Joan and the Brave Heart

Ages 4 to 9 · About 10 minutes to read aloud · Feast day May 30

Virtue: Courage

The story in a nutshell

Joan, a farm girl in France, hears God ask her to help save her country. She goes bravely to the prince, leads his soldiers with her white banner, and sees him crowned king. Captured and treated unfairly, she stays faithful to God to the end: God can do great things through anyone brave enough to say yes.

Before reading

- Look at the cover. What is Joan holding? What do you think her story is about?
- Does being brave mean you are never scared? *Listen for: No: brave people are often scared, but do what is right anyway.*

While reading

- When God speaks to Joan: how do you think she felt?
- When Joan sets out to find the prince: what helped her be brave? *Listen for: She trusted God.*
- At Orléans: what did Joan's courage do for the soldiers? *Listen for: It gave them courage too.*

After reading

- Joan was an ordinary farm girl. Why do you think God chose her? *Listen for: God can work through anyone who says yes, however small or young.*
- Joan would not tell a lie, even when it was very hard. When is it hard to tell the truth?
- When do you need to be brave? Who can help you? *Listen for: God, a grown-up, a friend; a small prayer.*
- *Older children:* Courage isn't only for soldiers. What else can it look like? *Listen for: Standing up for someone left out, telling the truth, trying something new.*

Words to explain

- **prince**: the king's son, who should become the next king
- **crowned**: given the crown in a special ceremony that makes someone king
- **banner**: a flag on a long pole, carried in front so everyone can follow it
- **cathedral**: a bishop's great church; Charles was crowned in the cathedral at Reims
- **trial**: when people decide whether someone has done wrong

Be a Little Saint this week

The book ends with three challenges. Choose one to try together, or send all three home:

1. Do the right thing even when it feels hard, like telling the truth, or standing up for someone who needs a friend.
2. Say a kind hello to someone who looks left out or alone.
3. When something good feels a little bit scary, take a deep breath, say a small prayer, and be brave.

Pray together

Dear God, make me brave. When I am afraid to do what is right, help me to say yes to you, with a big, brave heart, the way Saint Joan did. Amen.

A note for the leader

The end of her story. The book tells gently that Joan was captured, treated unfairly and stayed brave to the end, and that she was only nineteen. It does not say how she died, and young children rarely ask. If they do, keep it simple: she stayed faithful to God, and now she is with him in heaven. Read those pages ahead of time.

Go further

Our free **Saint Joan's journey map** has a coloring map of her journey across France, her banner to cut out and carry, and what to say at each stop. More ideas for the feast day are at littlesaintsbighearts.com/saint-joan-of-arc-feast-day, and every free printable is at littlesaintsbighearts.com/printables.

Joan and the Brave Heart by Joseph Glazier. Free to copy for your class or program.