

Kids' Chronicle

Jesus performs his first miracle

BY JOE SARNICOLA

In the town of Cana, in Galilee, there was a wedding. Jesus was there with his disciples. His mother, Mary, was here as well.

Everyone was celebrating the marriage of the bride and groom, and the father of the bride was especially proud — until his servants told him some bad news. The wine was almost gone, yet it was much too early for the guests to start leaving.

The host explained his predicament to Mary, who had been his friend for a long time.

"What am I to do?" he asked. "I will have insulted my guests, and brought shame upon myself, and my household."

Mary reassured him, "Perhaps there is something I can do to help."

Mary walked through the crowd of people until she found Jesus. She leaned over and whispered in his ear, "My son, your host is almost out of wine. I know you are able to help him."

Jesus looked up at his mother.

"Please do not ask this of me," he said. "It is not yet time for me to do such things."

But Mary called the servants over and told them, "Whatever my son tells you to do, follow his instructions exactly."

Jesus asked the servants to show him where any vessels for water were kept. They brought him to the back of the house, where there were six large, empty jars.

"Fill them to the brim with fresh wa-



Illustration by Linda Jeanne Rivers

ter," Jesus said.

The servants brought water from the well until the jars could hold no more.

"Now," Jesus said, "you may draw from the jars and have the banquet master taste it before serving the guests."

After tasting the wine — which was no longer water — that the servants had brought him, the banquet master approached the father of the bride.

"Sir, you are a remarkable man," the banquet master said. "I have attended many weddings and other celebrations as banquet master. In every case, the better

wines were served first and after that the lesser quality wines were brought out."

The host, unaware of what had happened, was not sure what the banquet master was going to say. Did he know he had run out of wine? Was the wine he had served of a poor quality? Had he offended his guests and his daughter?

"This wine you have just given me to taste before serving is one of the finest I have ever drunk," the banquet master continued. "Everyone will remember this gesture of respect on your part for a long time to come."

Bible Accent



During the time of Jesus, grapes were picked, as they are today, in late summer or early fall, depending on the kinds of grapes and how the weather had been that season.

The grapes were then placed in vats, usually made of limestone, for pressing. Men would crush the grapes bare-footed. This seemingly crude way of pressing actually was gentle on the grapes and retained most of their flavor, producing a smooth, rich tasting wine.

After pressing, the grapes were allowed to ferment, sometimes for several months. Adding sugar during this process helped to increase the alcoholic content of the finished wine. If the grape juice was allowed to ferment too long, it turned into vinegar.

Wine was an important beverage and commercial product of ancient Israel, and was even used for some medicinal purposes.

St. Benedict

While on a visit to Rome in the middle of the seventh century, 25-year-old St. Benedict of Biscop decided to join a religious order. He became a monk, and within 10 years he was an assistant to St. Theodore, the archbishop of Canterbury, England.

Impressed with St. Benedict's ability and devotion, St. Theodore appointed him abbot of St. Peter and Paul Monastery. St. Benedict made several more journeys to Rome and also established two monasteries that became known for the high quality of their teachings and for their libraries of manuscripts, music and art works. St. Benedict died in the year 690. We honor him on Jan. 12.



Kids' Club

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

Why do you think this first miracle performed by Jesus was so important?

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 Jan. 22, 1998. 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 Axel Engle, a third-grade student at Holy Cross School, Rochester. In response to the question, How might things have been different if Jesus had been born into a rich family? he wrote:

If Jesus was born rich, he probably would not have learned to be a carpenter like his earthly father, Joseph. Also, his family might have paid off the officials not to hang him on the cross. Therefore, he would not have died for our sins and no one would have a chance to get into heaven.

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Q&A

READ MORE ABOUT IT:

John 2

Who told Jesus the wine was gone?
What happened to the water in the jars?

Puzzle

Answers on page 7.

How many names of biblical men and women can you find in the phrase, "The first miracle of Jesus?"

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