

School

The next major development in the religious upbringing of your Grandchildren is likely to concern the choice of first school. If a Catholic school is available and parents decide to choose it, your task immediately becomes very much easier. This seems so obvious that it is hardly necessary to expand about it. The key advantages of education in an atmosphere of faith and of graded catechetical teaching need no stressing. But there are others, not so central but nevertheless worth mentioning. One is the effect on your Grandchildren's parents. The school will draw them into a world of likeminded people - who meet at the school gates and at parents' evenings, school concerts and the like - people who will often be brought even closer by the friendships forged between their children - church-going people.



You yourselves, as Grandparents, will inevitably be drawn into this world, keenly

interested in your Grandchildren's academic and athletic progress, as well, of course, as their growth as Christians. If you're living not far off, you'll be at the concerts and prize-givings and sports days - not to mention football and hockey matches.

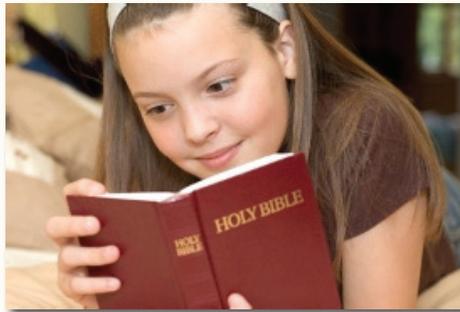
Another unique religious advantage, which only attendance at a Catholic school can bring to your Grandchildren, is the integration into their education of the sacraments of the Church - Reconciliation, Holy

Communion, Confirmation. It is far more natural to approach these great steps in Christian formation



in the same way as other important steps in education - as one of a number of like-minded individuals, learning and experiencing together.

Some parishes, especially large ones, organise a weekly catechetical session for children at non-Catholic schools and, if Grandchildren cannot find a place at a Catholic school (or if their parents do not choose one), such a course offers an alternative, though a rather imperfect one. But, besides giving regular instruction, it does bring together a group of parents in the same (difficult) circumstance, which is, as seen above, always



advantageous; moreover, it gives Grandparents an opportunity to help; for example, in transporting children to/from the classes.

In the event that Catholic schools are unavailable or overcrowded and there is no alternative course, prospects will depend, almost always, on the attitude of the parents. If they are committed to fulfilling their Baptismal promise of bringing up their children as Catholics - or if one of them is committed and the other not unsympathetic - then once again Grandparents will be ready to step forward to help. They may find themselves supplementing

the task that the parents are themselves undertaking or, perhaps, circumstances may dictate that the whole onus falls on the Grandparents. In this case, Grandparents will be well advised to consult their local clergy regarding preparation and methods and to explore the nearest Catholic repository for catechetical material; excellent courses exist for various age-groups, often including exercises for the children to do themselves.

