

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

The law of the Sabbath

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

It was a hot, sunny Saturday. Jesus and his friends were walking through a wheat field.

The wheat was golden brown. It was ripe and delicious.

The friends of Jesus began to pull off heads of the grain. The wheat grains made a great snack. And Jesus' friends were hungry.

They sat down with Jesus and enjoyed the crispy grains of wheat. It was like a picnic. Saturday — which Jews know as the Sabbath even today — was a day of rest from work. Jesus and his friends were enjoying the day's rest together.

But Isaac and several other Pharisees were watching. "Look," Isaac said in a shocked voice. "They are picking grains of wheat. They are doing work forbidden on the Sabbath."

"And our traditions do not allow you to pick even a few grains of wheat on the Sabbath," Jonathan added.

"Let's go over and speak with them about this," Isaac suggested. "Jesus surely knows that what they are doing is against God's law."

So the group followed Isaac over to where Jesus and his friends were enjoying their wheat snack.

They were upset. Isaac spoke to Jesus.

"Look what your friends are doing!" Isaac told Jesus. "Why are they breaking God's law? Don't they know that what they are doing is not permitted on the

Sabbath?"

Jesus had no problem with what his friends were doing. He did not believe that picking a few grains of wheat for a snack broke the law of the Sabbath. He did not agree with the view of this group.

"How can you accuse my friends?" Jesus challenged them. "God's law does not forbid what my friends did."

Jesus told them a story from the Bible about King David. David allowed his friends to eat what people said was forbidden. They were hungry and there was no other food.

"The Sabbath was made for people," Jesus told Isaac. "People were not made for the Sabbath."

Isaac and his friends felt insulted. They turned around and walked away.

"Who is he to be telling us about the Sabbath," Isaac fumed.

"We are experts in God's law. He and his friends are doing what is forbidden. They are sinners."

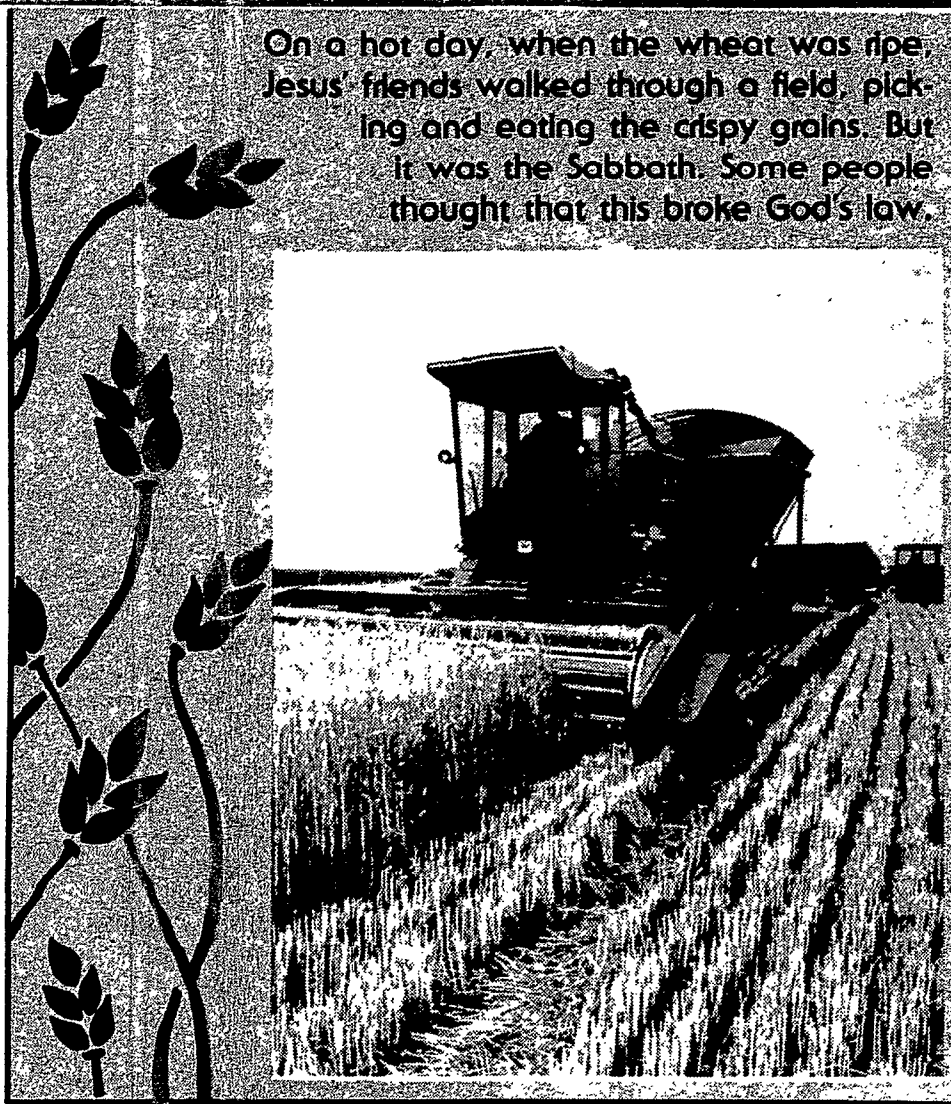
Eliazar said nothing. But he was thinking deep thoughts.

"What Jesus said makes a lot of sense. Jesus respects God's law. But God surely gives laws to help people to be good and find happiness. Isaac and I have been too harsh."

(Story hour biblical quotes — this week from Mark 2:23-28 — are paraphrased.)

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

On a hot day, when the wheat was ripe, Jesus' friends walked through a field, picking and eating the crispy grains. But it was the Sabbath. Some people thought that this broke God's law.



Caring

Caring is a most important part of the ministry of Sisters Regina and Mary Grace. Supported by funds from The Catholic Church Extension, they bring the Word of God to the unchurched living in the most isolated poverty areas of southwestern Missouri.

As an Extension annuitant, you will be our helping partner in the missionary work right here in the United States with the sisters and many, many

others. And besides, for your annuity gift of \$1,000.00 or more, you will receive a rate of return that will provide secure, regular income for as long as you live.

Complete and return the coupon below for information on how you can receive a life income while helping Sisters Regina and Mary Grace as they nourish life in southwestern Missouri with God's Word.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

- What are some rules you follow at home or at school? Have you ever wished you didn't have to follow your rules? Why?
- If you are on a sports team or if you play a musical instrument, do you have rules about practicing? What are those rules? Do they help you?
- If you could make a rule for your class at school, what would it be? Would it help you and others?

Children's Reading Corner

"Salt Boy," by Mary Perrine is a story about a young boy who broke one of his rules. To amuse himself, the boy had been lassoing some sheep, then letting them go free. When his father found out about it, he forbade him to lasso the sheep. Then one day a lamb got into some trouble. The only way for the boy to rescue the lamb was by lassoing it, which he did. Children and adults might read the book together and then talk about it. What is the reason for the rules parents and families follow? Was it right for the little boy to make the decision he did for the lamb's sake? (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. 02108, 1968; Paperback, 95 cents.)



The Catholic Church
EXTENSION Society
35 East Wacker Drive • Chicago, Illinois 60601

FT 494

Yes! Please send me information about an Extension Gift Annuity. I understand I am under no obligation.

Name (Rev., Mr., Mrs., Miss) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Date of Birth _____