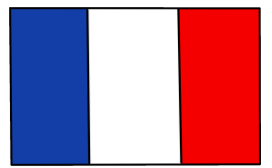
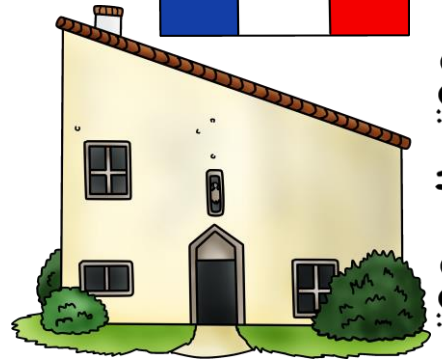


# JOAN OF ARC



## EARLY LIFE

Joan of Arc (or Jeanne d'Arc, as she is known in France) was probably born on January 6, 1412, in the village of Domremy in France. Her father was a prosperous farmer. Joan had three brothers and one sister. Joan lived a normal life for thirteen years. She worked on her family farm and learned to spin, sew, and cook. Joan also became very religious and spent a lot of time at church. She learned her Bible lessons and stories.



## CALLING

Joan heard a voice from God at age thirteen. She realized it was the archangel, St. Michael. He spoke to her several times and told her that two other saints—Margaret and Catherine—would also speak to her. They told her God had a mission for her. The saints said France was in trouble in the Hundred Years War. England and France had been in conflict off and on for decades over who would control much of the territory of France itself. Joan should leave her village to help lead the French in battle against the English. After she drove them out, she would take the king to be crowned at Rheims. Joan kept her divine experiences secret at first. She never specified how often and when many of them occurred. Joan was also confused about what to do about them. She prayed for guidance on the subject. Nearly four years later at age sixteen, Joan decided it was time to listen to the voices and take action.

## JOURNEY

It was unthinkable for a young woman to travel alone at this time. Joan had her cousin come get her and explained the situation to him. She planned to ask King Charles of France for an army. She went to the local town 10 miles away and asked the commander of the garrison, Count Baudricourt, to take her to see the king. He just laughed at her though. Joan did not give up though and continued to ask him for help. She was able to gain the support of some local leaders. The count finally agreed to escort her to the royal court. Joan dressed in men's clothes and left for her trip on February 13, 1429. She was accompanied by six men-at-arms. Her attire served a couple purposes. It was for comfort, but also helped conceal the fact that she was a woman from potential enemies. Joan had her hair cut short so she would resemble a young page.

## MEETING

The group traveled through the enemy-held heart of France for eleven days. Joan's parents sent her brothers, Pierre and Jean, to help protect her. She met with counselors first, where she was questioned extensively. One felt she was worthy enough to meet with Charles, while the other thought she was insane. She was able to meet with the king on March 6. Charles was suspicious of her at first. He was not sure if he should put her in charge, if she was a messenger of God, or if she was mentally unwell. He sent Joan to a group of clergymen who asked her many questions. She passed all the tests he gave her, and King Charles eventually decided he had nothing to lose. He allowed Joan to accompany a convoy of soldiers and supplies to the city of Orleans, which was under siege from the English army. Joan practiced for battle while she waited on the king. She became a proficient fighter and expert horse rider. When the king told her she could fight, she was ready.

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In late April 1429, it was time to strike. Orleans was one of the most important cities in France. It was the gateway to the entire Loire Valley, one of the few areas still under French control. News of Joan's visions from God reached Orleans before she arrived. The French hoped God was going to save them from the English. Joan was greeted with cheering and celebration upon her arrival. Her presence turned the tide of the battle.

## BATTLE

Joan waited for the rest of the French army to arrive as reinforcements.

While French forces distracted the English on the west side of Orleans, Joan helped lead forces unopposed through the city's eastern gate. The mission included bringing in and storing important supplies. Joan was resting on the evening of May 4, when she suddenly jumped up, inspired, and announced that she would attack the English. She armed herself and hurried to an English fort east of the city. She discovered a battle already underway. Her arrival roused the French, and they took the fort. Joan advanced on another fort on the morning of May 6. The English evacuated to defend a stronger position nearby. Joan and another French commander attacked and took it by storm. The French moved against the fort of Les Tourelles the next day. Joan impressed everyone by helping lead the charge in battle several times. the morning of May 8, 1429. As the voices had prophesied, Joan was wounded in the throat by a crossbow bolt soon after the fighting started. She kept going, but blood loss forced her to stop. There were rumors that she had died, and the French started to retreat. Joan pulled out her sword and rushed back to the front line. The French, newly heartened, surged forward and set the drawbridge and gate on fire. Some English were killed, and others fell in the river and drowned. The survivors fled to nearby towns controlled by the French. Orleans was once again in French hands and proved that the English were not invincible.



## KING CHARLES

Joan's success convinced the French that God was with them, and they fought with fresh enthusiasm. The French then drove the English out of several more towns near Orleans in a space of six days known as the "week of victories." Joan still needed to achieve the other part of her visions. She led Charles to the city of Rheims to be crowned as the king. Others followed them along the way. Charles was crowned the king of France with Joan in his presence. After the ceremony, she knelt before Charles, calling him her king for the first time.

## CAPTURE, TRIAL, AND DEATH

Joan took a small force to defend the city of Compiegne in May 1430 when she heard it was under attack. Her force was attacked outside the city. They raised the drawbridge and captured Joan. They held her as a prisoner in a keep. She tried to escape, jumping from the tower and fell into the moat. She was knocked unconscious but was not seriously hurt. Once she recovered, she was taken to Arras where she was sold to the English for a small fortune. Charles shockingly did not try to save her. For months, Joan was chained, threatened with torture, and harassed with thousands of questions. She maintained her innocence. On May 23, she was condemned to be burned unless she recanted. Faced with certain death, Joan



recanted. She was burned at the stake in 1431 for heresy, a common occurrence at the time. Witnesses say she forgave her accusers and asked them to pray for her. At death, Joan was only 19 years old. In 1920, Joan was proclaimed a saint of the Catholic Church. There are many paintings, books, movies, sculptures, and statues of her all over the world.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# JOAN OF ARC



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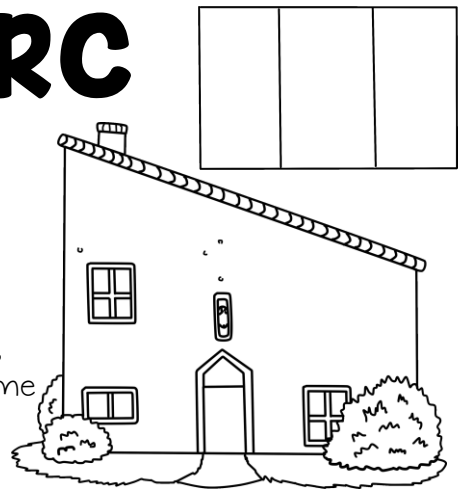


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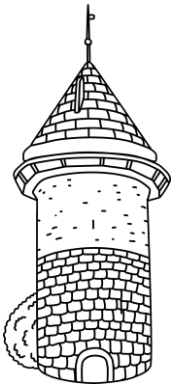
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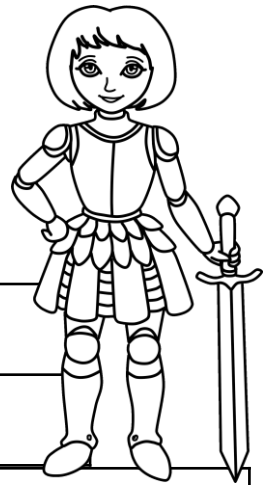
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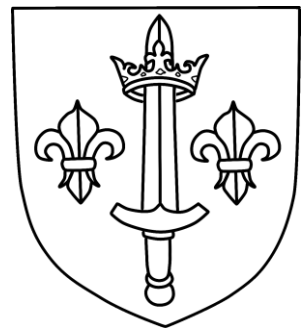


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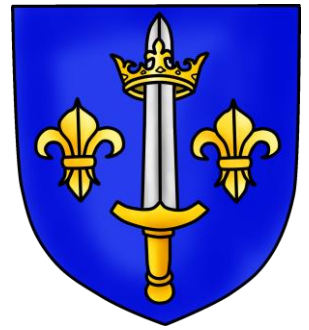
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# THANKS!

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