Parents should take the time to look over the science tests and alert the student to the kinds of questions which will be asked, as well as the detail required. Usually after one or two tests, the students do better because they are familiar with the test style.

Algebra

Algebra is pretty straightforward with the Saxon text, but the student must do his assignment every day without fail. The daily practice is vital. If a student feels he is "getting behind," we suggest a lesson or two on the weekend.

If the student prefers, he could do the problem sets in two sessions, such as the odd numbered ones in the morning, the even numbered ones in the afternoon.

The work should be labeled clearly with the number of the problem. If the answer is correct on the answer sheet, that is great. But if the teacher needs to check a problem to find out what is wrong, she needs to find the problem quickly.

Students should include all steps in solving a problem, and not skip steps. Shortcuts result in carelessness.

A homemade Algebra notebook is a great resource. It should include important rules or statements or formulas with examples of problems. It should be used daily for reference. The glossary is a helpful tool also which is too easily forgotten.

Teachers' Unions on the Run

Last year, *Forbes Magazine* ran an article exposing the NEA for its role in the decline of education in America. This month, *U.S. News and World Report* has devoted its cover story to the ways in which the teacher's unions have harmed education and stymied efforts toward reform. Since you can't get any more mainstream than *U.S. News*, this is indeed a breakthrough.

As an overarching theme, the article cites the problems with trying to bring assembly-line work rules into the classroom. When assembling widgets, seniority is the main thing, and it probably doesn't matter whether Bob, Joan, or Tom puts the next piece on the widget. But teaching is a different matter entirely, and it certainly does matter who the teacher is and how good a teacher each person is.

The emphasis by unions on seniority over ability means that very good teachers are not rewarded, and very bad teachers are protected. For example, Cathy Nelson was named Minnesota's Teacher of the Year in 1990. But at the time of the award, Ms. Nelson wasn't even teaching. She had been laid off by the school district because she did not have seniority, and the school administrators could not consider merit in the decision of whom to let go.

Or consider the case of Jaime Escalante. His success in teaching advanced mathematics to inner-city students was dramatized in the movie *Stand and Deliver*. But a few years after the movie was made, Escalante left the Los Angeles system and went to Sacramento. Escalante says he left because the Los Angeles union "objected to his zeal," including teaching "too many students in his calculus class."

But the problem of getting rid of bad teachers is even worse. Union contracts have extensive protections written into them which prevent teachers from being fired for incompetence. Teachers can file grievances and appeals that can drag on forever. In New York, accord-

ing to *U.S. News*, the average cost to fire a teacher is \$200,000. In one New York case, a teacher was convicted of selling cocaine and went to prison, but he still collected his salary from the school district for several years while in prison. With this type of procedure in force, administrators have little hope of firing



poor teachers, so they do the next best thing—try to get them transferred to other schools.

Another general union-created problem is that since everyone is treated alike, individual drive and initiative count for nothing, and are, in fact, discouraged. Teachers who do extra work for students, or try to better themselves as teachers, are treated exactly the same as teachers who don't. Salaries are based solely on experience and numbers of college courses completed. Other than these two factors, the best and the worst teachers can always expect to be paid the same amount. This encourages the worst teachers to stay, but encourages the best teachers to leave.

The teachers' unions are in trouble and they know it. They've wedded themselves to the Democratic Party, and have committed millions of dollars to backing Democratic candidates. They have also committed millions to stopping reform laws in states, and fighting these laws in court when they pass. But with the popularity of home schooling, charter schools, and voucher programs, perhaps

the choke hold of teachers' unions on education in this country is coming to an end.

Moral Outrage

One of the particularly strange things about abortion in this country is the absurd mental hoops which abortion supporters must jump through. Harry Houdini was never half the mental contortionist of the average "pro-choicer."

A few years ago there was a particularly bad abortionist in New York who accidentally spared the life of a baby but cut off portions of her limbs in the process. There was quite a bit of moral outrage against this doctor, for God only knows what reason, since his only failing was lack of deadly skill.

Fr. Neuhaus, in *First Things* reports several similar incidents. Apparently, in one case in England, some test results were mixed-up and a baby without Down's syndrome was aborted, while a baby with Down's syndrome was allowed to live, accidentally. In another case in Boston, a doctor has been charged with falsifying ultrasound results in order to tell mothers that their babies are older than they really are, hence jacking up the abortion fee.

In both these cases, there was moral outrage. Women had been wronged! In the first, the poor mother had murdered her baby under false pretenses, and another poor mother hadn't murdered her baby under false pretenses. In the second, an abortionist, who by all rights should be the most caring and virtuous of human beings as evidenced by his dedication to his calling, had the audacity to overcharge. God forbid that some poor woman couldn't afford the procedure and had to carry her baby to term! But then, gouging is what abortionists do all day anyway. Why shouldn't they do it to women as well as to babies.

One does wonder what kind of world we live in where nothing matters except the inconsequential.

Coupon Shopping for Savings

How would you like to save 50% and more off your grocery bill each time you go to the supermarket? Does the idea of purchasing \$150 worth of name brand food and paying only \$75 sound appealing? Many of the home schooling families in Front Royal have discovered a way to cut their food bills in half.

We are all familiar with using coupons to cut our food bills. Supermarkets that double the value of coupons are common throughout the country. This method of shopping takes double coupons a step further.

Use the manufacturers coupon circulars found in the Sunday newspapers. Purchase 6, 8, or even 10 newspapers, and if possible, find a distributor who will give you a discount rate for purchasing in bulk and will also deliver them to your door. The next thing is to find a supermarket that doubles *all* the coupons you submit for the same item. The idea is to stock up when the specials come along, so find a supermarket that will double all your cereal coupons at the same time. Some supermarkets have a policy of doubling only the first coupon for a particular item and if you should purchase more than one of that item, you would be given only the coupon's face value for the additional purchases. Look for two competing supermarkets close by. Often they engage in price wars and will waive their usually stricter policies of coupon refunding.

Then look for store sales. For example, if dishwashing detergent is on store sale for \$.89 from the regular price of \$1.19 and you have a \$.25 coupon, doubling the coupon, you get \$.50 off, for a final cost of \$.39. This is the time to stock up and purchase as many items as the coupons you have. Another good example is shampoo. With a large family shampoo often goes quickly and the inexpensive \$.99 variety is good for children's hair. By using a \$.50 cent coupon which doubles, the shampoo is free. In our local supermarket there is no limit to how many coupons we can use

so we take advantage. The rule to remember is use the largest coupon amount for the smallest size item. Keeping this in mind, it's easy to purchase many items for pennies or even get them free.

It is important to purchase your Sunday newspapers in bulk. Depending on the size of your family, buy from four to eight papers. There are usually two coupon booklets in each edition. What you want to do is to be able to stock up and buy as many as you can when a really good special comes along. Often a product coupon runs in a cycle of eight months, so if you miss a good deal, it will almost be a year before the coupon is available again. Notice too, that several weeks after a group of manufacturers coupons are put in the circular, the supermarkets will run specials on the same items. Keep an eye out for this pattern and save your coupons for these times.

Don't let the idea of having so many coupons around the house overwhelm you. Assemble all like pages from the booklets and staple them together. For example, take the four pages of the soup advertisement and staple. Then take the four pages of ketchup and staple, and so on. Put them back together in their original order in the booklet and you now have one large coupon book rather than the four. Do the same for the second different coupon booklet. This takes only about 20 minutes and facilitates cutting since you will cut 4-8 coupons in the time you can cut one. This is a real time saver. Of course, you will need a larger size coupon holder than the standard index file boxes. Categorize the coupons in the box according to where the item is located in the store you most frequent. If the first aisle is where the juices are found and the next aisle has macaroni, be sure to file your coupons in the same order. In this way, you can quickly find the coupons and compare what you have to what is in front of you in the supermarket.

Try to keep your coupon box in the car at all times. Make a habit of taking

the box in the store with you each time you shop. Study the supermarket circulars and combine as many coupons as you can with their store specials. Do this at home before going shopping.

Often a supermarket will give you \$.50 to \$1 off your next order for purchasing a product. Combine your coupons with these offers. Then apply the store coupons you get at the checkout on your next purchase.

Keep in mind that looking for coupons and sale items as you shop will take longer than what you may be accustomed to. You really need to concentrate on what you are doing, so keep the younger children at home and avoid shopping at the busy times. Evening or even late night shopping is a much better idea. By the way, this is an excellent job to involve home schooling children in grades 7 through 12. They come to appreciate the value of saving a dollar.

Using the above steps, you can easily cut your food bills in half. If you are fortunate to have a store that triples the coupon value, you'll be paying one-third of what you've paid in the past. By buying in quantity, you will reduce the number of shopping trips you normally do. You will find your pantry and extra closet space well stocked.

To give you an idea of the savings to be had, here are our own experiences. On our first attempt at this, we were indeed fortunate to discover that a supermarket in the next town was offering triple coupons. Although it was a thirty mile round trip, the effort paid off. After loading up two shopping carts to their limit, and having a \$210 total, my final cost was \$70. I brought home 10 packages of name brand noodles (1 lb. each) for free; four packages of my favorite brand of hot cocoa cost \$.29 each (regularly \$1.25). Another mother had a \$350 total, final cost \$80. One 20-year-old stout-hearted young man in our group saved his mother \$90 on a \$150 food bill. Even though the triple couponing is a once-in-a-blue-moon opportunity, with regular double couponing, we still consistently get 50% and more off each shopping expedition.



CONFERENCES

Tampa, FL: March 30, 1996. Seton Conference. Father Charles Fiore: Church Teachings on Home Schooling; Ginny Seuffert: Home Schooling in the Large Family; Dr. Mary Kay Clark: How to Avoid Burnout; Paul Sullivan: Home Schoolers at College; Dr. William Marra: The Rebirth of Catholic Faith & Culture Through Home Schooling; Dr. Mark Lowery: Father's Role in the Home Schooling Family; Panel: Discipline in the Home Schooling Family.

Cincinnati: Human Life International conference, April 12 - 14. Seton exhibit table.

Phoenix, AZ: April 20, 1996. Seton Conference. Father Charles Fiore, Dr. William Marra, Dr. Mary Kay Clark, Dr. Mark Lowery, Mrs. Ginny Seuffert.

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Raleigh, NC: May 4, 1996. Father Robert Hermley, Dr. William Marra, Dr. Mary Kay Clark, Mrs. Ginny Seuffert

Toronto, Canada: May 27, 28, & 29: Pan-American Conference on Family and Education. Dr. Clark speaking.

Milwaukee, WI: June 8, 1996. Father Charles Fiore, Dr. William Marra, Dr. Mary Kay Clark, Mrs. Ginny Seuffert, another speaker TBA.

Pasadena, CA: June 15, 1996. Conference sponsored by Christ the King Home Schoolers Association. Seton exhibit, Dr. Clark speaking.

Manassas, VA: July 12, 13. NACHE Conference. Seton exhibit, Dr. Clark speaking.

Syracuse, NY: August 2, 3: Conference by Syracuse Catholic Home Schoolers. Seton exhibit, Dr. Clark speaking.

Catholic Family's Magnificat

We would like to encourage all of our readers to subscribe to *Catholic Family's Magnificat*. Currently, *Magnificat* is the only general Catholic home schooling magazine available in the United States and Canada. It is consistently worth reading and is sure to be of interest to all Catholic home schooling families. We think it is especially important that such a vital resource not be lost through lack of support.

Magnificat will soon be mailing its issue on "Home Schooling through High School." To order an issue or subscribe (\$20 in the US, \$28 Canada or ground delivery overseas, \$40 airmail), write: *Magnificat*, PO Box 43-1015, Dept. S, Pontiac, MI 48343-1015. Visa/MC accepted at 800-627-3977 (in the US and Canada) or at the information line at 810-412-1959 (all other countries). Please note that the 800 number is for orders only. All other requests, please use the information line. You can also reach *Magnificat* over the Internet at Marianna.Bartold@ewtn.com.

Accreditation News!

Seton Home Study School is pleased to announce that it has received provisional accreditation from the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NWASC). This provisional accreditation is the next-to-last step toward full accreditation with the Northwest Association. Full accreditation takes several years, but provisional accreditation is identical to full accreditation for the purposes of credit transfers, college admissions, etc.

We are especially pleased to be accredited by the Northwest Association because it is one of the most educationally innovative in the country. Based in Boise, Idaho, it accredits public, private, and religious schools through the Northwest United States, and its accreditations are recognized by the other five regional associations. These six regional associations together accredit most of the schools in the country. This means Seton students should have few problems in having their studies recognized or their credits transferred to other schools.

The immediate effect is that Seton parents can say that their children are enrolled in an accredited program. But it is important to add that the program is provisionally accredited. Professional educators understand what this means and can accept it as the equivalent of full accreditation for most purposes. This very fact will usually be enough to settle any inquiries from authorities. And some states have specific exemptions in their home schooling laws for parents who use an accredited program.

If you have any questions about Seton's accreditation or about how it affects you and your family, feel free to call Seton at 540-636-9990.

Called to Married Love

28. Committed to the task of educating their children for love, Christian parents first of all can take awareness of their married love as a reference point. As the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* states, such love “reveals its true nature and nobility when it is considered in its supreme origin, God, who is love (cf. 1 John 4: 8), ‘the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named’ (Ephesians 3: 15). Marriage is not, then, the effect of chance or the product of evolution of unconscious natural forces; it is the wise institution of the Creator to realize in mankind his design of love. By means of the reciprocal personal gift of self, proper and exclusive to them, husband and wife tend towards the communion of their beings in view of mutual personal perfection, to collaborate with God in the generation and education of new lives. For baptized persons, moreover, marriage invests the dignity of a sacramental sign of grace, inasmuch as it represents the union of Christ and of the Church.” *Humanae Vitae*, 8.

The Holy Father’s *Letter to Families* recalls that: “The family is in fact a community of persons whose proper way of existing and living together is communion: *communio personarum*.” *Letter to Families, Gratissimum Sane*, 7. Going back to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the Holy Father teaches that such a communion involves “a certain similarity between the union of the divine Persons and union of God’s children in truth and love.” *Gaudium et Spes*, 24. “This rich and meaningful formulation first of all confirms what is central to the identity of every man and every woman. This identity consists in the capacity to live in truth and love; even more, it consists in the need of truth and love as an essential dimension of the life of the person. Man’s need for truth and love opens him both to God and to creatures: it opens him to other people, to life in communion, and in

particular to marriage and to the family.” *Letter to Families, Gratissimum Sane*, 8.

29. As the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* affirms, married love has four characteristics: it is human love (physical and spiritual), it is total, faithful and fruitful love. Cf. *Humanae Vitae*, 9.

These characteristics are founded on the fact that “In marriage man and woman are so firmly united as to become, to use the words of the Book of Genesis - one flesh (Genesis 2:24). Male and female in their physical constitution, the two human subjects, even though physically different, share equally in the capacity to live in truth and love. This capacity, characteristic of the human being as a person, has at the same time both a spiritual and a bodily dimension.....The family which results from this union draws its inner solidity from the covenant between the spouses, which Christ raised to a Sacrament. The family draws its proper character as a community, its traits of communion, from that fundamental communion of the spouses which is prolonged in their children. Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?, the celebrant asks during the Rite of Marriage. The answer given by the spouses reflects the most profound truth of the love which unites them.” *Letter to Families, Gratissimum Sane*, 8. With the same formula, spouses commit themselves and promise to be “faithful forever” *Rituale Romanum, Ordo celebrandi matrimonium*, 60. because their fidelity really flows from this communion of persons which is rooted in the plan of the Creator, in Trinitarian Love and in the Sacrament which expresses the faithful union between Christ and the Church.