Meet St. Joan of Arc! • Saints for kids

LIVED: Joan was born to French peasants on January 6, 1412, and died May 30, 1431. She lived during the last part of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), in which England attempted to take control of France. Th e war, along with the plague, had wiped out half of the population of France, which was on the verge of defeat by the time Joan appeared.

MISSION: Joan told Charles VII, the embattled dauphin (future king) of the French, that she had been inspired by divine visions to lead the French army in driving the English off French soil; she also promised that she would see him crowned king.

ADVENTURES: Joan made quite a spectacle when she arrived at the French army camp at Blois on a white horse, dressed in white armor and carrying a banner of her own design. A pageboy and heralds provided by the dauphin rode with her. Marshal Jean de La Brosse, commander of the force at Blois, together with his aids, met her.

"So, you are Joan the Maid!" he said, looking her over skeptically. "Th e peasant girl on whom Charles depends to bring victory aft er these dozen years of defeat?"

"Sir, she is the Maiden of whom the prophecies speak!" exclaimed the pageboy, which made La Brosse and his aids laugh heartily with scorn.

"It is the King of Heaven who sends me," Joan said. Fire flashed in her eyes, and the force in her voice silenced their laughter at once. "If you will follow my banner, God will help you break the siege of Orléans, and the dauphin will be crowned king of France within the year."

“Well, that would be a miracle, indeed,” La Brosse said mockingly. “And just how does God intend to accomplish this?”

“We’ll begin with discipline and dignity,” Joan said, nodding at the disorderly camp. “All the men must go to Confession. Today! And then Mass, every day. And the cursing and profaning of God must stop!”

The sneer disappeared from La Brosse’s face. “This is your plan? This is what will bring us victory?”

“Only by relying on God will the men have courage,” Joan said, “and only with courage will there be victory.” And with that, she rode into the camp, leaving La Brosse to wonder if this strange girl had indeed been divinely sent.

Learn more

Maid of Heaven has an extensive set of resources, including several stories, just for kids.

Here’s the Catholic.org 3-minute bio of St. Joan of Arc:

Here’s the trailer for Joan of Arc, a film from Ignatius Press:

Download the St. Joan of Arc coloring sheet.