

Kids' Chronicle

Jesus uses a vineyard to explain heaven

BY JOE SARNICOLA

After he had spent several days ministering to the people of Galilee, Jesus traveled into Judea, on the opposite side of the Jordan River.

As soon as the people found out he was there, they gathered around him. In a short time a large crowd had formed. Some of them brought sick people for Jesus to heal. Jesus was patient and healed as many people as were in need of his touch.

Finally, Jesus motioned for the people to sit down and make themselves comfortable. He stood on a small hill so that everyone could see him.

"I can tell by your faces," Jesus said, "that many of you have questions."

Jesus pointed to a man who was sitting with his wife and two children.

"What would you like to know?" he asked.

"I have heard people say you speak of a kingdom of heaven," the man answered. "Please tell us about it, too."

"The kingdom of heaven can be explained with a story," Jesus said. "Once there was a man who needed workers to tend his vineyards. He arose early in the morning and went into the village to hire them. When he had found enough men, he agreed to pay them one silver coin for every day they worked."

"At 9 o'clock the landlord returned to the village and found a few more men who were not working for



Illustration by Amy Sundstrom

anyone. He hired them to work in his vineyards. He returned at 12 o'clock and again at 3 o'clock and hired additional workers. At 5 o'clock he went to the village a final time and found several men standing around laughing and talking.

"He said to them, 'Why are you just standing around?'"

"'Because there is no work for us,' one of the men said.

"'Well, there is work to be done in my vineyards. I will pay you a fair wage in exchange for your labor.'

"When the sun had gone down and there was not enough light for the men to work, the landlord gave his foreman instructions to pay the workers for the day. 'Pay the men whom I hired last first and work

back until you pay the first men I hired,' he told the foreman.

"The men who were hired first thought they would be paid more than the other men because they had worked longer, but every man received one silver coin. They complained to the landlord, who told them, 'I will do what I wish with my money. Does my generosity anger you?'"

Then Jesus said to the people, "The first will be last and the last will be first."

READ MORE ABOUT IT:
Matthew 20.

Q&A

1. How did Jesus explain the kingdom of heaven to the people?
2. Why were the first workers angry?



Bible Accent

The Jordan River is the most important waterway in Israel. Its source is the melting snow of Mount Hermon, east of the port cities of Tyre and Sidon. From there it flows south through the Sea of Galilee and continues for another 200 miles until emptying into the Dead Sea.

As it flows, the Jordan River drops more than 1,500 feet. Along the way are dangerous rapids and unnavigable shallows. Every spring the river reaches flood stage.

Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan on dry land when they entered the Holy Land. Naaman was healed after bathing in it. John baptized many people in its waters, including Jesus.

St. Cyprian

St. Cyprian was born at the turn of the third century. He was known as a skilled lawyer and teacher. After he converted to Christianity, he concentrated on studying the Bible and theology.

He eventually became an ordained priest and was so well liked and respected, he was nominated to become bishop before he had reached the age of 50. Less than a year later, Christians endured a period of persecution by the authorities. Cyprian found a safe place to live and from there he was able to continue to write and spread his teachings and provide leadership.

Cyprian could not remain hidden forever, and when he was found he was sentenced to death. He is remembered as a caring and devoted man of God. We honor him on Sept. 16.

Kids' Club

You can win a \$50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) answering this question:

Why do you think crowds of people often surrounded Jesus when he travelled?

Send your essay - including name, home address, telephone number, school and grade - to Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Deadline for entries is Sept. 26, 1996. The winner will be notified by phone and receive the savings bond by mail. In addition, the winner's essay will be published in an upcoming issue of Kids' Chronicle.

Last month's winner was Gus Cost, a third-grade student at Rochester's French Road School. In response to the question, What are some ways we can show we have faith in God? he wrote:

Faith does not always mean we are big, brave and strong, but faith means we believe and trust in Jesus. If you were to read the story "Jesus walks on the water," you would find that Peter has lots of faith in Jesus, because when Peter sees Jesus coming he jumps out of the boat and believes that Jesus will not let them him drown, so faith means if something is scary or a problem to you, you believe in Jesus and he helps you.

Puzzle

Using Matthew's Gospel and the clues given, find the names or words that begin with the letters below. The chapter and verse where each word can be found is given. Answers can be found on page 6.

- A _____, Isaac, Jacob. (1:2)
- B _____ John, the _____. (3:1)
- C _____ "Be _____." (8:3)
- D _____ The _____ went. (8:23)
- Evil _____ An evil spirit. (12:42)
- F _____ _____ loaves. (14:19)

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