

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

Where didn't Jesus pray?

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

"Where did Jesus like to pray?" the man from another country asked a group of Jesus' disciples.

They smiled. "Where didn't he like to pray?" Isaac asked. "That would be a better question!"

Miriam chuckled. "I always had the feeling Jesus prayed everywhere and any time."

"I had the same impression," Isaac added. "I remember how much he liked to go off and pray alone. The night before he chose his 12 apostles, Jesus spent the whole night up on a mountain praying."

"I remember one morning the crowds were looking for Jesus," said Jonathan. "We searched all over for him. Finally we found him praying in a very secluded spot in the desert."

Anna shared something she had heard. "Before any of us knew him, before Jesus began to teach and heal, people say he spent 40 days alone praying in the desert. That was right after John the Baptizer baptized Jesus in the Jordan River."

"We were all impressed with how Jesus prayed so often and so easily," Ruth admitted. "We talked about it a lot among ourselves. We wished we knew how to pray like Jesus did."

"That's right, Ruth," Joshua agreed. "I remember one day we noticed Jesus praying. One of us asked him to teach us to pray. That day he taught us to pray. 'Our Father...'"

"But did Jesus always go off in-

to the mountains or desert to pray?" the man from another country asked. "A lot of us can't do that."

"No," Miriam quickly answered. "Jesus prayed in the morning, afternoon and evening no matter where he was, just as many Jews do."

"And he liked to go to the temple to pray," Joshua recalled.

"But Jesus prayed in our homes, too," Anna added. "He often prayed the meal blessing at our house."

"And he prayed even when surrounded by crowds in the marketplace or in the fields," Jonathan insisted.

"I wasn't there the night Jesus was arrested," admitted Isaac. "But those who were said he was deep in prayer at the olive garden just outside Jerusalem. They say he prayed a long time. He must have suspected what they would do to him."

"And he prayed while he was dying on the cross," said Miriam with tears in her eyes. "I'll never forget that. It was only because he was so used to praying all the time that he could pray in that awful hour."

"You may be right," the man from another country said. "I noticed that you pray, too. Would you teach me to pray like you do — like Jesus did?"

This week's Story Hour is based on Mt. 14; Mk. 1; Lk. 4, 6, 9 and 11.

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

Jesus was a person of prayer. He prayed in the mountains, the desert, and the temple. No matter where he was or who he was with, prayer was important to Jesus.



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.

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HOW ABOUT YOU?

Imagine that you are a friend of Jesus at the time he was living on earth. One day you see him praying alone. Afterward you get a chance to ask him a question. What would you ask?

On Sunday during Mass there are prayers of petition — prayers of the faithful. This is when the community prays for people who have special needs. Imagine that you are asked to write up two requests to use during the prayers of the faithful on Sunday. What would you write?

Children's Reading Corner

Prayer happens in people who believe. In the book, "No More Than a Mustard Seed," by Carol Greene, a young boy named Tobi has a serious illness. His father believes that praying to Jesus will help, but Tobi is afraid. In this story, we find out why Tobi becomes a person who cares about prayer. (Arch Books, Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63118. Paperback, \$1.75.)

Among other books about faith for children are "I Am...A Cloud," and "I Am...A Tree," by Joanne Marxhausen (Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63118. Paperback, \$1.95.)



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