

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

'You mean you share everything?'

By Janaan Manternach

"How do you Christians live?" the curious Roman lawyer asked a group of his friends.

This was in the early days of the first Christians. They were people from the Jewish tradition. But they believed in the prophet Jesus as the Messiah God sent to save the world.

"What is it like being a Christian here in Jerusalem?" the lawyer asked.

"Well, I guess a very important thing is that we are so close to one another as a community," Sarah responded to the lawyer.

"We do many things together."

"We pray a lot together," Mark added. "Every day we pray together in one of our homes."

"We pray the usual prayers of the Jews three times a day — in the morning, afternoon and evening. We pray the psalms from the Scriptures. And we pray special prayers that Jesus taught us."

"In fact we meet every day in one of our homes to have a special meal together," Susanna added. "We call it the 'breaking of bread.' We have a regular meal and then we do together something Jesus used to do with us. Bread and wine are blessed and shared in remembrance of Jesus. We remember Jesus and we pray. We believe he is with us."

"But don't I also see you in the temple?" the lawyer questioned further.

"Yes," Jude answered. "We go

every day to the temple to praise God."

"But most of the time we gather in one or another of our homes," Sarah interrupted.

"There we read and talk about the teachings of the apostles. They were Jesus' closest friends. We meditate on their words."

"We just enjoy being together. We care very much about one another."

"We've all noticed how much you seem to love one another," the Roman commented.

"We share everything we have," Susanna added. "We sell any property we have and divide up the money. Everyone receives what they need. Any money we earn through our work, we divide it up also."

"That's amazing," the Roman lawyer said with real surprise. "I kind of wish I had whatever it is that you have. Many of my friends admire you followers of Jesus as much as I do. I guess that's why so many people are joining your communities."

"Come visit us sometime as we gather to pray in one of our homes," Mark said to the lawyer.

"Thanks. I'll do that soon," the lawyer replied as he turned to leave.

Story hour biblical quotes — this week from Acts 2:42-47 — are paraphrased.

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

Your life at home is very important to you. Jesus' early followers felt that way, too. They enjoyed eating, praying and just being together as a family.



Together

Sister Elenita Barry, M.M., 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?

- Try to imagine yourself as one of the earliest Christians. Think about how they shared everything they had. Do you think that would have been hard to do?
- Have you ever shared one of your possessions when, at first, you didn't really want to?
- Has anyone else ever shared something with you that made you very happy? What was it?

Children's Reading Corner

What happens when people in a family pray together at home? Some people say that when they pray together as a family, they realize how much they are loved by each other.

Still, praying together isn't always easy if you're not used to it. But there are some books that might be helpful. Here are two books for parents to know about and for families to use together:

"The Family Book of Seasons," by Edward and Dianne Murray. Our Sunday Visitor, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, Ind. 46750. 1981. Paperback, \$4.00.

"The Blessing Cup: 24 Simple Rites for Family Prayer-Celebrations," by Rock Travnikar, OFM. St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1615 Republic St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45210. 1979. \$1.95.