

# mater et magistra

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 2 SPRING 2010



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## THE WONDER

### WITHIN CHILDHOOD

*A Collection of Ideas for Pursuing Montessori Education in the Catholic Home*

**G**. K. CHESTERTON WROTE, “WHAT WAS wonderful about childhood is that anything in it was a wonder.”<sup>1</sup> Isn’t this so true? Our children’s eyes and hearts are so full of awe as they experience the world around them. Every experience is rich and meaningful for them because children are able to appreciate the simple beauty around them—the simple beauty that we miss because we’re so busy overthinking life! And in a mysterious way, richness is a part of the simplicity. Our Lord tells us exactly how important this mystery is, “Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it” (Mark 10:15).

What does this have to do with the home education of our young learners? So much! Often in home education we begin with great fervor! We’ve been anticipating this moment for so long—perhaps since our first child was born. Beginning our home education journey we are overcome with anticipation, planning, hoping, and purchasing. We’re caught up in our own vision, and our child, full of wonder, perhaps feels she is just along for the ride—living our lesson plans but not learning with enthusiasm.


I’d like to encourage you to turn off that path to take a different journey—to find a world of wonder with your child. I’m inviting you to a place where imagination and truth meet: in the simple, everyday moments that are so rich with connections for our child. We don’t need a program or a scope and sequence for this; this is a lifestyle of wonder.

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## On the Cutting Edge

CARMENTA LATIN [WWW.CARMENTALATIN.COM](http://WWW.CARMENTALATIN.COM)

Editors Note: This is the second in a series exploring the novel and adventurous ways home-educating families are providing educational experiences for their children. In this issue, we examine Carmenta Latin founded by Andrew Kuhry-Haeuser. Visit [www.carmentalatin.com](http://www.carmentalatin.com).

ARMENTA LATIN FOUNDER, ANDREW KUHRY-HAEUSER believes that given the essential nature of the Latin language in the context of a broad classical liberal education, it should be a basic course for all stu-

dents no matter what subject matter they choose for higher education. His online course is best suited for junior-high and high-school students, as well as adults, and involves interactive chat room work along with homework from two basic texts. The convenience of this online format makes the study of Latin in a classroom setting with an experienced teacher more accessible.

A rigorous course, Carmenta Latin uses *Primer of Ecclesiastical Latin* by John F. Collins in the first four semesters and *Lingua Latina* by Hans Orberg in the fifth through eighth semesters. According to Kuhry-Haeuser, “Collins’ *Primer* presents a more traditional, grammar-focused approach to the language, one that is more suited to the beginning student. By means of this thorough and well-organized text, the student learns about the rules and structure of Latin and of language in general, which in time he is able to apply to his own native language.”

Then the class moves into *Lingua Latina*, which is an immersion text written entirely in Latin with no guides or explanations. “With this crutch removed,” says Kuhry-Haeuser, “the student is now

forced to understand the rules and intricacies of the Latin language from context, leading the student to a more intuitive understanding of the language and allowing him to learn to write and speak it quickly and fluidly.”

The third component of the Carmenta Latin program is conversation. Beginning in the second semester, students in the course begin speaking and writing in Latin both in and out of class. In class the instructor leads group conversations (starting very simply, but moving in time to the more complex), while at the same time, outside of class, pairs of students are assigned each week a certain amount of Latin conversation time, chatting with each other by means of the text chat room on the Carmenta Online Latin Classroom website. Kuhry-Haeuser believes that this conversational element, integrated fully into nearly every level of the course, is key to the students’ long-term success with the Latin language: “Only through the frequent practice in forming sentences and recalling vocabulary that conversation in the language provides are the students able, in time, to truly master it. Conversation, which

forces the student to obtain and then retain a high level of logical *and* intuitive understanding of the language, can serve to take the student from a rudimentary understanding of Latin to a deep understanding of the structure and beauty of the language and its literature, and connectedly, language in general.”

The class meets frequently (three times a week in the first two semesters and two times per week after that) so that fluency and retention are easy to obtain. Kuhry-Haeuser’s goal for the course is impressive: the acquisition of a complete and fluent knowledge of the Latin tongue. It seems completely doable given the structure of the classes and the interaction provided by the instructor.

#### **STUDENT PERSPECTIVES**

I had spent about two years reading various Latin grammars and fumbling around the Latin forums and materials on the Internet, and found myself none the wiser. Sure, I could painstakingly slap together highly stilted Latin prose, or get the general (but not exact) meaning of a Latin sentence. However, there were no local courses for me to take.

Instead, I signed up for a live online formal course in Latin, the Carmenta Online Latin Classroom. Three days a week, one hour per class, plus homework and tests, for a total of 120 hours per section. Magister Andreas knows his subject well, and teaches well and with humor. The midterm and final are taken while online, so there is an hour to complete the translation tasks. The pace is just right, and there is much classroom participation. I find that I am learning and retaining much more than with self-learning.

If you’re interested in learning Latin in a classroom, but don’t have any local resources that offer Latin classes, I highly recommend checking out Carmenta.

*Robert Baruch  
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*Mr. Baruch is a software architect. He has a special interest in reading and translating medieval scientific texts, as well as in translating English Wikipedia articles into Latin on Vicipaedia, the Latin-language version of Wikipedia.*



The Carmenta Online Latin course has been awesome. I’ve completed the Latin I coursework, and I have to say that I can already see the results in my everyday life: I have a better grasp of the English language now and my vocabulary is broader. Andrew is a great instructor, very competent and helpful. And on top of that, he has a great sense of humor! I think my favorite part of the course has been the vocabulary. Andrew makes learning the vocabulary fun and easy by showing us the connection between the words and their English derivatives. I would recommend this course to anyone who is interested in learning Latin.

*Jimmy Beebe  
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