

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

Jesus teaches the people how to pray

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

Jesus stood on a sloping hill overlooking the blue sea. A huge crowd of people sat on the grass all around him.

There were so many women, men and children that the crowd stretched all the way down the hill to the water's edge. They listened to Jesus talk.

"When you pray," Jesus was saying, "don't be like the hypocrites. They like to be noticed wherever they pray. They even pray out loud on street corners so that everyone will think they are holy."

Smiles rippled through the crowd. People winked at one another. They all knew the people Jesus was talking about.

"I know a fellow like that," Miriam whispered to Rachel. "He makes a big show all the time of how much he prays."

"You wouldn't believe this woman I pass by every day," Rachel said softly. "She stands for hours praying on the big street corner near the Temple. A lot of people really seem to be impressed."

Jesus smiled. He felt sure people knew what he was talking about. Then he gave the people this advice:

"When you want to pray, go to your room. Close the door. Pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees what no one else sees, will repay you."

"My parents are like that," young Joseph said to his best

friend, David. "They pray a lot at home, but nobody sees them. They don't pray just to be noticed by others."

"Not mine," David replied sadly. "They don't pray much at all. But my grandparents seem to be praying all the time."

Jesus had another suggestion. "Don't use a lot of words in your prayer. Don't talk much. Some people think God will hear them just because of the number of words they use in their prayers. Do not imitate people like that. Your Father knows what you need, before you ask."

"I agree," Rabbi Isaac told his young student, Josiah. "Sometimes when I pray, I don't say anything. I just try to be aware of God's presence with me. Jesus is right."

"I'm not sure how to do that," Josiah replied. "I need some words. Maybe Jesus recommends a certain prayer." To his surprise Josiah heard Jesus giving the people a prayer.

"Here is how you are to pray," Jesus was saying. "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil."

Story Hour biblical quotes — this week from Mt. 6:5-13 — are paraphrased.

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

Your room at home is a special place where you can go to sleep, to read, to play or just to be quiet. Your room is a place where you can pray too. God will hear your prayers, even if others don't.



Healing

Bringing Holy Communion to an 85-year-old shut-in in the poverty-ridden backwoods of southern Missouri is one way Sister Mary Claudia Wissman, D.C., serves God.

Because she is a registered nurse, Sister Mary brings medical assistance to a deprived people who rarely see either a doctor or a hospital. She serves with two other sisters who are religious education and social services experts.

Supported by a grant from the Catholic Church Extension Society, they work as a team to heal the spirit and bodies of people who will never realize the American dream. Their

work is demanding, frustrating, rewarding—and vital. But their team is too small to succeed alone. It needs you.

Join us and become a member of the Extension Society team. Although you won't be present personally in the home missions, your impact will be felt in this holy effort. Together we can bring the word of Christ to those who might never hear it.

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HOW ABOUT YOU?

- What kind of God is the one that Jesus calls Father?
- What kind of God is the one that Jesus calls a forgiver?
- What kind of God is the one that Jesus says will give us our daily bread?

Children's Reading Corner

"When God Speaks," by Joan Lowery Nixon, is an exquisite conversation between a child and his mother. The child discovers the ways, other than words, in which God says, "I love you." (Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Ind. 46750. 1978. Paperback, \$2.50.)

"If Jesus Came to My House," by Joan Gale Thomas, is about a child who imagines what he would do with Jesus if he came to visit. The little boy will acknowledge that Jesus can't call on him in the way he imagined, but that he can go to Jesus' house to kneel, pray, sing, worship and talk. What he could do for Jesus is what he could do for others when they come to visit, the child realizes. (Lothrop, Lee and Shephard Co., 105 Madison Ave. New York, N.Y. 10016. 1951. Hardback, \$4.25.)



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EXTENSION Society
35 East Wacker Drive • Chicago, Illinois 60601