

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

When did we see you hungry?

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

The crowd was large. People pushed and shoved to get closer to the front. They wanted to see and hear Jesus.

Jesus stood up on some steps so it would be easier for people to see and hear him. He raised his hands above his head. The crowd became very still. Everyone strained to hear what Jesus would say.

"When I return in glory," Jesus began, "I will sit like a king on a throne. Everyone will stand before me. I'll separate people into two groups, just as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. He places the sheep on the right side and the goats on the left."

The crowd remained very still. Everyone wondered which side they would be on.

Jesus continued, "I'll say to those on the right, 'Come! My Father blesses you. You will receive what God has planned to give you since the creation of the world. I was hungry and you gave

me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I had nothing to wear and you gave me clothes. I was sick, and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.'"

Everyone in the crowd, of course, imagined they were on the right side of Jesus. But they weren't sure when they had fed him, or welcomed him, or visited him. In fact they didn't remember doing any of these things for him.

Jesus knew what they were wondering. He put their thoughts into words. "Those on the right will ask, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you into our homes? Or when did we give you clothes? When did we see you sick or in prison and come to visit you?'"

People could hardly wait for the answer Jesus would give to these questions. They were amazed at his response.



help him when he was in need. They did not feed or clothe him when they saw him hungry and thirsty. They didn't give him shelter or clothing when he needed it. They did not visit him when he was sick or in prison.

"As often as you neglected these people in need, you neglected me," Jesus concluded.

The crowd broke up. People pondered Jesus' words.

(Story hour biblical quotes — this week from Matt. 25:31-46 — are paraphrased.)

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

"This is what I will tell those on my right who ask these questions," Jesus said. "Whenever you did any of these things for the least important of my brothers and sisters, you did it for me!"

The crowd reacted in amazement. People whispered to one another. "Does he mean that what we do for the people around us, we are really doing for him?"

Jesus then talked about those who would be on his left, the goats. He said that they did not

Missing Parts

Add the missing vowels to the words below. The phrases in the puzzle are to be found in this week's Children's Story Hour.

1. l _ r g _ _ c r _ w d
2. sh _ _ p _ n th _ r _ ght
3. g _ _ ts _ n th _ l _ ft
4. k _ ng _ n _ thr _ n _
5. _ w _ s h _ ngr _ _
6. _ _ _ _ _ g _ v _ m _ dr _ nk
7. _ w _ s s _ ck
8. _ _ _ d _ d _ t f r m _

answers: 1. large crowd, 2. sheep on the right, 3. goats on the left, 4. king on a throne, 5. I was hungry, 6. ... you gave me to drink, 7. I was sick, 8. you did it for me.



Forgiveness

The promise of God's forgiveness is fulfilled as Father Robert Whalen, SJ, 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.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Think about your own community. Are there any people there who are hungry, or thirsty, or lonely, or who need clothes? Can you help?

Children's Reading Corner

"An Artist" is a story by M.B. Goffstein. Children and adults may enjoy reading it together again and again. It begins with the words, "An artist is like God, but small." The story continues by describing how artists spend their lives. They use their talents trying to make colors sing in their paintings.

The book's illustrations help to show that the world the artist sees is an echo of the world of God's creation. Look in your local library for other books by Ms. Goffstein, a fine writer and illustrator. (Harper & Row, 10 E. 53 St., New York, N.Y. 10022. Hardback, \$7.95.)



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