

# Kids learn from parents' reading

Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier

Teachers in Catholic schools throughout the diocese spend a good deal of time introducing their students to the joys of reading, but parents have an equally important role in this process, teachers say.

Kate Boggs uses a variety of methods to keep her class of 12 third-graders at Spencerport's St. John the Evangelist School excited about reading. Each student is responsible for reading at least three books a month, one of which must be a book with several chapters. Since her students recently read more than 100 books in a two-month period, Scholastic Inc. donated 100 books to underprivileged children. Boggs also sets aside 15 minutes before lunch each day to read out loud to her students, as well as 20 minutes after lunch for students to read quietly to themselves.

"The importance of reading in our society can't be overemphasized," Boggs said. "All the other subjects build on reading. Reading naturally builds vocabulary."

Boggs said she loves reading and is excited about it, so her students catch her enthusiasm and look forward to reading as well. Parents — especially those who read with their children — can have the same effect.

"I think reading together is huge, and a lot of parents I think get ner-

vous because they feel like they don't read well enough or they get self-conscious," Boggs said.

If parents read in some of their spare time instead of always turning on the television, their children will notice that and learn that books are a part of daily life, not something that only belongs in school, Boggs said.

Sharyn Taets has the students in her second-grade class at St. Mary Our Mother School in Horseheads complete a weekly reading log. The students are supposed to read for at least 15 minutes a night, five times a week. They are required to record the date, name of the book and number of pages read each time, Taets said. Before beginning a new book, students write a few sentences about the book they just finished, she added.

"This log makes the children accountable for the reading homework assignment," Taets said. "The parents seem to like this format. They usually have the children read to them, and they help the children with their entries. One mother recently indicated to me that she feels the reading log has helped her child to want to read more independently and that she has seen an improve-



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Each day, third-graders in Kate Boggs' class at Spencerport's St. John the Evangelist School read to themselves for 20 minutes. On Feb. 11, Boggs reads a book along with her students John Sommer (clockwise from the back left), Hannah Visca and Alyssa Scherer.

ment in her reading skills as well."

Sister Mary Marvin, principal of St. Monica's School in Rochester, said kindergarten through fifth-grade students at her school utilize Renaissance Learning Inc.'s Accelerated Learning program. With this program, students choose books to read then take a computerized quiz to test their comprehension. Students are expected to spend 30 minutes reading during each school day, along with another 30 minutes of reading at home.

The point of this program, Sister Marvin said, is to make sure the students get enough reading practice

and to help them become independent readers. Students who participated in the program during the 2002-03 school year read a combined total of approximately 13,000 books, she said.

Parental support is an important component of this program, Sister Marvin added. Parents are expected to spend time at home reading with their children and, if possible, volunteer to help with the program at school. Most parents have supported the program once they've seen how effective it is, she said, and if the parents are excited about it, the children will be too.

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