



# Catholic Cour

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DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK ■ VOL. 105 NO. 16 ■ THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 1994 ■ 75¢ ■ 24 PAGES



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Merita Sheive (right) helps her son Ryan dress for the frigid weather before driving him and younger brother Taylor to Lansing High School, where they get on the bus that takes them to Immaculate Conception School in Ithaca.

## Why Catholic schools?

### Education, care earn parents' high praise

By Lee Strong  
Senior staff writer

If administrators at Immaculate Conception School in Ithaca ever need a recruiter, they've got one in the making in second-grader Ryan Sheive.

According to his mother, Merita Sheive, Ryan has been praising Immaculate Conception to his friends who attend public schools — even though he's only been attending the school since September.

Ryan has been trying to get his friends to convince their parents to send them to the Catholic school, his mother explained.

"He's taken to it like a fish to water," his Merita Sheive remarked. "He likes the structure."

Of course, if any of the 53 Catholic schools under the supervision of the Diocese of Rochester want recruiters now, they need only turn to the parents of their current students.

Many of these parents have chosen to send their children to Catholic schools despite the cost — which for some means scrimping or working extra jobs — because they believe their children benefit from Catholic education.

"I see the ethics and morals and a sense of a community (that I teach at home) backed up in the Catholic schools," noted Sheive, who also is sending Ryan's brother, Taylor, to Immaculate Conception's kindergarten program — despite the fact that the family is Methodist.

Cyndi Hornbeck and her husband, Michael, were also concerned with the school environment when deciding where to send their children.

"I knew that from looking into the public schools in the area, I wanted my kids to be in a more family-type atmosphere and to be in a smaller school," Cyndi Hornbeck remarked.

The Hornbecks are currently sending four boys — Frank (eighth grade), Mickey (sixth grade), Joseph (second grade) and Peter (kindergarten) — to St. Ann's School in Hornell.

"I just wanted a place where I could have more input," Hornbeck added. "I'm able to go in there with any complaints, and can get them taken care of."



Ryan, who has attended Immaculate Conception School since September, starts his day at 8 a.m. with a morning prayer in Andrew Krauss' second-grade class.

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