

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

Stories of strength

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

There is a true story I like. It happened long ago — almost 40 years ago. The story is about 20 French children and what they did to help 10 other children.

I think of this story now because it helps me realize how much goodness children can bring into the world. The story is called "Twenty and Ten." It was written by Claire Huchet Bishop (Penguin Books, New York).

It all happened at the time of a big war, the Second World War. It seems that 10 Jewish children badly needed help. Otherwise, they feared they might die.

These children had fled from another country where Jews were not welcome. Now that country's rulers had broken into France.

Fortunately, 20 children of France came to the Jewish children's rescue. The French children stumbled onto a cave. They hid the Jewish children in the cave. Then they found ways to bring food to them without

the soldiers catching them.

What is amazing is how the French children made their plans and carried them out themselves. Their teacher, Sister Gabriel, had been taken prisoner.

Sometimes we think people are strong only when they are big and muscular. But don't you think people are strong too when they help each other? Or when they show love?

I have another favorite story about being strong. It, too, happened long ago.

This story is about Jesus. Powerful people in his land did not like some things he said when he was teaching. Now Jesus felt they might try to take him prisoner — perhaps this very night.

After supper with friends, Jesus went to a favorite garden of his, across from the city of Jerusalem. He liked to pray under its old olive trees.

There he said to Peter, James and John, his closest friends: "My heart is almost breaking. Stay with me."

The three sat down. Jesus

went a few steps further and prayed.

First, Jesus asked: "Can I avoid the suffering I fear." Then he said, "Father, I want to do whatever you want me to do."

Then it happened — exactly what Jesus feared. People were coming to capture him.

Jesus prayed again. But his time to escape was passing quickly.

He woke up his three friends, who were sleeping. He said: "My time has come. See, my betrayer is here." Then his friend Judas, the betrayer, led the group into the garden. Jesus was tied up and led off.

I think this story shows that Jesus was strong — and that he wanted most of all to bring the Father's goodness to the world, no matter what the cost.

(Ms. Manternach is the author of catechetical works, Scripture stories and original stories for children.)

Missing Parts

Fill in the vowels in the phrases below. All of the phrases are contained in this week's children's story.

1. s_c_nd w_rld w_r
2. Fr_nch ch_ldr_n
3. b__ng str_ng
4. _ft_r s_pp_r w_th fr__nds
5. m__t_m__ h_s c__m__
6. _l_v__ tr__s
7. st__ w_th m__
8. t__d __p __nd l_d __ff
9. p_w_rf_l p__pl__
10. c_t__f J r_s_l_m
11. f_v_r_t__ g_rdn
12. t_m__ t__sc_p__

answers: 1. second world war, 2. French children, 3. being strong, 4. after supper with friends, 5. my time has come, 6. olive trees, 7. stay with me, 8. tied up and led off, 9. powerful people, 10. city of Jerusalem, 11. favorite garden, 12. time to escape.



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 of two ways children can bring goodness into the world.
- What kind of person is strong, in your opinion?

Children's Reading Corner

"I Think — I Know," by Joan Hutson. This is a little poster book in which a little girl and boy talk about the many things they think God likes. In the end the little girl says that she knows God loves her. Adults and children can use this poster book to talk about what it means to love God and to have God love you. They also might talk about how people bring goodness into the world through love. (Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Ind., 46556. 1979. \$1.95.)



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