

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

The wisdom of Edith Stein

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

Edith was remarkable from the day she was born. Her father and mother loved her dearly. Unfortunately, her father died when Edith was just 2 years old.

Edith was born in Poland in 1891. Her mother was a strong and good woman. She was a devout Jew and observed the traditional Jewish customs.

Edith was the youngest child. She was full of life and loved to play hide-and-seek with her brothers and sisters.

Edith loved to study and learn. She was always near the top of her class in school.

As she grew older, Edith had many questions about life. She began a lifelong search for the meaning of life. But at that time, the more she learned the less she believed in God.

Edith went on to the university. She studied philosophy, always trying to get below the surface of things. It was very unusual for a woman at that time to study

philosophy.

One day she went to the funeral of an old friend. She was amazed at the courage of the man's widow. Edith asked her where she found the strength to cope with her husband's death. The widow, a Christian, said she believed her husband was with God.

This experience influenced Edith's life. She began to pray. She read the life of St. Teresa of Avila. She learned more about Christianity. After several years, Edith decided to become a Catholic.

Eventually Edith decided to become a nun, a Carmelite Sister.

She was very happy as a Sister. She continued to read and study. She prayed for hours. She loved the quiet. She wrote books on the meaning of life and the importance of faith.

Then war came to Germany. It was the Second World War. Edith had to leave Germany because of her Jewish origins. The Nazi leaders of Germany were persecuting Jews. She went to the Carmelite convent in Holland.

While there, she would write an important book on St. John of the Cross.

But Germany soon invaded Holland. In that country, the Nazis searched out all those of Jewish origins, including Catholic priests and nuns. They soon discovered Edith and her sister, Rosa, who was with her.

They were arrested and sent to a prison camp at Auschwitz in Poland. It was a horrible place. People suffered terribly. Edith did too. But she did all she could to help others.

"Whatever may happen to Rosa and me, we are ready," she told some friends. "Christ is with us even here."

Soon afterward, Edith Stein and her sister were put to death. She



prayed and helped others right up to the end.

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

Hidden Words

Find the words hidden in the puzzle below. They may be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. All the words are in this week's children's story.

A	O	N	A	Z	I	N	C	R	Z
R	D	H	F	E	C	G	H	E	J
F	O	S	W	T	D	V	J	N	O
U	E	S	G	E	I	I	G	U	H
N	I	X	A	R	L	M	T	Y	N
E	K	J	J	E	W	I	S	H	A
R	T	A	O	S	P	Q	R	P	Q
A	P	O	L	A	N	D	L	T	U
L	K	S	V	U	U	X	Y	D	E
B	F	B	N	M	W	C	F	G	L

POLAND, TERESA, JEWISH, ROSA, NUN, NAZI, EDITH, JOHN, FUNERAL

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Edith Stein always enjoyed learning new things. What would you like to learn more about? Would you like to learn more about yourself and how to use your own special talents? Would you like to learn more about what gives people happiness?

Children's Reading Corner

Much is hidden from the naked eye. Many realities cannot be seen, yet we believe they exist. People have used their minds to uncover parts of God's creation that were hidden. One of these people was Anton Leeuwenhoek. His story is poetically told in the book, "The Microscope," by Maxine Kumin. Children and adults might enjoy reading it together. Afterward talk about something you believe is real despite the fact that you cannot see it, even with a microscope. (Harper and Row, 10 E. 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10022. 1968 and 1984. Hardback. \$9.95.)

The dream

Father Henry Moczygomba baptized babies in this garage chapel. But he had a dream. It was a dream to help poor migrant families that make up his parish and two missions in the unforgiving ranch country of sun-baked southwest Texas.

Father Henry's dream was simple. He wanted a small permanent chapel for people who faced daily hunger and poverty. People whose income was exhausted on food, clothing and shelter.

The erection of a small chapel for the Catarina mission made that dream come true. Named St. Henry's, it was built with the help of an Extension building grant.

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