

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

'Come with me to the temple'

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

"Mark," the Roman lawyer called out to his friend in Jerusalem. "Where are you going in such a hurry?"

"I'm going to the temple," Mark answered. "Why don't you come along?"

The Roman lawyer, whose name was Lucius, was curious. He decided to go with Mark. He wondered what the temple was like.

This was in the time of the very early Christians, people in a society of Judaism. The conversation between Mark and Lucius tells us something about the daily life of the early Christians.

"You told me before that you and your friends who believe in Jesus pray a lot in your homes," Lucius said to Mark as they walked through the narrow city streets. "Why do you go to the temple then?"

Mark responded that "Jesus went to the temple very often. He prayed there with the rest of the people. He preached there often. The temple still means a lot to us."

"What exactly is done there?" Lucius continued. "How often do you go?"

"Often we go as a group to pray at least once a day," Mark began to explain. "Sometimes we go twice. We pray together the ancient prayers of our people. We call them psalms."

By then Mark and Lucius had

come into the temple area, Sarah and Suzanna met them there.

"Hello, Lucius," Sarah said with a smile. "We are happy you are coming with Mark." Next the three of them went on to describe to Lucius what the temple was like and what was done there.

"This is called the Court of the Gentiles," Suzanna told Lucius. "You are welcome to come in here."

"The next area is called the Court of the Women," Sarah said. "That's where we make our contributions."

"And the next area behind that is the Court of Israel," Mark explained. "There the people gather to burn incense to honor God. They pray together as the incense burns."

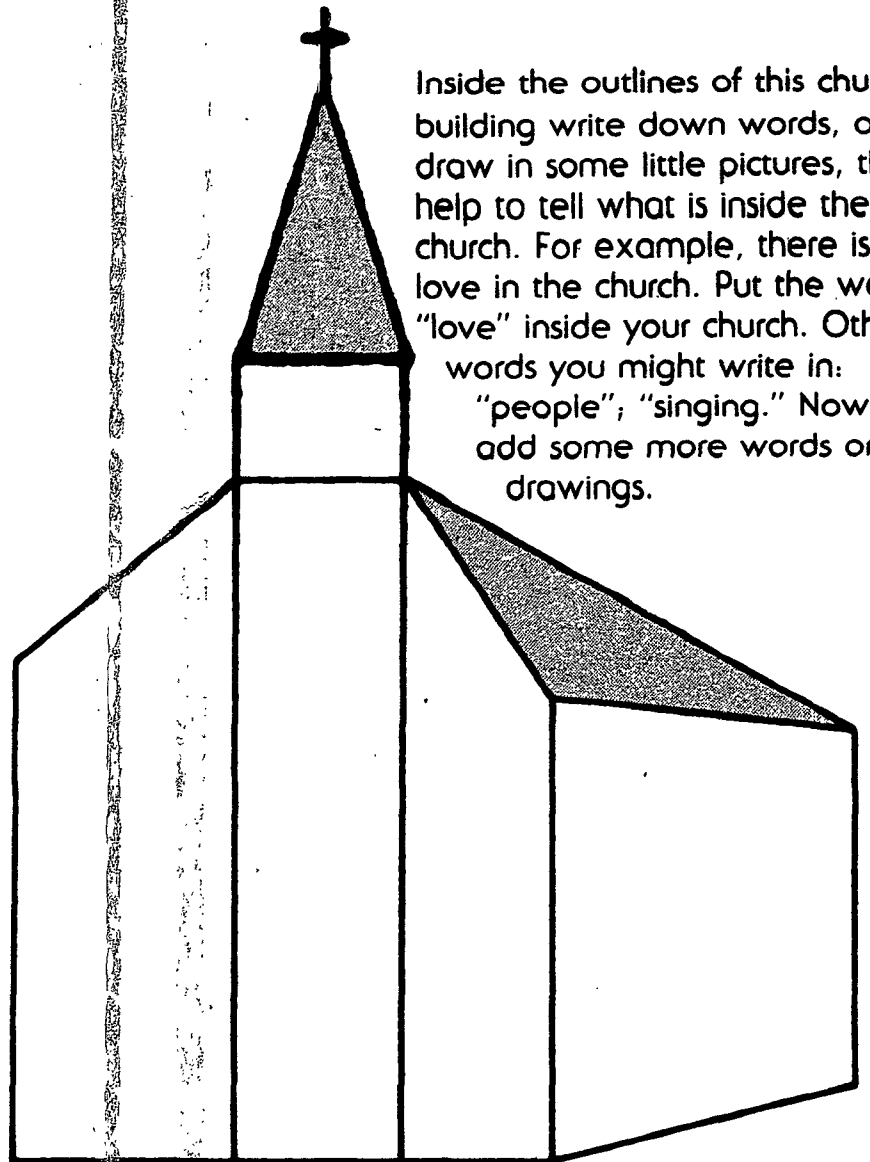
"Beyond that is the Court of the Priests," Suzanna told Lucius. "The altar of sacrifice is there. Each morning and evening the priests offer sacrifices. They offer animals like lambs to God. They also offer cereal."

"The temple," Sarah said, "is a house of worship and of God. We go there to pray to God."

"I'm sorry I can't join you inside the temple," Lucius said sadly. "But please pray for me to your God."

This week's Story Hour is based on Acts 2:46; 3:1-11; 5:12-42.

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



Inside the outlines of this church building write down words, or draw in some little pictures, that help to tell what is inside the church. For example, there is love in the church. Put the word "love" inside your church. Other words you might write in: "people"; "singing." Now add some more words or drawings.



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?

Children's Reading Corner

The church is more than a building made of wood, brick and stone. It is also God's people — all kinds of people. "The Church: Learning About God's People," by Carol S. Matthews, is a book that helps children grasp this idea. In short and simple sentences the different "parts" of the "body of Christ" are explained and a brief history is told of how the early church got started. (Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63118. Paperback.)

Another book for children about the church is "The Cathedral Book," by Maureen Gallagher. (Paulist Press, 545 Island Rd., Ramsey, N.J. 07446. Paperback.)



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