

Seven Clues: A Catholic Treasure Hunt

Scott Hahn

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Seven Clues is an engaging picture book that makes learning about the Catholic Mass fun.

In Scott Hahn and Maura Roan McKeegan's picture book *Seven Clues*, two children go on a quest to achieve deeper understanding of their Catholic faith.

Peter and Julia are surprised to find a mysterious box on their doorstep one morning. The attached card invites them to a banquet and says that they can discover more by following seven clues written on the scroll in the box. They invite their older brother James to join them on their adventure. At each step of the way, they learn vocabulary terms associated with Catholic teachings, discover that loved ones will be a part of the mysterious event, learn that those involved will admit their wrongs and ask for God's mercy, and are told that God's words can be found in the Bible.

The children's excitement grows as they hear about singing with invisible choirs of angels, learn why Jewish people sacrificed a lamb, and are reminded of the Catholic Church's teachings that Jesus is the "lamb" sacrificed to take away the sins of the world and is present in the Eucharist. After Peter and Julia solve the mystery, they're able to enjoy Sunday Mass with their grandparents; later, they decide to involve their wider community in the excitement. Here, respecting children's abilities and helping them without giving away any answers is crucial.

The story introduces a considerable amount of information about the Catholic Mass in a way that's both fun and memorable. That both children make equal contributions in coming up with ideas and taking action is inclusive, as is the fact that diverse age groups are represented, with all of the characters showing enthusiasm for the quest and expressing pride in the progress being made. And the illustrations are colorful and detailed; they complement the accessible, enthusiastic prose to convey suspense, curiosity, and excitement in growing measure.

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KRISTINE MORRIS (November 19, 2022)

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