

## CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

## An innocent victim

By Janaan Manternach  
NC News Service

It was dark in the Garden of Olives. Jesus and his friends were afraid. They could hear the sounds of footsteps, many footsteps, coming closer and closer.

They saw a flame. Then more and more flames coming closer and closer.

Suddenly the flames of the torches lit up their faces. Swords glistened in the light of the flames. Jesus and his friends stood there surrounded.

One man stepped out from those who had rushed into the garden. Jesus recognized him. So did the others. It was Judas.

Judas walked up to Jesus, smiling. He said, "Peace, rabbi." He embraced Jesus and kissed him.

Jesus suspected something immediately. "Friend," he said to Judas, "do what you came here to do."

Judas had betrayed Jesus. He led these people to the garden to capture Jesus. He told them to arrest the man he would embrace and kiss.

Now the guards grabbed Jesus. They told him he was under arrest. They tied his hands behind his back.

Just then one of Jesus' friends pulled out his sword. He waved it in the air and cut off one man's ear.

Jesus did not like what his friend had done. "Put your sword back where it belongs," Jesus rebuked him. "Those who use the sword are sooner or later destroyed by it."

Jesus' friend put his sword

away. He felt confused. He was just trying to defend Jesus from those who were tying him up. But Jesus did not want to fight violence with violence.

Then Jesus turned to those who confronted him. "Am I a criminal?" he asked. No one dared answer.

"Is that why you come with swords and clubs to capture me? Am I an outlaw?"

Silence. No one said anything. Jesus had more to say. "Every day I sat in the temple teaching. You did not arrest me there."

Jesus knew that they were afraid to arrest him in public because people would try to defend him. They came out in the night when everyone was at home.

"All of this is happening," Jesus told them, "just as the prophets of old said it would happen."

Then Jesus was silent. Jesus' friends became afraid. Jesus did not want them to fight back. They feared they might be arrested too.

So all of them ran away. They ran into the darkness, leaving Jesus alone in the hands of his enemies.

They grabbed Jesus. They led him as a prisoner out of the Garden of Olives into the dark night.

*Story hour biblical quotes — this week from Matthew 26:47-54 — are paraphrased.*

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

Judas stepped forward to kiss Jesus. This was a sign to the soldiers to arrest Jesus. Judas, one of Jesus' followers, had betrayed him.



## 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.



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## HOW ABOUT YOU?

- What would you like to do to make the world a more peaceful place?
- What is a peacemaker?
- How do you think Jesus felt in the dark as he watched the flaming torches come nearer and nearer?

### Children's Reading Corner

"Children as Teachers of Peace," edited by Gerald Jampolski. This book contains responses by children who were asked to describe what peace is. The children freely offer their thoughts about peace and about the violence that can destroy peace. One child calls peace "a friendship dance." Another says peace is "looking for the good in all." Children and adults can use the book to help them think about what it means to be peacemakers. (Celestial Arts, 231 Adrian Rd., Millbrae, Calif. 94030. Paperback, \$7.95.)