

## Proposed Homeschool Curriculum

Our primary focus for the education of our children is, to adapt a saying of Peter Maurin from his *Easy Essays*, where he defined our common task as the creation of a society “where it is easy to be good.” Our task is to create an educational environment where it is easy to become a saint. All our efforts should be geared toward this goal. In pursuit of that goal, we are guided by two precepts: 1) does this activity serve to embed the faith into the hearts and minds of our children, and 2) does it help them to know and love the faith so that they are able to defend the faith? The classical aspect of the school resides in the realization that the goal of the classical education was to create free men, the classical understanding of the liberal arts—those arts in which those who were free—free to think, free to reason, free to speak—were trained. The following curriculum is an attempt to adapt this classical understanding of education to the needs of our modern students and their families.

### History

--Use Tan's History of Civilization as the spine of the curriculum. Advantage: definite Catholic focus; focus on history from the focal point of Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem, the three civilizations that shaped Catholic Christianity; can be used by K-8. We can approach this a couple of different ways; we can assign each grade a year—for example, St. Agatha organizes it as K—Egypt Year; 1—Greece Year; 2<sup>nd</sup>—Rome Year; 3<sup>rd</sup>—Middle Ages; 4<sup>th</sup>—Modern Year; 5<sup>th</sup>—American Year; 6<sup>th</sup>—Ancient Year; 7<sup>th</sup>—Medieval Year; 8<sup>th</sup>—Modern Year. Or, since this is our first year for all grades, we could start everyone at the Ancient Year, with activities adapted for each grade's needs. History and its study are the heart of our work—history is the liberal art par excellence, for the study of history frees us from the tyrannies of the present.

### English

Grammar—I usually begin this, with my children, in grade three, as I focus on Phonics for grades one and two. I like a Memoria Press curriculum; they have it set up as a five year program, which emphasizes memorization work, so memorize the rules of grammar, two to three a week, for the five years. English Grammar Recitation, I-V. Another option: St. Agatha used Shurley Grammar, and seems to like that curriculum. I just found another grammar option that could be promising as well, Analytical Grammar.

Reading: For the first couple of years, one option is Memoria Press's series of First Reading Primers. I have used for all my children a re-issued set of reading primers written for Catholic school use in the 1940s and 1950s, the Faith and Freedom Readers, by Seton Press. I have really enjoyed this series, and they make for a good first readers' series. In their re-issue, they also have workbooks tailored to go with each story in each book, and that can be a really useful tool as well.

After the children get comfortable with reading, I move on to reading with workbooks that include vocabulary and questions for the children to answer. I am very fond of Memoria Press's offerings, and there is a fairly large selection to choose from. Kolbe has some good choices on that front; they have some books that overlap with Memoria Press, but they also have some books that are specifically Catholic that are excellent for upper elementary in particular. Mixing these two could be quite effective.

## Phonics

--Grades One and Two, although Grade Three is a possibility as well. It is possible to do Phonics Grades K, 1, 2, and 3, and then switch to English Grammar in Grade Four. I would recommend using a phonics based approach for early reading. I use Memoria Press's Classical Phonics, which has a basic text and very useful flash cards. Memoria Press also has a Phonics workbook, Grades K-3, that I have found to be very good.

My main focus, for the first few years, through second grade, is: Phonics, Math, Handwriting, and Religion. I usually begin incorporating other subjects later. Spelling, in second grade; Latin, History, and Science in third; Geography in fourth. For this proposal, I am presenting options drawn from both my method for my children and what other schools have done, as schools often have different needs than a purely homeschooling model.

Religion: several options warrant consideration. There is the classic Faith and Life Series from Ignatius Press, used by many schools and homeschoolers. Adequate, orthodox enough; however, also simplistic and often boring and very repetitive. This past year, I began using a newly issued series; it is an updated version of a series from, originally, I think, the 1950s. TAN has updated and re-published this series, which has the collective title Our Holy Faith. It includes a text from K-8; is theologically sound; it is set up with a lesson for the children to read and then every lesson includes a question-and-answer format, based on the Baltimore Catechism, which is excellent practice for the kids to practice memorization. In middle school, TAN offers a two part curriculum, Story of the Bible, Old and New Testament, that I have been very pleased with.

Latin: I have used the Memoria Press texts, which is very useful for teaching for a non-Latin speaking teacher. Memoria Press begins them in second grade; I usually begin them in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Prima Latina, Latina Christiania, and then the Forms Series, 1-4.

Math: I have used a few different texts. I propose Math-U-See to start with. I have used it the last couple of years with success, and my oldest daughter prefers it to Saxon. It includes video instruction, and use of manipulatives, and is designed to include a chapter a week, essentially, so easy to lesson plan.

Handwriting: K-8. Begin with print, and then introduce cursive. I like Memoria Press's workbooks and approaches, although there are a lot of different options. One idea: we could incorporate elements that we want the children to be practicing anyway, like their questions from Religion or English Grammar, and put them into a website to generate the text in the appropriate sizes and handwriting style (print or cursive).

Spelling—I really like Memoria Press's Traditional Spelling texts; they are the best that I have come across. They are adding a text a year; they are up through year four right now, I think. I usually start Spelling in 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, and go through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Geography: Memoria Press has a good four-year geography program. It has a year of American states; a year focusing on (modern) geography of the Classical world; a year that covers everything not covered in the first two; and year covering social and human geography. I usually do these in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8.

## Kindergarten

### Math

Math U See Primer or Numbers Book set

### Religion

Our Holy Faith

### Read Aloud

TAN's Catholic Stories for Boys and Girls

### Phonics

Classical Phonics with K Phonics Workbook

### Morning Work

Kindergarten Morning Work

### Enrichment

Kindergarten Enrichment, Book of Crafts, Art Cards

## First Grade

### Phonics

Classical Phonics and Phonics Grade I Workbook

### Reading

Seton Faith and Freedom Readers, Grade I

### Math

Math U See Alpha

### Handwriting

Self Created Print-outs or Copybook I

### Religion

Faith and Life I or Our Holy Faith, Good Shepherd

(History) see above

(Science)

## Second Grade

### Phonics

Classical Phonics and Phonics Grade II Workbook

### Reading

Seton Faith and Freedom Readers, Grade I and Grade II

### Math

Math U See Beta

### Handwriting

Self-Created Pages or Copybooks II or III or Copybooks Cursive I (I have begun cursive in second or third grade, depending on the child) and New American Cursive I

### Religion

Faith and Life II or Our Holy Faith, Lamb of God

(History) see above

(Science)

(Latin)

Prima Latina

### Spelling (begin)

Traditional Spelling I

### Third Grade

Phonics (possible, or discontinue for Reading)

Phonics for Grade III Workbook

Reading

Tales from Beatrix Potter; Prairie School; The Courage of Sarah Noble; Little House in the Big Woods; Seton's Faith and Freedom Readers, Grade III

Spelling

Traditional Spelling I or II

Latin

Prima Latina or Latina Christiania

Religion

Faith and Life III or Our Holy Family, Prince of Peace

Math

Math U See Gamma

History

(see above)

Science (TBD)

Handwriting

Self-Created Pages or Copybook Cursive I or II and New American Cursive 1 or 2

### Fourth Grade

Reading

Little House in the Big Woods; Farmer Boy; Charlotte's Web; Mr. Popper's Penguins; Greek Myths

English Grammar

English Recitation I

Spelling

Traditional Spelling II or III

Latin

Latina Christiania

Religion

Faith and Life IV or Our Holy Faith, Bread of Life

Math

Math U See Delta

Science (TBD)

History

(see above)

Handwriting

Self Created Pages or Copybook Cursive II or III and New American Cursive 2

## Fifth Grade

### Reading

Homer Price; The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe; Heidi; Greek Myths

### English Grammar

English Recitation II

### Spelling

Traditional Spelling III or IV

### Latin

First Form

### Religion

Faith and Life V or Our Holy Family, Light of the World

### Math

Math U See Epsilon

### Science (TBD)

### History

(see above)

### Geography

States and Capitals or Geography I

### Handwriting

Self Created Pages Or Copybook Book IV and New American Cursive 2

## Sixth Grade

### Reading

Adam of the Road; Robin Hood; The Door in the Wall; King Arthur

### English Grammar

English Recitation III

### Spelling

Spelling Workout F

### Latin

First Form (continued); Second Form (begin)

### Religion

Faith and Life VI or Our Holy Faith, King of Kings  
Or TAN's Story of the Bible, Old Testament

### History

(see above)

### Science (TBD)

### Handwriting

Self Generated Pages or New American Cursive 3

### Geography

Geography I or Geography II or States and Capitals

## Seventh Grade

### Reading

The Bronze Bow; The Hobbit; Anne of Green Gables

### English Grammar

English Recitation IV

### Spelling

Spelling Workbook G

### Latin

Third Form

### Religion

Faith and Life VII or Our Holy Faith, Messiah or TAN's Story of the Bible, Old or New Testament

### Math

Math U See Pre-Algebra

### History

(see above)

### Science (TBD)

### Handwriting

Self Created Pages or New American Cursive 3

### Geography

Geography I, Geography II, or States and Capitals

## Eighth Grade

### Reading

Treasure Island; The Wind in the Willows; The Adventures of Tom Sawyer; Shakespeare (various options)

### English Grammar

English Recitation V

### Spelling

Spelling Workbook H

### Religion

Faith and Life VIII or TAN's History of the Church or Story of the Bible, New Testament or Our Holy Faith's Alpha and Omega

### Math

Math U See Pre-Algebra or Algebra

### Science (TBD)

### Latin

Fourth Form

### History

(see above)

### Handwriting

Penmanship Practice with Wisdom Scriptures

### Geography

Geography III