

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

A young man listens to Jesus

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

David was a young Jew. He grew up in Jerusalem. His parents were very devout people. The whole family belonged to the group called "Pharisees."

The members of David's family were good people. They were concerned about keeping God's law. They tried to keep all the commandments, those that told what the Jews should do and those that told what Jews should avoid.

The Pharisees were so careful about God's commandments that they had developed additional rules. These extra rules were ways to keep people from even getting near to breaking any of God's laws.

David learned all the commandments. He tried hard every day to obey them all. He believed God loved those who kept all these laws.

One day David was with a group of Pharisees who were angry with Jesus. "He does not keep all of the commandments," some were saying.

"He probably doesn't even know all our rules," another added.

At the same time, Jesus was talking with his friends. Soon a large crowd gathered to listen to Jesus. David and the small group of Pharisees stood at the edge of the crowd.

"The scribes and the Pharisees are teachers of God's law," Jesus began. "They are successors of Moses who first gave us God's law. So do what they say about the law."

David smiled proudly. But his

smile disappeared as Jesus went on speaking.

Jesus warned the people not to follow the example of those among the Pharisees who "lay heavy burdens on people but don't lift a finger to help people bear the burdens."

Jesus continued his warning, saying: "The people I have in mind like to be seen doing good works. They take the front seats in the synagogue and the place of honor at special dinners."

David felt those words strongly. "Not all Pharisees are like that," he said to himself.

Jesus had even more to say. "They love to be called 'rabbi,' or 'teacher.' Avoid being called 'teacher.' You are brothers and sisters of one another. You have only one teacher."

David knew what Jesus said was true of some people. He hoped others didn't think he was like that.

"The greatest among you is the one who serves the rest," Jesus continued. "Whoever makes himself great, will be humbled. Whoever humbles himself will be made great."

David walked away from the crowd. He wanted to think.

"Jesus really makes me think," he said to himself as he walked alone down a side street. "How can greatness be found in becoming like a servant?"

Story Hour biblical quotes — this week from Matthew 23:1-24 — are paraphrased.

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

The Pharisees listened as Jesus spoke. "The greatest among you is the one who serves the rest," he said.



Forgiveness

The promise of God's forgiveness is fulfilled as Father Robert Whalen, S.J., hears the confession of a prisoner in the Federal Medical Prison in Springfield, Missouri. Father Whalen's message of forgiveness and the love of God help heal the pain of confinement for large numbers of repentant prisoners.

With help from the Catholic Church Extension, Father Whalen introduces prisoners to basic Christianity. It's a tough job in a hostile environment.

Father Whalen 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 needs new members. It needs you.

Join us. Become a member of the Extension Society team. Although you won't be present in the home missions personally, your impact will be felt in this holy effort. Together we can bring the Word of Christ to those who don't have it.

Write for a free subscription to Extension magazine today and discover the difference you can make. Together, and with God's grace, we can achieve His missionary goals here in our own beloved country.



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

HOW ABOUT YOU?

- ☐ Have you ever noticed someone helping another person in a big way? What kind of help was it that you saw?
- ☐ Do you think you ever help other people — really help them? How? Do you make them happy, or comfort them, or take care of a task someone else didn't have time for?
- ☐ Why do you think Jesus said it is a great thing to help others?

Children's Reading Corner

In some cases it is good — even important — to be different from others in your crowd. But it may take courage. "Nog's Vision," by Brian Hall, is a story about Nog, who doesn't fit in with the others in his city. Because he is so special — because there is no one else quite like him — Nog has something special to offer to others. This actually helps them. After reading this story together, you might talk about what it means to be different in some way from others. And also talk about how important it is to like yourself — to enjoy being you. For, like Nog, you too are special. There is no one else quite like you. (Paulist Press, 400 Sette Dr., Paramus, N.J. 07652. Paperback, \$3.95.)