



# Seton Home Study School

Volume XXVII, Number 11 ♦ “under the Magisterium of the Catholic Church” ♦ November 2010

## Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Church celebrates the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary on November 21. The Presentation recalls the day that Mary’s parents, Ann and Joachim, presented their holy young daughter to the priests in the Jewish Temple. Mary was to remain in the Temple and to be taught by the priests. She was to be educated about the Scriptures and to live a life dedicated to God.

Mary’s elderly parents realized that Mary was a special gift from God. It is likely that they had some knowledge of the special plan of God for their daughter, the plan of salvation for all. They knew that the life of religious education and training in the Temple was God’s will for their daughter.

The Fathers of the Church see the deeper meaning of the Presentation. They recognize that Mary, who entered the Jewish Temple as a child and lived in daily prayer and service to God, would herself become the Temple of the Savior when she carried Jesus in her womb.

Certainly when Mary was trained in the Temple, the priests were careful to keep her away from worldly dangers and distractions. Because of her gift of being conceived without Original Sin, Mary knew many eternal truths instinctively. Certainly, she quickly learned the many stories and lessons of the Old Testament. She was familiar with Moses, Abraham, as well as Isaias and his prophecies about the Messiah.

Moses wrote that when God gave him the Ten Commandments, God the Father said, “Take to heart these words which I enjoin upon you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest. Bind them at your wrist as a sign, and let them be a pendant on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your houses, and on your gates.” (Deut. 6:6-9)

The lesson from God the Father is clear. We parents are to meditate and to teach our children when we are sitting, walking, even when we are “at rest,” and when we rise in the morning. As we work with our hands and work with our minds, we should be teaching our children how to live the authentic Godly life.

Not only should our every action give evidence of our commitment to God and His teachings, even the entrance to our homes should give such evidence. As we enter the doorway of each room in our house, there should be evidence of our commitment to obeying His commandments.

The Presentation reminds us of the importance of education in the spiritual life. Mary was educated about living the Godly life by the priests in the Temple. The Church today recognizes that parents and godparents are responsible for fulfilling the Baptismal promise of educating the children regarding the teachings of Jesus.

We are to present our children to God in Baptism. The Presentation reminds us of the importance of Baptism, when our babies are presented to God for admission into the Mystical Body of Christ. Baptism enables us to enter the heavenly kingdom of God.

Not only should we aim to receive the Sacraments often, we should have our house blessed, have statues or holy pictures of Jesus, of Mary, of events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. Our family should have a special place where we pray every day. We should be saying the Rosary and novenas, saying ejaculations throughout the day, involving the children in feast day projects, such as making an Advent Wreath and putting up a May altar.

Parents are responsible for the religious education and training for their children. We must teach our children the Scriptures, especially the New Testament in which Jesus teaches us what we need to know and what we need to do to be happy with Him forever.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

- MKC

<i>Inside . . .</i>	
<i>Questions</i> .....	<b>2</b>
<i>Home Schooling Tips</i> .....	<b>4</b>
<i>Questions and Answers</i> ....	<b>5</b>
<i>Goldilocks</i> .....	<b>6</b>
<i>Letter to Seminarians</i> .....	<b>8</b>



## *Questions We Are Asked*

*by Dr. Mary Kay Clark*  
*Director, Seton Home Study School*

**My son in 4<sup>th</sup> grade is struggling. I started him early in school because he was so eager, but now he seems to be overwhelmed.**

Many children are eager to learn at a young age, four years old, even three years old, so parents start their kindergarten program early. They may start with just phonics or math, whichever is of most interest. As they progress in the first few grades, they continue to do well. However, by fourth grade or sometimes in fifth grade, it is not unusual for certain signs of immaturity or a slower rate of learning to show up. When this happens, we often recommend that the student repeat the same grade level but with different books.

Since the student already has grades, these could stay on the report card. If the grades are low, however, then the grades could be deleted and the second year grades could be included on the report card.

Sometimes the grades in some subjects are good the first time, such as in math. In this case, the student could move on to the next level in math, but repeat the grade level for other subjects. Nevertheless, the parents should be alert to the student's progress in the course in which he is being moved up. It might be helpful for the student to move more slowly and take two years in that subject.

The advantage of home schooling is that parents can make adjustments for various situations and changing skills. Many students start out loving math in the early years, and then become more interested in history in later years. Parents can adjust the lessons so that more "enrichment" can be done in the new areas of interest.

**I started about two weeks late. Is there any way my son can catch up?**

Seton has no calendar. Parents can start at any time. We have written the lessons for 36 weeks because that is the normal length of the school year, but whenever you start or finish is up to you. While most states do not require a certain number of days for home schooling families, the Seton lessons follow the normal nine-month pattern. However, you can take a shorter or a longer time. The reality is that students can do some subjects in a shorter time, and some subjects take a longer time.

It is important to keep a schedule. After a while, you might want to change the schedule, but students do better in their work if there is a schedule. They can more easily be mentally prepared for math at 9 am if it is scheduled every day at that time.

Plan on the most challenging subjects in the morning when your student should be at his best. Many families schedule religion first, followed by a half-hour of math or English. A second half-hour of math, or finishing up a math assignment, can be scheduled in late morning.

If your student is doing well in a subject, and you have some time available, move some time to a subject where your son needs that extra practice.

**I like math and want my son to be interested in math, to be excited about math, but he seems bored. Do you think I need to change textbooks?**

Except in the very early grades, most textbooks are pretty similar. Home schooling families usually like the Saxon books in the upper grades. The publishers offer supplemental video tutoring disks for every lesson, to play

on the computer. Using these videos on the computer has definitely helped many students to be more interested in math.

Go on the Internet and find out what is offered for students in the way of math competitions and puzzles. There is something now called the American Math Challenge which can improve attitudes about math.

Use Google to look for math contests, math games, math puzzles, math problems, math riddles, and so on. Be sure to click on images and videos, as well. They are amazing! These things will keep your son busy and excited about math for years to come! Our nation needs good mathematicians. Math students in the U.S. have fallen seriously behind math students in other countries.

---

*Seton has no calendar. Parents can start at any time.*

---

**I'd like to move my son up a grade level in several subjects which he has already finished. What do I do about English, which he has not yet finished?**

There are several considerations here. First, would he be able to take more time each day and finish up the English? That might be better than moving on.

On the other hand, it may be that your student, especially an older student, is discouraged that he is falling behind. He may not be doing his English because he sees no hope in moving on. For this student, enrolling him in the next grade level for the other subjects may encourage him to get going. However, you should schedule a class in the lower level English at the beginning of each day, before proceeding to the upper level classes.

Another point: remember that children need exercise. In fact, everyone needs daily exercise and fresh air, not to mention good healthy eating habits. Schedule exercise between the classes every day. You might have a more energetic student!

### Why do you have a Science 8 book with just black and white illustrations?

*All Creatures Great and Small* for Grade 8 Life Science was written some years ago by an excellent Catholic science teacher. It is usually not appreciated at first glance, but as the year goes on, and in later years, the book is more appreciated.

The author himself did the illustrations, and they are for the specific concepts being taught on the page. A few years ago, we had a science teacher research the possibility of using full-color pictures to replace the illustrations. We discovered that the black and white illustrations actually made the science concepts easier to understand.

---

*Students don't need to depend entirely on a textbook when the Internet puts all the knowledge in the world at their fingertips.*

---

Consider investigating the colorful science-related videos on the Internet. Students don't need to depend entirely on a textbook when the Internet puts all the knowledge in the world at their fingertips. We certainly do need a textbook for basic information, but the Internet videos add much more knowledge and appreciation! The most common expression you will hear from your students and from yourself is Wow!

### My children do not like to do book reports. How can I "sell" them on doing their reports?

Perhaps you and the family can help sell them on the story in the books. Each day, have your children talk about what they read in their book report book. Make it a dinner-table or lunch-table topic of discussion. Others can and will ask questions, which will help your students to think more about what they read. They will become more interested, and consequently more able, to write

a report. Watch the little ones become interested!

Consider finding information on the internet which might be relevant to the story in the book, such as the events of the time period, the places mentioned in the book, famous people who lived at that time. If you have a color printer, perhaps you can print out a picture related to the story which could be a topic of discussion for the whole family.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, one of the books for consideration for a book report is *Red Hugh, Prince of Donegal*. There is so much on the Internet relating to Ireland and Irish clans, the history of battles among clans and against the English in the 1500s, you will never run out of interesting information, colorful images, and videos. Perhaps your family has an Irish background. Perhaps your children would be interested in your family tartan!

There is literally no end to the possibilities of interesting topics related to every one of the books for the book reports. Give your children the opportunity to be excited about the story and everything surrounding it.

### My son loves his music. He has even written music pieces. He wants to go to a college to major in music, but I am nervous about the college not being Catholic.

We often have questions from parents of graduating high school students who become very interested in art, music, film-writing, or drama. The students want to attend a college which will help him in these artistic areas.

It is important for our children to have a solid Catholic education first. Basic courses in English, history, math, science, foreign languages, not to mention religion, should be the goal for every Catholic college student. Supplemental courses or part-time jobs in artistic areas can be taken at the same time or over the summer.

At the present time, we are in an economic situation which makes it necessary for workers to have a broad liberal arts education which can be adapted for a variety of jobs. It is very difficult to "break into" artistic careers;

it is often dependent on "who you know" and being at the right place at the right time. While waiting for that "big break," people need to be able to do other jobs.

### I am a single parent, a father, teaching my fourteen-year-old son at home. Do you have any advice for me?

Congratulations for teaching your son. Home schooling can help the development of a great relationship between parents and children.

You want to do everything you can to help your son become interested and knowledgeable about everything, especially those things that interest you as well.

Take your son to the library at least once a week. The libraries offer books and magazines, but also computers and educational activities. Be sure you have a computer at home, keeping control of the usage, but helping your son to develop research skills.

Think of yourself as a student as well as a teacher, a student who is anxious to learn and to investigate. Help your son to develop an attitude of curiosity and inquisitiveness.

Don't neglect the spiritual life. Go to Mass every day with your son if you can. Teens need all the graces they can get as they are affected in many ways by the secular culture all around us. Take your son to frequent confession. Consider being involved in some of the church activities, such as novenas, weekly Rosary, picketing abortion clinics, visiting a nursing home, and the like.

For further ideas, read my book *Catholic Home Schooling*, and read the Seton newsletters. The current and past newsletters are now available on our website. Go to our Home page, then scroll down to Parent Resources, then scroll down to Topical Newsletter Index. You will find topics such as Discipline, Organization, and Father's Role.

If you would like to talk with other home schooling fathers, you might want to attend a local support group or a home schooling conference in your area.

## Home Schooling Tips

*Editor's Note: We recently asked on our Facebook page for home schooling tips from our families. Here are some of the tips they gave us:*

When writing book reports ALWAYS make an outline first. It helps keep the student organized and the report is then easier to write.

Begin the day with a little jumpstart: morning offering, jumping jacks, push-ups and mountain-climbers shakes off any fogginess!

Remember that everything is a teachable moment, from how to interact with the various people you meet to how roller coasters are designed using physics (used that one yesterday at Six Flags!).

Start your day with gratitude. Remind yourself that you have been given a gift to be able to home school and this gift is precious and the years go quickly. Look at your precious children, hug them and smile—smiles and hugs go a long way. Have breakfast. And I always say the St. Padre Pio quote, “Pray, Hope, and Don’t Worry.” Your day will be good. And if it’s not so much, there is always tomorrow!

Organize their books, workbooks, sheets, papers, records, etc. Find a place for everything. This way it is much easier to locate when you need it. Use milk crates, filing cabinets, folders—even empty cereal boxes decorated can easily hold your important papers.

Use “other” tools for teaching, such as cooking or woodworking for Math, trips to historical places for History, and pilgrimages for Religion. Never let these be a substitute for book work, but they are a fun treat every now and then.

This is our first year home schooling and I have to say being organized is our key. I love the lesson plans from Seton so I can add my son’s other activities to it.

#1 Tip: Starting the day with our family Rosary. That has been so good

for us. If we wait for the evening, it seldom happens, but first thing in the morning, it works out great.

I’d have to say teaching time management is our number one help, especially advanced planning of lessons and meals and monitoring “distractions” throughout the day. The older kids are learning to note the distractions (siblings, Internet, iPod, “can you help a minute,” etc.) so we can try to minimize them. Listening to Ginny Seuffert once in a while via mp3 keeps me on my toes!

My mom has been home schooling me since I started school, and I am now almost done with ninth grade. What has helped me to do well in my schoolwork is always doing my best even when the subject is boring, praying for help before starting my work, and listening to my parents when they tell me to do something.

My mom has been home schooling me since 6th grade. I am just finishing up my Freshman year in high school. What helps me is praying to the Holy Spirit and saying my prayers every day. Also going to daily Mass helps a lot before I start class. You have to work hard and if you can dream it, then you can do it. I also pray especially to Mother Seton, the patron saint of our school.

With my middle school child, we used a schedule of class periods for the day. That way she could tell if she was taking too long on a subject and not miss out on time to get to the next subject.

Meals are cooked once a month and frozen in portions. Chores are charted and delegated to each family member. School schedules are fixed with deadlines. Daily Mass and Adoration are essential to the running of the house and the formation of the Domestic Church. The best tip I have with regards to home schooling is Time Management! Although I don’t sound spontaneous on paper, keeping a very smooth-edged schedule with appointments, errands,

grocery lists, assignment needs, club schedules, etc., actually gives us more FREE TIME as a family (spontaneous fishing trip, a day at the beach or pool, one-on-one time with a child, museums, parks, etc.) and makes date nights possible again.

Each school day begins around the home altar with the lighting of a blessed candle, the Sign of the Cross with Holy Water, morning offering, daily Mass readings, and the Pledge of Allegiance. As the day progresses, plenty of fresh air and exercise is a necessity. When gathering around the table for the evening meal—the students are given, each in turn, an opportunity to share what they have learned with Dad!!

Stay organized--with your classes and your house. When things are in their proper order, there is less stress and everyone is happier!

Having the same basic daily routine helps tremendously! Meals at approximately the same times, naps regularly (for little ones who still need them), etc. Having flexibility is important too, but the routine helps everyone know what to expect each day, and makes planning so much easier!

Don’t hesitate to call the Seton counselors for advice. They are wonderful! I have the children write book reports more than necessary so when it is book report time it seems like a piece of cake!

Besides the obvious (organization), have a schedule that is flexible, and pray. I would say do the harder subjects first thing in the morning when the mind is fresh and if all you get done are their core subjects then I’d say it was a successful day.

Make sure to keep the marriage relationship strong! A loving and peaceful home is key to a successful home school!

*Cont’d on page 7*

## Questions, Answers, and Errors

by John Clark

Occasionally, when people ask me about this column, they wonder if I'm making this stuff up. So I thought I would take a few moments and answer the more frequent questions. Here they are.

**Are those the real names of your children?** Yes. Unlike in *Dragnet*, the names have not been changed to protect the innocent. Along with middle names and ages, they are: Athanasius Chrysostom (17), Veronica Marie (15), Demetrius Innocent (13), Tarcisius Bellarmine (11), Philomena Guadalupe (9), Dominica Rose (7), Bonaventure Duns Scotus (5), Immaculata Faustyna (3), and Mary Katherine (1).

Oddly enough, when I recite these names to people, the one that throws them for a loop is Mary Katherine. After all the other names, "normalcy" seems out of place. I love that. Lisa and I also thought that the first Mary Kay Clark was so successful that the world needed another.

I am open to suggestions for the next child, if by the generosity of God there is a tenth. Maybe Lisa and I should initiate a naming contest—submit ideas for the name and the winner gets a free dinner for four at *Jack in the Box*. If you are inclined to do so, be sure that the name is: 1) at least four syllables, 2) the name of a doctor of the Church, and/or 3) someone who directly conversed with Jesus.

**Do you mind surrendering some of your privacy for the column?** I guess people think I'm being too open with my life when I mention things like our "any two socks is a match" rule, or our "Bowling for Bedtimes" contests. However, since when did privacy become

a Catholic virtue? It's not listed in the *Summa*, but if it were, St. Thomas would probably have had a section called: "Vices Opposed to Privacy," in which he would have listed "child-rearing" as the primary vice. Listen, anyone who has nine children couldn't possibly have privacy as a top priority. At any given time, my bedroom door has no lock on it. As a matter of fact, it may not even have a doorknob at the moment. There are downsides to this, not the least of which is that yesterday, our toddler snuck into our bed during the night and proceeded to wet the bed.

You're asking about *privacy*? I'll settle for a dry place to sleep.

**Are you having any more children?** This question logically follows the one about privacy. When I am asked this question, I think about growing up in a family of seven boys. When I was growing up, people used to ask me about my family, and I loved to shock them by telling them I had *six* brothers. They would almost always follow up by commenting: "Your mom must be a saint!" Then I would joke to them: "She would have had more, but she wanted a career, too." (Catholics don't get this joke. They think I'm serious.) I'm sure my mom and dad wanted to have more children, and I've always had a touch of sadness that my mom never had a daughter. A sister among us may also have balanced out some of the more testosterone-laden things that my brothers and I did growing up, such as shooting arrows at the house, making our own ammunition, having *Space Invaders* contests on the *Atari* game system, ghost-riding bicycles down our street, fighting with colored pencils, making fishing lures out

of *Coca-Cola* cans, breaking limbs by playing neighborhood football, or dressing up in Ninja outfits and hurling throwing stars in our garage—basically the things that happen when there is a lack of female influence. The most emasculating thing that any of us did growing up was polish the gun cabinet. (Oddly enough—and it seems even odder in retrospect—we were pretty good at home schooling.) Although we boys may not have recognized it at the time, a sister would have been a welcome addition to our family.

Realistically, I doubt that anyone who has nine children suddenly decides that he can't have ten. Our philosophy is that there is always room for one more at the table—even if it's a card table.

**How do you do it all?** Well, I'm not sure what it "all" is, but I'm pretty sure I'm not doing it "all." Happily, I am doing *some* of it. For instance, the other day, Veronica had a history test and she was having a hard time remembering the important facts in the life of Josef Stalin. If I were doing it "all," I would have quizzed her over and over until she remembered the communist's life in great detail. However, that is a little depressing. So I set the facts to her favorite Taylor Swift song. Unbelievably, she remembered the rather esoteric lyrics days later. That is doing "some" of it.

**Errata.** In the interest of honesty, I feel compelled to mention a serious mistake I made in a previous column. In my August 2009 column titled *Decaf*, I mentioned that there is no golf in Heaven. Athanasius reprimanded me about this one, giving me the verbal equivalent of rapping my knuckles with a ruler. It turns out that there may be golf in Heaven, but the putting greens are much more forgiving.

## *The Goldilocks Factor*

by Ginny Seuffert

At Seton we are often asked how many hours the actual schoolwork should take. The home school literature is brimming with advice on this very subject. I read once that no home schooler should spend more than three hours a day, three days a week, three weeks each month on formal schoolwork. With the possible exception of a super smart and self-motivated child in the early primary grades, that is simply not enough. On the other hand, some parents tell me that they start right after breakfast and work all the way through to suppertime. That is just too much. Like Goldilocks, we home schooling parents want to find the amount of time that is not too much, nor too little, but “just right.” Experience and common sense will show us just what that is for each child.

I’ve been laid up recently with a bad back. As I was more or less good for nothing, I decided to put the flat-on-my-aching-back time to good use and teach my four-year-old grandson to read. A typical boy, his small motor coordination is pretty undeveloped, so I did not use a workbook. We learned letter sounds, starting with consonants and short vowels, and as I write this, he has mastered two long vowel sounds.

At the end of six weeks, he can read sentences like, “Mom can see a big rat on the rug. Dad is mad at the rat.” We practice writing on a whiteboard with dry erase markers, so he can write very big. We started with tracing, but now he can write some letters on his own. This morning he wrote “tot lot” on the board by himself, sounding out the spelling with no help from grandma. At the end of each reading lesson, we practice writing numerals from 1 to 9, and doing some simple addition and subtraction. His parents have already taught him his prayers, but I am teaching the first answers from the Baltimore Catechism. Our daily lessons average 20 to 30 minutes. That is all he needs, and all that is appropriate for his age. He is doing just fine.

My high school daughter, on the other hand, needs to spend a minimum

of six hours or more every day on her work. No student can expect to finish high school level work in less than one hour per day, per subject, with maybe another hour or two of reading each night. Parents who insist that the really important thing is that the children are reading good books miss the point. Of course they need to read good books, but they also need to analyze important elements of the books and be able to write intelligently about them. It is not enough to read primary sources in history. Students also need to understand the events and movements surrounding the document to be able to place it in context. In-depth study of history, especially the history of Europe and the Americas, is an essential of responsible citizenship.

Learning upper level math, despite protestation of “I’ll never use it again!” is important for several reasons. For starters, colleges require it. Additionally, math inculcates logical thinking skills — think of geometry proofs — and allows the student to gain self-confidence by mastering something really difficult. Science must be included as well. Even if your child never enters a science-related field, our newspapers are filled with the moral implications of modern science. A responsible adult needs to be able to understand complex issues like stem cell research, in-vitro fertilization, abortion, euthanasia, resource conservation, and climate change. Finally, it is crucial that before they set off to college or enter the work world, our children need to deeply understand their Catholic Faith and practice it with an unwavering commitment.

What is a “just right” amount of home schooling? Children in the primary grades are so different in their learning levels and attention span, it is difficult to have a suggested amount of time. Most moms and dads can sense when it is time to have a time-out, and when they can go back to the schoolwork. More active children will not stay still very long, and you will need to teach in spurts. Those younger ones anxious to read may carry a book around

with them and amazingly, start learning on their own.

Middle school and junior high school students will need to add some time after lunch and perhaps catch up on reading after dinner. High school students top out with six to eight hours a day, including evening reading.

Of course, these times are based on average students. Some children are able to focus on their schoolwork from the earliest grades, and enjoy the challenge of finishing their work in a timely fashion. Other children, often very intelligent, will bog down in the details and take longer to complete assignments. Some students are perfectionists and won’t quit until the work is “perfect.” Some students simply lack the ability to grasp new concepts quickly, and need more time to develop necessary skills. Some children lack self-discipline, or are disobedient, and will work only when mom stands guard over them. All of these factors will affect the length of the school day.

The typical American school schedule of nine o’clock until three o’clock from September to June originated in a different era when children’s labor was needed on the family farm. We home schoolers are not tied to that schedule. If your 2<sup>nd</sup> grade son cannot sit still and concentrate for three hours in the morning, break the day up into one-hour sessions. If your kindergarten daughter finds practicing her letters too laborious for her limited small motor skills, slow down and take an extra six months, or even a year, to finish kindergarten. What’s the hurry? If you just had a baby and simply cannot find the time during the day to help your struggling fourth grader, add an hour of schoolwork on Saturday and Sunday when Dad is home to help. If your high school student fell through the cracks because you were helping younger children, let him finish over the summer.

The amount of time that is “just right” for Catholic homeschoolers is whatever we need to raise Catholic adults who are solid in the Faith, clear thinkers, hard workers, and academically prepared to take on the challenges of the modern secular American society.

*Home Schooling Tips, cont'd*

Pray, try to make daily Mass once a week, be flexible when you can and consistent when you must!

Enjoy your kids. Be open to learning yourself. Relax.

Staying connected with seasoned Seton home educators, via Facebook, Seton message boards, etc., is invaluable. Between the home educators who have gone before me, and the Seton staff, there is abundant assistance, advice, and prayerful support!

Praise God for the wonderful days when your child has finally gotten through his multiplication facts without any errors, the house is vacuumed, and there is laughter. Let these days remind you on the other days what a treasure it is to have your family together!

My children wear "uniforms" for school: polo shirt, khaki bottoms, shoes and socks. I find when they are dressed for school they are more ready to learn. (We've added the Seton T-shirt as a uniform option this year). When our school day is finished, they change to their play clothes.

I implemented Susan Patrick's Workbox system for my kids. It saved my homeschooling life! Every subject

and/or activity is placed in a separate clear shoebox( we have up to 12 for the older kids) and they are numbered on a bookcase. When they are done with a box it goes into a big bin. The kids see their progress and are motivated—such a wonderful thing. Then every night I set them up again for the next day. Google Susan Patrick Workbox system for all the info, and tailor it to your needs. Praise God!

Plan, organize and stick with it. Start each day at the same time and do subjects in the same order. Take breaks (recess) at scheduled points during the day. When you get off track, do not panic. Just adjust and try to get back on track. If you notice that it seems to be happening a lot, stop and take a look at what is causing you to get off track and either eliminate the cause (TV, computer games, phone, etc.) or discuss it with your children (kids don't like getting behind in their work any better than we do) and come up with a creative solution. I have found that when I include my children in these types of decisions it is a lot easier for us to stick with it.

I had to turn off the ringer on my phone and let people leave messages which I check every day at the end of the school day. I have also explained to people that they will not be able to get a hold of me during the school day.

I have noticed that my children are more inclined to stay focused knowing that they have a scheduled break and yes, they do come back in (when recess is done) and get back to work.

Do your home schooling at one end of a long dinner table and have lunch at the other end so you don't have to put everything away just to eat.

Start each and every day by offering your day to God and His Blessed Mother.

Write a daily/weekly schedule as well as a menu for as far ahead as you can manage. Then stick to it. Give yourself permission to say no to outside requests; you work fulltime teaching and that has to be your priority. Pick a patron saint for your school and ask for that saint's prayers.

For young kids I have "fun time." After finishing two subjects (without whining) we get fun time, which consists of turning on fun music, playing learning games, scissor activities, dot-to-dots, etc. They are still learning but do not really know it! It gives me a small break, lets them learn, and is a nice bribe when things are falling apart. This works really well for those kids who are tough to motivate.

## The Seton Home Study Newsletter

is published monthly by  
Seton Home Study School  
1350 Progress Dr.  
Front Royal, VA 22630  
Phone: (540) 636-9990  
Fax Machine: (540) 636-1602  
Internet: [www.setonhome.org](http://www.setonhome.org)  
E-Mail: [info@setonhome.org](mailto:info@setonhome.org)

Subscription price for non-enrolled families is \$15 per year. Free online at [www.setonhome.org/archive](http://www.setonhome.org/archive)

Executive Editor:  
Dr. Mary Kay Clark

Editor: Kevin Clark

## Seton Phone Numbers (Seton main line: 540-636-9990, all numbers 540 area code)

Admissions, Enrollment, Re-Enrollment: 636-2039  
Elementary Counselors: 636-1429  
Grading: Rhonda Way, 622-5525  
High School Course Approval: Gene McGuirk, 635-4728  
High School English: Walker Solis, 636-1755; Christine Smitha, 636-1633  
High School Math: Tom Herlihy, 636-1846  
High School Math/Science: Don Valaike, 636-1396  
History: Bruce Clark, 636-1199  
Home Schooling Father: Gene McGuirk, 635-4728  
Independent Studies: Bob Wiesner, 636-2238  
Religion/Sacraments: Fr. Constantine, 636-1527  
Senior Guidance & Enrollment: Bob Wiesner, 636-2238  
Special Needs: Stephen Costanzo, 622-5546 or Sharon Hines, 622-5542  
Testing (CAT): Clare Schmitt, 636-1324

## Seton Email Addresses

[www.setonhome.org](http://www.setonhome.org)  
[counselors@setonhome.org](mailto:counselors@setonhome.org)  
[admissions@setonhome.org](mailto:admissions@setonhome.org)  
[grading@setonhome.org](mailto:grading@setonhome.org)  
[info@setonhome.org](mailto:info@setonhome.org)  
[enrolled@setonhome.org](mailto:enrolled@setonhome.org)  
[myseton@setonhome.org](mailto:myseton@setonhome.org)  
[shipping@setonhome.org](mailto:shipping@setonhome.org)  
[testing@setonhome.org](mailto:testing@setonhome.org)  
[SSDept@setonhome.org](mailto:SSDept@setonhome.org)  
[conferences@setonhome.org](mailto:conferences@setonhome.org)



*Seton Home Study School*

1350 Progress Drive  
Front Royal, VA 22630

Change Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 19  
Elizabethtown, PA

*Letter to Seminarians from Benedict XVI*

When in December 1944 I was drafted for military service, the company commander asked each of us what we planned to do in the future. I answered that I wanted to become a Catholic priest. The lieutenant replied: “Then you ought to look for something else. In the new Germany priests are no longer needed”. I knew that this “new Germany” was already coming to an end, and that, after the enormous devastation which that madness had brought upon the country, priests would be needed more than ever. Today the situation is completely changed. In different ways, though, many people nowadays also think that the Catholic priesthood is not a “job” for the future, but one that belongs more to the past. You, dear friends, have decided to enter the seminary and to prepare for priestly ministry in the Catholic Church in spite of such opinions and objections. You have done a good thing. Because people will always have need of God, even in an age marked by technical mastery of the world and globalization: they will always need the God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, the God who gathers us together in the universal Church in order to learn with him and through him life’s true meaning and in order to uphold and apply the standards of true humanity.

Where people no longer perceive God, life grows empty; nothing is ever enough. People then seek escape in euphoria and violence; these are the very things that increasingly threaten young people. God is alive. He has created every one of us and he knows us all. He is so great that he has time for the little things in our lives: “Every hair of your head is numbered”. God is alive, and he needs people to serve him and bring him to others. It does make sense to become a priest: the world needs priests, pastors, today, tomorrow and always, until the end of time.