Kateri and the Whispering Woods

Ages 4 to 9 · About 10 minutes to read aloud · Feast day July 14 (April 17 in Canada)

Virtue: Faith and the beauty of creation

The story in a nutshell

Tekakwitha, a Mohawk girl who feels safe among the whispering trees, hears the priests' news about Jesus and longs to belong to him. She is baptized Kateri, stays gentle and keeps praying when others are unkind, and journeys to a village of Christian Mohawk families. There she thanks God for everything he made, cares for others, and becomes the first Native American saint.

Before reading

- Look at the cover. What is Kateri holding? Where is she? *Listen for: A little cross of two sticks, in a forest by a river.*
- What is your favorite thing God made outside?

While reading

- When the priests bring their news: what lit up inside Tekakwitha's heart? *Listen for: She wanted to belong to Jesus.*
- On the Sunday page: what did Kateri do when the children threw stones? *Listen for: She didn't shout back or throw stones; she stayed gentle and kept praying.*
- When the priest writes, "I send you a treasure": what was the treasure? *Listen for: Kateri herself.*

After reading

- What did Kateri thank God for in the woods? *Listen for: The birds, the rivers, the tall trees and the bright blue sky.*
- If someone teases you, what can you do? *Listen for: Answer gently, and tell a grown-up you trust if it keeps happening or hurts.*
- How can you be kind to someone who is new, or different from you? *Listen for: Say hello, sit with them, ask them to play.*
- *Older children*: Kateri was teased for being a Christian, but she kept praying. What helped her? *Listen for: She loved Jesus with her whole heart.*

Words to explain

- **Mohawk**: Kateri's people, a Native nation of what is now New York State and Canada
- **baptized**: welcomed into God's family with holy water
- **Kateri**: her baptism name, the Mohawk way of saying Catherine
- **Lily of the Mohawks**: a name for Kateri, because her life was pure and lovely like a lily

Be a Little Saint this week

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

1. Go outside and thank God for three beautiful things you can see, just like Kateri did.
2. If someone teases you, answer gently like Kateri did. If it keeps happening, or if it hurts, tell a grown-up you trust.
3. Be the first to be kind to someone who is new, or different from you.

Pray together

Dear God, thank you for the trees and the rivers, the birds and the bright blue sky. Help me to see how beautiful your world is, and to love you with my whole heart the way Saint Kateri did. Amen.

A note for the leader

Being teased. A child who is being teased may see themselves in the Sunday page, so make sure every child knows which grown-up they can tell. Dressing up as Kateri? A simple dress, a braid and a little cross are enough; feathered headdresses weren't part of her Mohawk dress.

Go further

Our free **Saint Kateri thank-you walk** has a page to draw three beautiful things God made, how to tie a little cross of two sticks, and a prayer card. More ideas for the feast day are at littlesaintsbighearts.com/saint-kateri-feast-day, and every free printable is at littlesaintsbighearts.com/printables.

Kateri and the Whispering Woods by Joseph Glazier. Free to copy for your class or program.