

Day 4

BOOK REVIEW FOR GRADE TWO

START WITH PRAYER

Ask your child's patron saint and your child's guardian angel to help your child grow spiritually from reading these books, and to protect your child from reading anything which might be detrimental to spiritual growth.

Select and read, or help read, a children's book for your child. Discuss the title, the author, and the pictures. Check your child's comprehension by asking your child to retell the story in chronological order.

PURPOSE OF A BOOK REVIEW

Let's talk a little about the purpose of a Book Review. We admit that one purpose is **to encourage reading**. Education is based on daily reading. The more good books, and we emphasize GOOD books that your child reads, the better education he will receive. That is why we emphasize good saints' stories. They present the life of a saint, they teach Catholic values, and include the history of the time. In a way, the biography of a saint is like a little encyclopedia in itself. So we encourage book reviews because we want to encourage your child to read and obtain an **excellent Catholic education**.

We also encourage the frequent writing of book reviews because it develops creative thinking, it **develops analytic thinking**. The child must think about what he has read, he looks at the cause and effect of events, he thinks about why the characters acted as they did. The reader thinks about the effect of other people and the effect of outside events of society which caused the character to act or think as he did.

So what do we expect you to do regarding the "Book Review" for your little one only in grade two? To put it simply: to have your child think about what he has read.

A BASIC FORM FOR BASICS

We have included four copies of a form for what we consider important for a second grader to think about in regards to reading a book. Obviously, this is minimal. Whatever extension you want to consider for your child we wholeheartedly encourage. As you look at the questions we ask for the assignments in the readers, this can give you an idea of the kinds of questions to ask about the book your child is reading.

THE BASICS

What are the basics? Your child should write the title of the book first. This should be underlined. If your child starts using the computer, the title may be put in italics.

Be sure that the title is written so that the main words have a capital letter and the minor words do not.

Secondly, your child should write the author, first name first. If the author has a middle name or a middle initial, this should be included. It should be written as it appears on the title page.

Thirdly, your child should write where the story takes place. If it is a story of St. Patrick, though St. Patrick was in other places, the main part of the story takes place in Ireland, so your child should write "The story takes place in Ireland." Your child does not need to write every place the story takes place, but at least the main place where the story takes place.

Fourthly, when does the story take place? This should be pretty easy in most cases, but if your child is not sure, discuss it with your child to help him figure out what the author is saying to show us when the story takes place. Sometimes the author does not give the year, but the author makes a statement early in the story about some historical event.



Fifthly, who are the main characters in the story? Your child should understand that at least two people should be mentioned and there might be one or two others. Four people should be the most your child should list. If your child can do it, the people other than the main character should be identified in regard to their relationship with the main character. When telling the story of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, her husband should be listed, as well as the Italian couple who took her to the Catholic Church and explained the Catholic Faith to her.

ORDER OF EVENTS FOR A REASON

To divert for a minute: When your child is giving you an oral report on the book, one of the most important things at this age is for your child to **retell the story in correct chronological order**.

If you pick up just about any “reading workbook,” you will see that putting the events of a given little short story **in chronological order** is the most frequent assignment. It is important for your child to be orderly in his thinking, and to understand cause and effect.

It was Elizabeth Ann Seton’s husband’s illness and need for a sunny climate that made them both go to Italy. Being in Italy, she was surrounded by Catholics. There she was befriended by Catholics and taken in by a Catholic family.

So when you are listening to your child give an oral report, do not hesitate to ask “Why?” Why did the saint do this or that, or think this way, or speak this way? Why did St. Francis start building that church? What was he thinking? What did he say about why he was building the church? What did he think? What did he say? What did he do?

WHAT ARE THE MAIN EVENTS IN THE STORY?

This is the next question on the Book Review form for your child. Your child should simply list three main events, in chronological order. We don’t want your child to write a summary, but simply a list in sentence form. This makes your child THINK and make a judgment about the most important three events in the story.

This question develops critical analysis. We realize some children are going to be challenged by thinking about which are the three most important events. However, take the time to discuss the story with your child. Encourage him. Lead him along the path. If you read a book every week (it can be a short second-grade level book), and you discuss with your child each week about the three most important events in the story, by the end of the year, your child should pretty well understand what you are trying to do. More importantly, you have developed a higher level of thinking, of critical analysis in your child.

DID YOU LIKE THE STORY? WHY OR WHY NOT?

It is important for all of us to think about what we read and whether it has anything to say to us. Has it helped us to be a better Catholic? How did this saint, because of how this saint lived or helped others, help us? Relating the story to our own lives is an important final step in analyzing a book.

Your child can answer the question in one or two sentences.

IF THIS HAPPENED TO YOU, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

This question is not included on the form, but as a Catholic parent, we should be discussing with our children what they think they would do, as a good Catholic, if they were faced with this particular problem or situation. Does your child think the main character solved his problem in the correct Catholic way?