

Elizabeth Ann Seton

Book Title: Elizabeth Ann Seton: Daughter of America

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It is hard to believe that one of the problems Elizabeth Ann Seton faced over two hundred years ago is still a big problem nowadays. No, I'm not talking about tuberculosis. I'm talking about religious freedom. Our country, which was founded during Saint Elizabeth's lifetime, has always proclaimed itself a place where a person can worship whenever and however they like without fear of persecution. Saint Elizabeth was ostracized from her job and friends because she chose to become a Catholic. She had to move to a different state for fear of her life! Just because being a Catholic won't get you kicked out of New York City nowadays doesn't mean that we should stop caring about religious intolerance. Jesus taught us to love our neighbors. He showed us by example that it is okay to show kindness even to society's outcasts. Just because we believe differently, and worship differently, doesn't mean that we should show less love to someone. Remember the hardships that Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton faced the next time you start to judge someone because of their religion, and show kindness instead of hate.

Discussion/Written Response Questions

1. How does the Golden Rule, "Treat others as you would like to be treated," apply directly to Elizabeth's life? Give specific examples.
2. As a wife, mother, and Sister of Charity, Elizabeth took care of many people. Who do you help care for? How do you show love for others? Can you think of ways you and your classmates can help people in your community who need help?

History Connection

Review the 1st Amendment to the US Constitution. What exactly does freedom of religion mean in our country? Even though this amendment was written during

Elizabeth's life, was she really "free" to practice Catholicism in New York City? How can we prevent religious persecution from happening today?

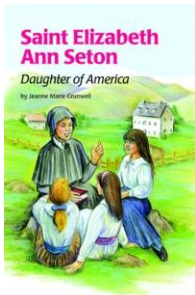
In the time leading up to the Revolutionary War, many colonists were forced to choose a side. Tories, or loyalists, like Elizabeth's father, supported the King of England; and Patriots wanted to break free from British rule and establish their own nation. Page fourteen of this book states, "It was a confusing time." Pretend that you are a Tory and write a paragraph giving three reasons why you choose to stay loyal to the King. Then pretend you are a Patriot and write another paragraph giving three reasons to fight the British.

Science Connection

Research tuberculosis. What are the symptoms and causes? Elizabeth's husband refers to the disease as "the Seton cough." Why did the Setons think that tuberculosis runs in the family? What could Elizabeth have done to prevent tuberculosis from affecting so many of her loved ones.

Geography Connection

New York City, NY
Pisa, Italy
Baltimore, MD
Philadelphia, PA



Elizabeth Ann Bayley was born in New York City on August 28, 1774. Her father, Richard Bayley, was a well-known doctor. Her mother, Catherine, died when Elizabeth was just three years old. In 1794, Elizabeth married William Seton. Elizabeth, William, and their five children had a happy life together. Elizabeth devoted her time to her family, to helping others, and to prayer.

But then her father, whom she loved very much, died. Then her father-in-law also died, and the Seton fortune quickly dwindled. Next Elizabeth's husband Will became sick and also died in 1803. In her grief, Elizabeth prayed, "My God, I am alone in the world with you and my little ones. But you are my Father and doubly theirs."

Elizabeth was consoled by the Felicchi family who were Catholics and in 1805 she became a Catholic herself. A few years later, Elizabeth was asked to come and open a girls' school in Baltimore. It was there that Elizabeth decided to live as a religious sister, eventually founding the Sisters of Charity. Besides founding many Catholic schools, she also opened orphanages. She even made plans for a hospital, which was built after her death. She is the first US-born citizen to be declared a saint.

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton: Daughter of America captures the mystery of how God's love and call unfold all throughout our life. Children will learn powerful lessons about faith, trust in God, and courage in serving others.

Recommended for ages 8 – 12.

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