

"Everybody is smart. We just learn at different speeds."

When Sister Marguerite Gibbs was 3 years old, her mother died. She and her brother and sister were raised by their father, with the help of a widow the children called "Aunt Belle."

Sister Marguerite attended St. Michael High School in Flint, where she fell in love with her teachers. She lived the typical student life, enjoying dances and parties, but she knew she wanted to join the IHM community; she wanted a relationship that would last forever. She liked the lifestyle, the teaching and everything being a part of the community had to offer; however, her father was not happy with the idea. He felt the lifestyle of a nun was not compatible with her outgoing personality, but he didn't object the second time she asked him.

Her first mission was at St. Catherine (Detroit), where she taught first grade for five years, with more than 60 students in her classroom each year. Sister Marguerite loved her students' innocence and sweet faces. She taught first grade at St. Martin (Detroit), first and second grade at St. Mary's Academy and first grade at St. Francis de Sales (Detroit) and St. Thomas (Ann Arbor). At St. Timothy (Trenton), she taught sixth grade and ministered as a teacher and principal at St. Charles (Coldwater).

The changes from Vatican II occurred while Sister Marguerite was at St. Timothy. She recalls the day she wore the short habit for the first time. The bell rang and she walked into the classroom, shut the door and a boy whistled. She laughed, thinking, "Well, I must not look so bad."

While in Coldwater, St. Charles became a public school, but she continued to minister as principal. It was here that she discovered the "Workshop Way[®]" teaching method from Sister Grace H. Pilon, SBS. This program affected her way of teaching children and helped her when teachers came to her with problems in school. "I love how the Workshop Way[®] gave children independence," she explains. "It is the philosophy that all children can learn that is important. The students were able to take responsibility for their behavior. I didn't have to discipline them. I loved seeing the students happy. Workshop Way[®] changed my life. It tapped into my creativity. I became less rigid. I was so happy!"

Sister Marguerite taught the Workshop Way[®] to teachers at Xavier University in New Orleans for 17 summers. "Teaching made me a better person," she says simply. "I just loved working with children and adults. To help the teachers become better and more confident in their jobs was my goal."

Since she retired and moved back to the Motherhouse, Sister Marguerite has enjoyed sewing for others. "I hope I have many more years to continue doing what I've been doing," she says. Her greatest joy, though, has been "the tremendous people who are here. I have been so enriched by them."