

Saint Margaret of Antioch • Saint Stories

Once upon a time, a very long time ago when the Church was brand-new and being a Christian was dangerous, there lived a young girl named Margaret. She was not born into a Christian family, for her father was a pagan priest—that is, a priest who served false gods.

Shortly after Margaret was born her mother died.

“I can’t raise Margaret. I am too busy as a priest!” said her father.

So her father sent her to live with a woman in the countryside. This woman was a Christian, and without Margaret’s father realizing it, she taught Margaret all about Jesus. When Margaret was old enough, she too became a Christian. In fact, she even promised Jesus to never marry and to remain faithful always to him. (Kind of like being a nun.)

Eventually her father found out about Margaret becoming a Christian. Furious, he begged her to return to worshiping his many false gods, but she refused.

“I give up!” her father exclaimed. “If you won’t believe in my many gods, you will no longer be part of my family!” And he no longer considered Margaret his daughter. (How sad!)

The woman who had raised Margaret allowed her to live with her again. Margaret readily agreed and soon became a shepherdess, a woman who raises and cares for sheep.

Margaret was a beautiful young woman, and soon was attracting the attention of young men. Because of her promise to Jesus, she turned down their marriage proposals.

However, one important government official would not be

refused.

“Deny your Christian faith and marry me—or else.” he demanded.

“No, I will not deny my faith!” replied Margaret.

So, this man had Margaret arrested and tortured for being a Christian. (At this time it was against the law to be a Christian.)

According to a very old book, *The Golden Legend*, written about 800 years ago, many miraculous things happened when the men tried to torture and kill Margaret. However, the book only states the following event. You will need to decide if it is true or not.

According to the legend, Satan turned himself into a dragon—and swallowed Margaret whole! (Oh no!)

But he didn’t realize that Margaret was holding a cross in her hands at that moment. According to the story, the cross irritated the dragon’s innards and Margaret was able to escape alive. (The story didn’t say HOW she actually got out of the dragon when the cross bothered his stomach. How do YOU think she got out?)

It is unknown how she was martyred (killed for believing in Jesus), but we do know she died in the year 304.

Feast day: July 17

St. Margaret of Antioch, pray for us!

Activity: Create your own legend!

Have your child imagine the scene where the dragon swallows St. Margaret and the cross irritates him. Let your child dictate to you a story about what the dragon is thinking and doing, and how Margaret gets out of the dragon safely. Write down the story as your child tells it to you. Then, have

him/her draw a picture to go with the story.

Or, if you have play dough or clay, have your child sculpt the dragon. Maybe make a cross too and have it sticking out of the dragon like a sword.