

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

A bold mother asks for Jesus' help

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

The girl screamed and groaned. Her mother knelt beside her, reaching out to comfort her. She pulled her daughter to her and held her tight.

Slowly the young girl became calm. "Thank God!" her mother sighed softly. "How I wish my little girl could find help. She is so beautiful when she is calm like other children."

Neighbors stood around the mother and child. They looked sad. They felt sorry for the little girl and for her mother.

"Too bad," one woman whispered to her neighbor. "She's a very sick girl."

"I think an evil spirit has her in its power," the neighbor woman answered.

A man had a suggestion for the mother. "A man named Jesus is visiting in town. He has healed many people. I know where he is staying. Maybe he would help your girl."

The mother sent her daughter home with an older brother. She followed the man to the house where Jesus was staying.

Jesus had hoped no one would recognize him. It was a strange village in the territory of Tyre and Sidon and he wanted to rest for a while.

The mother ran into the house where Jesus was staying. The people in the house were Jews, like Jesus. The woman was a foreigner, a Greek.

"What is that foreigner doing in our house?" the owner of the house asked his wife. "Surely

Jesus will have nothing to do with her since she is a gentile."

As soon as the mother saw Jesus, she ran to him and fell down at his feet.

"Sir, please help my little girl," the Greek woman pleaded. "She is very sick. People say a bad spirit is hurting her."

Jesus wanted her to know that his mission was first to the Jews. "Let the children of the house eat first. It is not right to take food from the children and throw it to the pups under the table."

People chuckled. They doubted that Jesus would help this foreign woman.

"Please, Lord," the woman begged, "help my daughter. Even the pups under the table eat the family leftovers."

"How bold she is!" a guest commented.

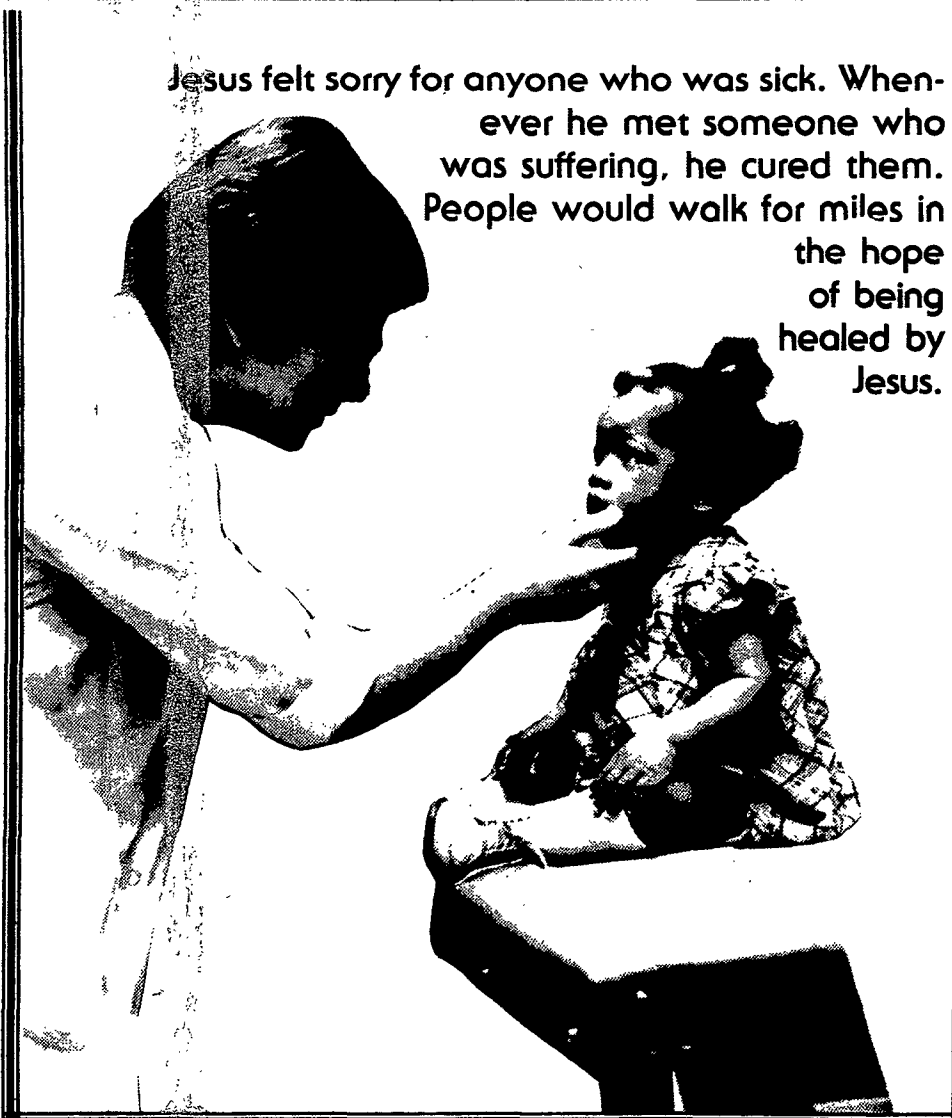
But Jesus liked the woman's sense of humor. He was touched by her concern for her sick child.

"Go home now!" Jesus told her. "Your daughter is all right. No bad spirits will be bothering her any longer."

The woman stood up. She thanked Jesus. When she got home, she found her little girl asleep in bed. She was no longer sick.

Story Hour biblical quotes — this week from Mark 7:24-29 — are paraphrased.

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



Jesus felt sorry for anyone who was sick. Whenever he met someone who was suffering, he cured them. People would walk for miles in the hope of being healed by Jesus.



Trust

After ordination to the priesthood in his native Ireland, Father Peter Quinn came to America to give his life of priestly service to the disadvantaged living in our poorest home mission areas.

Supported by grants from the Catholic Extension Society, Father Quinn has earned the trust of his Mississippi parishioners by devoted service to their spiritual needs. He is part of a team of home missionaries who, together with Extension, pursue the vital and urgent task of evangelization here in the United States. But the team is too small to do the job without help. It

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HOW ABOUT YOU?

□ First, think back to a time when you had a cut that needed to heal, or a broken bone that needed to mend. Then think about a time when there was a need for healing or mending in one of your friendships. How did your friendship heal? What can you do to mend a friend's broken feelings?

Children's Reading Corner

"The Seeing Stick" is a story by Jane Yolen. Children and adults might read it together. Afterward, they might talk about the different kinds of healing that happen in people.

In the story, a little girl, an only daughter, is blind. Her father, the emperor, is sad and offers a fortune in jewels to anyone who might help her.

An old man, who is blind, helps the sorrowful and self-centered princess see — not with her eyes, but with her fingers and with her mind and heart. The healing is not what anyone expects, yet it is real. Sorrow turns to joy. (Thomas Y. Crowell Publishers, 10 E. 53 St., New York, N.Y. 10022. 1977. \$9.95)



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