

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

Jesus' friends remember, wait together

By Janaan Manternach

Jesus' friends walked slowly down the slope of Mount Olivet. Jesus had just left them to go back to his Father. They thought they saw him rise up in a cloud until they could not see him anymore.

As they walked down into the valley and up toward the city walls, they thought of Jesus' instructions. "Don't leave Jerusalem," he told them. "Wait there for a few days. My Father and I will send the Holy Spirit to you."

This all happened after the time of the resurrection.

His friends were not sure just what Jesus meant, but they wanted to do just what Jesus told them to do. So they went back to Jerusalem. They returned to the upstairs room where they were staying.

Peter was there. So were James and John, and Peter's brother, Andrew. Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew were there too. So were the other James, Simon and the other Judas. They had been Jesus' closest disciples. Once there were 12 of them. Now there were just 11. Judas, the one who betrayed Jesus, was missing. He had killed himself because of what he had done to Jesus.

There were some women there, too. They had followed Jesus all during his years of teaching. Jesus' mother, Mary, was with them. So were some of Jesus' relatives and other disciples.

They came together to pray and to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit. All day long they prayed.

—Sometimes they prayed from the Bible, praying the Psalms.

—At other times they prayed in their own words.

—For long stretches of time they meditated silently on what Jesus told them.

"When the Holy Spirit comes to you," Jesus said just before returning to his Father, "you are to be my witnesses. You are to go everywhere telling people about me and about our Father's love. Start right here in Jerusalem. Then go all over Judea and Samaria. From there go out into the whole world."

Those were Jesus' last words to them. They prayed long over those words. What could this mean, that they were to go all over the world telling people about Jesus? They had never been out of their own country before.

They prayed together as they decided on someone to take the place of Judas. "Lord," they prayed, "you read people's hearts. Show us who to choose to replace Judas. Should we select Joseph or Matthias? Please help us decide."

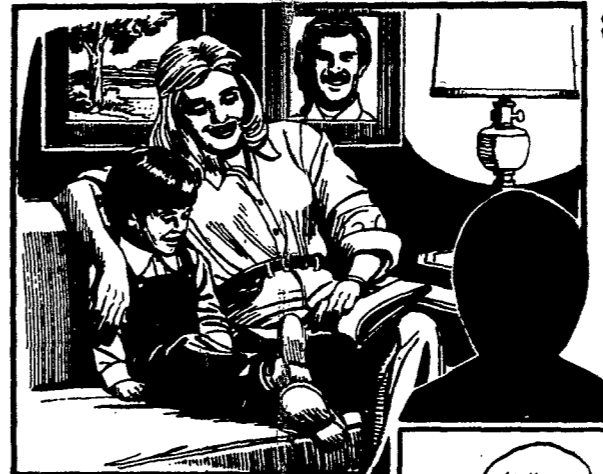
They chose Matthias to be added to the 11 apostles. So there were again 12 of them.

For days they waited and prayed as a community. They prayed to be able to live up to what Jesus was asking of them. They prayed that God would send them the Spirit of Jesus to be their helper and guide.

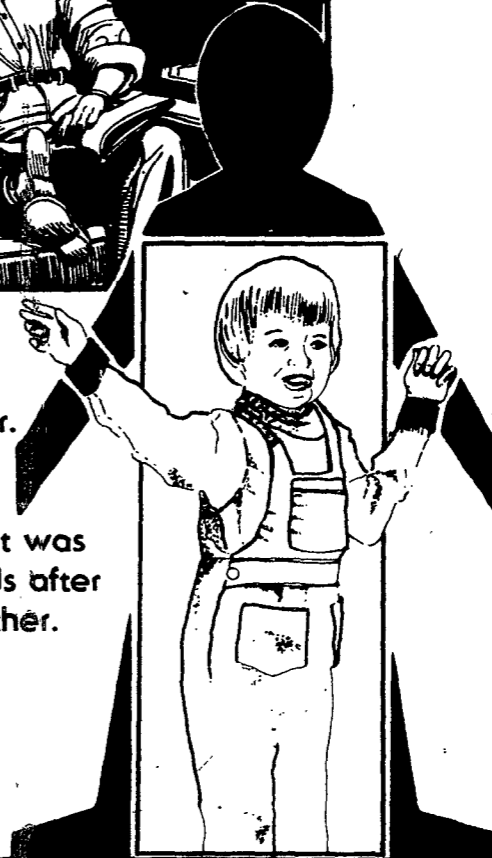
They found strength in praying together as a community of Jesus' friends.

Story Hour biblical quotes — this week from Acts 1:12-26 — are paraphrased.

(Ms. Manternach is the author of numerous catechetical books and articles for children.)



Friends need each other. Often they are drawn together by the things they care about most. It was like that for Jesus' friends after he went back to his Father.



Together

Sister Elenita Barry, MM, worked with Navajo children in western New Mexico for more than 10 years. Supported by a grant from the Catholic Extension Society, she taught Navajo children the saving Word of the gospels.

Sister Elenita is one of a small team of home missionaries who, together with the Extension Society, pursue the vital and urgent task of evangelization here in the United States. But the team is too small to do it alone. It needs new members. It needs you.

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HOW ABOUT YOU?

A friend is someone to talk to, someone to have fun with, someone you can count on, and trust. Why do we like to have friends?

Have you ever helped a friend? Has a friend ever helped you? How?

Children's Reading Corner:

"If You Listen" is a story by Charlotte Zolotow. Children and adults might read it together. Afterward they might think about what it means to believe in someone they cannot see or touch. In this story, a little girl, whose father has been away a long time, asks how she can know her father really loves her. Her mother answers by pointing to some other realities the little girl knows without seeing them. For instance, she knows the chiming church bells are in the steeple even though she can't see the church from her home. (Harper and Row Publishers, 10 E. 53rd St., New York, NY 10022. 1980. Hardback, \$8.95.)