SISTER ANNE’S HANDS  
By Marybeth Lorbiecki  

Recommended Reading for grades 3-6

In small-town America in the early 60’s Sister Anne comes to teach at Anna’s school. “Her skin was darker than any person’s I’d ever known,” says Anna, and her hand “was puppy brown with white lacy moons for nails.”

From the first day of second grade, Sister Anne lights up the classroom. I’d never had so much fun at school!” Anna observes after a day of counting buttons and teeth, sharing jokes and stories. Then someone sails a paper airplane past Sister’s head, with an ugly message written on the wings. How Sister deals with the incident and the profound impact she has on her students—especially Anna—is at the heart of this moving, timeless tale.

Poetic, understated prose and luminous paintings loaded with period detail, enhance this story about how a teacher can change a child’s life. Both funny and heartfelt, Sister Anne’s Hands is based on one of the author’s own childhood experiences, so it has that rare immediacy and emotion that make for the most memorable stories. Uplifting and bound to please, this book is a joy to read alone or aloud, and will have an impact on young and old alike.
Guidelines for Parents

Multiple Choice

Multiple-choice questions are designed to assess Common Core Reading and Language Standards. They will ask students to analyze different aspects of a given text, including central idea, style elements, character and plot development, and vocabulary. Almost all questions, including vocabulary questions, will only be answered correctly if the student comprehends and makes use of the whole passage. For multiple-choice questions, students will select the correct response from four answer choices.

Short Response

Short-response questions are designed to assess Common Core Reading and Language Standards. These are single questions in which students use textual evidence to support their own answer to an inferential question. These questions ask the student to make an inference (a claim, position, or conclusion) based on his or her analysis of the passage, and then provide two pieces of text-based evidence to support his or her answer.

The purpose of the short-response questions is to assess a student’s ability to comprehend and analyze text. In responding to these questions, students will be expected to write in complete sentences. Responses should require no more than three complete sentences. Please write response with complete sentences, correct spelling and punctuation.

Extended Response

Extended-response questions are designed to measure a student’s ability to Write from Sources. Questions that measure Writing from Sources prompt students to communicate a clear and coherent analysis of one or two texts. The comprehension and analysis required by each extended response is directly related to grade specific reading standards.

Student responses are evaluated on the degree to which they meet grade-level writing and language expectations. This evaluation is made using a rubric that incorporates the demands of grade specific Common Core Writing, Reading, and Language standards. The integrated nature of the Common Core Learning Standards for ELA and Literacy require that students are evaluated across the strands (Reading, Writing and Language) with longer piece of writing such as those prompted by the extended-response questions. Please remember to write complete sentences, correct spelling, punctuation, opening paragraph, answer question with details from text and closing paragraph.
Finally, the day came when I walked down the hall to my new room and saw her. She had on a black dress and veil like all the other nuns, but her skin was darker than any person’s I’d ever known.

“And who are you, child?” she said with sparkles in her voice.

“Anna Zabrocky,” I answered, seeing she had a space between her teeth just like me.

“Mighty fine freckles you have,” she said, smiling widely. “Anyone kissed by angels as much as you, must have wings sprouting for sure.”

Well, let me tell you, no one had ever connected me with angels before. I was the one they sent to the hall for talking in class or to the principal for mouthing off.

When she reached out to touch my check, I dodged her hand as if it were hot. It was puppy brown with white lacy moons for nails. And palm side up, it was pink with dark lines. A light pretty pink like an evening dress for Barbie. I tried not to stare.

She didn’t seem to notice. “Welcome to the second grade. I’m Sister Anne.”
**Multiple Choice Question 1**

In line 2, the word “veil” means?

A. A piece of fine material worn to protect or conceal the body.
B. A piece of fine material worn to protect or conceal the face.
C. A long piece of material used to cover the legs.
D. A long piece of material used to wrap around the waist.

**Multiple Choice Question 2**

Which best describes how Anna felt when she first met Sister Anne?

A. Anna was disappointed.
B. Anna was comfortable.
C. Anna was pleased and taken back.
D. Anna was shocked and scared.

**Multiple Choice Question 3**

In line 10, the word “dodged” means?

A. to strike
B. to move away
C. to catch
D. to fear

**Multiple Choice Question 4**

What type of student best describes Anna?

A. Quiet
B. Chatterbox
C. Outgoing
D. Shy

Office use only           2 pt. question  ______________________
Short Response Question 1

That day, to start class, Sister Anne had us tell some of our very best jokes, even the nun ones like “What’s black and white, and black and white, and black and white?...A nun rolling down the stairs.”

And when she read to us at story time, she did all the voices, low or high or grunting.

Then she had us counting the buttons on our clothes, pencils in our desks, and teeth in our heads. After all that adding and subtracting, we ended up toothless, pencil-rich, and with buttons on our underwear. I’d never had so much fun at school!

- Why did Anna have so much fun in school?
- Use three details from the text to support your answer.
But after lunch a paper airplane sailed past Sister’s head and hit the Blackboard-WOOSH.

There was a note written on the wings. Sister Anne read it out loud:

“Roses are red,
Violets are blue.
Don’t let Sister Anne
Get any black on you.”

A few giggles rippled across the room. Sister’s face froze like a tongue on an icy post.

“This is funny?” she asked us softly.

We didn’t say a thing. I felt as guilty as if I’d made the airplane.

“I’ll need some quiet time to think about this, if you know what I mean.”

We did. You could have heard a butterfly sigh for the rest of that day. We went home with plenty on our minds.

That night in my bed, all I could see was Sister Anne’s hand as she reached out to me.

• How do you think Sister Anne felt when she read the note?
• How do you think Anna felt after Sister Anne received the note?
• Use details from the text to support your answer.
Extended Response

Sister Anne gave the class another chance.
”Now,” she said, “I was sent here to teach, and that’s what I’m going to do.”
And she did.

- Why do you think Sister Ann taught her class about Phillis Wheatley, Matthew Henson, and Sojourner Truth?
- Research the three people above to support your answer.
- State two facts for each person.
**SCORE SHEET**
Sister Anne’s Hands (grades 3-6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Choice</td>
<td>2 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Response 1</td>
<td>3 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Response 2</td>
<td>2 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Response</td>
<td>6 pts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Passing Grade** 11-13 pts

Your final score

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For Scorers Use Only

**Comments to Student:**

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😊 Thank you for participating in Mr. G’s ELA Book Club. Please save these score sheets. Once you have completed three books and received three passing grades returns the sheets to my office for a free Dress Down Day
Tips for Parents

1. Read the entire book before filling out the form
2. Yes, you may read it to your child
3. Ask questions along the way ~ i.e. vocabulary inference, predicting what will happen next
4. When students answer your questions ask them what from the text gave them the clues to help with their answer
5. Have children do drafts on scrap paper for the written response first
   a. Review for spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.
   b. Enhance the vocabulary words in the response
      i. Change ~ like to adore
      ii. Change ~ want to desire etc.
6. Develop vocabulary word list from the stories and use them at home whenever possible
7. Discuss what your child learned from the story not just retelling the story
Anne. Anne, alternatively spelled Ann, is a form of the Latin female given name Anna. This in turn is a representation of the Hebrew Hannah, the name of the mother of the prophet Samuel. Anne is a common name in France.