

A NOTE TO PARENTS

The image of Jesus as healer is one that is very appealing to children, and which they accept very readily. They seem to understand that there was a special, uniquely powerful presence during the few years of Jesus' earthly ministry, which may flash out among us time and again, but which is not with us today in quite the same way. They may wish with deep longing that they had been there to see and know Jesus; but their faith in him as savior and healer may be genuine and deep without leading them to expect that he will magically "fix" chicken pox or a broken arm overnight.

What does surprise children, as it may surprise us, is the discovery that the exercise of healing power was extremely costly to Jesus. We read again and again in the Gospels that Jesus was *exhausted* by his healing ministry. When a desperate woman reached out and touched him in a crowd, he felt "power" go out of him (Luke 8:46). He sometimes had to go to great lengths to get away for a while and make time for prayer and renewal. He was not a man of steel, with no need for food, sleep, or recreation. In his Father he had access, as we do, to an inexhaustible source of love and strength; but for him, as for us, drawing from that source took work, which in turn required space, time, and emotional energy, commodities that were as precious to him as they are to us.

As Jesus' followers, we must work, as he did, at "waiting upon the Lord" to "renew our strength." Children can be taught some elementary techniques of meditation at a very young age; they are surprisingly responsive. Sit together in a quiet, comfortable place with your eyes closed. Help your child to breathe slowly and deeply, and to relax the body, one part at a time. Then gently lead your child to visualize the great love and peace of God—"like a wide, deep ocean," "like the sky," "like a light in a dark and scary place," "like a soft, warm bird, sitting on a nest," "like Everlasting Arms, holding you." Use whatever images come naturally to you. This can be a treasured time of closeness for you, your child, and God. It can also lay the groundwork for a lifetime of discipleship, and openness to God's healing gifts.

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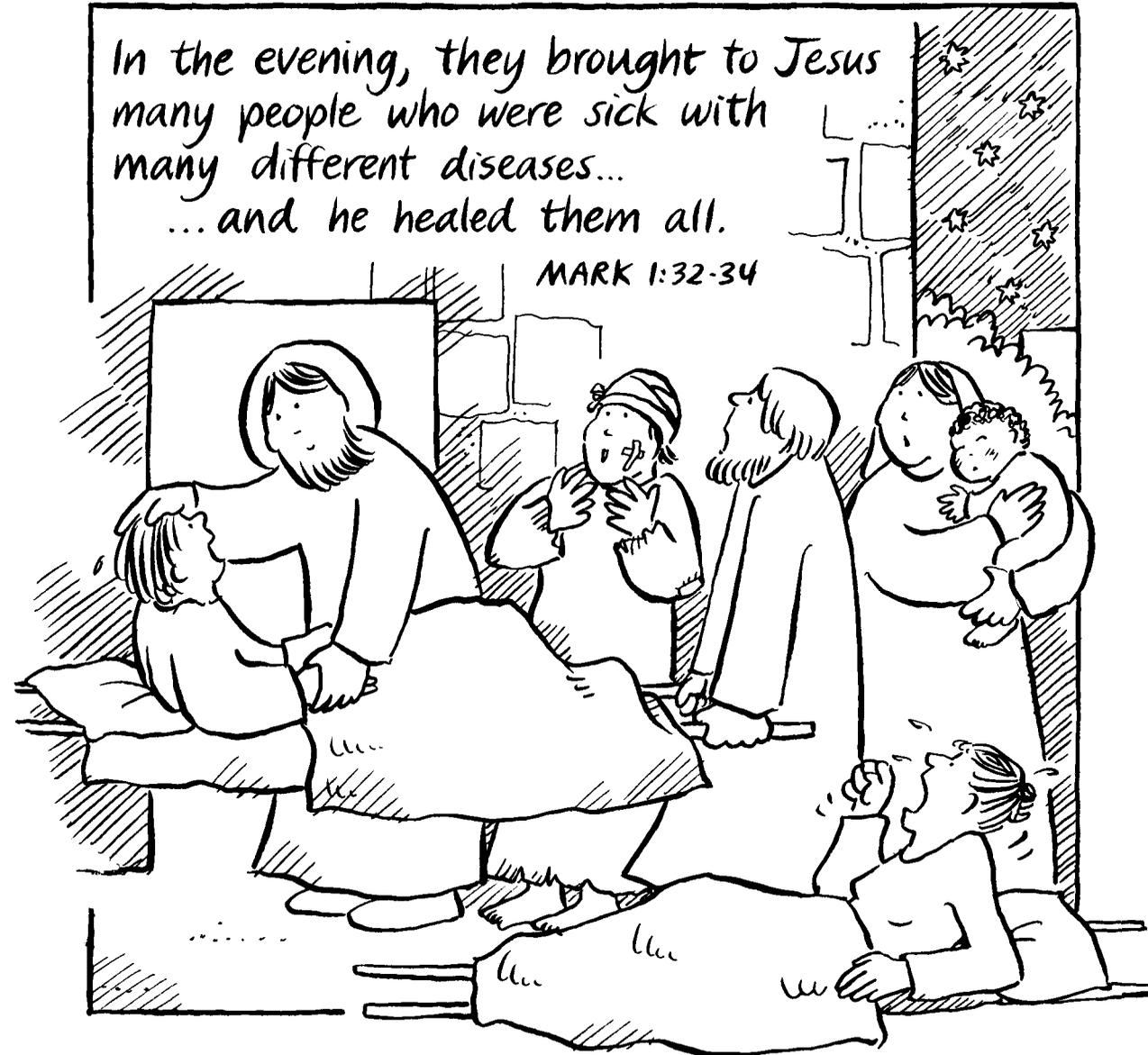
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JUNIOR

Year B
5th SUNDAY
after
EPIPHANY

In the evening, they brought to Jesus
many people who were sick with
many different diseases...
... and he healed them all.

MARK 1:32-34



Jesus came to stay at Simon and Andrew's house. But Simon's wife's mother was very sick.



Jesus came and took her hand. She sat up. She was well!



Soon, everyone was bringing sick people to Jesus, for him to heal them.

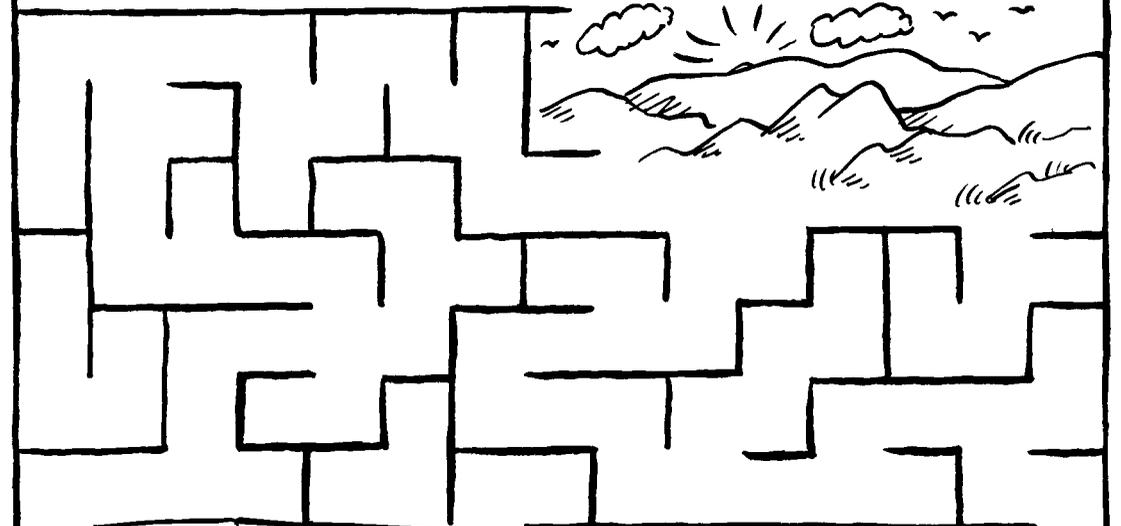


To be alone and pray, Jesus had to get up very early, and go out away from the town.



People could tell that Jesus was full of God's power and love. They came crowding around him, asking him to heal them.

But sometimes Jesus needed to be alone. He needed a quiet time to pray to God. He needed to keep God's power and love alive in his heart.



Help Jesus get away to a quiet place and pray. Then help him come back, full of God's power, and heal the people.