

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

Joan's call to arms

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

Joan lived with her family on a small farm in France. She worked in the fields and learned to sew and cook. She was strong and rode the farm horses better than her brothers. She loved to run races against the boys in her village. She usually won.

But a terrible war was changing everything. England had invaded France. English armies roamed over the countryside, destroying crops and burning homes. Joan was just 13 when she felt God was calling her.

This all happened hundreds of years ago when the world was much different than it is today.

It began one bright spring day. Joan was sitting in the pasture with her father's cows and sheep. She wondered why no one would lead the French against the English soldiers. She felt God wanted her to help.

She talked to her father. He did not think girls should take part in

war. So she talked to her pastor. He was more understanding. He told her to pray more. She did and became convinced that God was calling her to help save her country.

So Joan cut her long hair. She dressed in soldier's clothing and rode with an escort of soldiers to the palace of the French prince.

His guards led her to Prince Charles. "God sent me to help you save our country," she told him. "God also wants me to help you become king of France."

Everyone laughed. "How can a teen-age girl help me save France?" the prince thought to himself. But after a while he became convinced he should take Joan seriously.

"I will give you some soldiers," Prince Charles told her. "Your country will be thankful if you drive the English army out of France."

"That is what God is calling me to do," Joan said confidently.

So she led the soldiers into battle. They won a great victory at

Orleans. The presence of this brave girl inspired everyone. Joan became a hero. And Prince Charles became king.

But then Joan was captured by the English.

She was put in prison. People began to say she was a witch. She was turned over to a church court of that day and put on trial.

The court tried to get her to admit she practiced witchcraft. She denied the charge, repeating that God called her to help save her country. "I cannot refuse God's call," she insisted. But she was condemned to death.

Joan was just 19 when she was executed. The church later realized she was a great young woman.

We honor her as St. Joan of Arc each May 30.

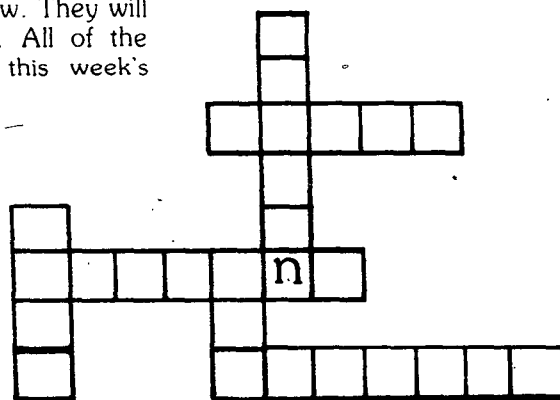
(Ms. Manternach is the author of catechetical works, scripture stories and original stories for children.)



The Girl Soldier

Fill in the blanks with the words written below. They will only fit one way. All of the words are from this week's children's story.

CHARLES
JOAN
ORLEANS
ARC
PRISON
WITCH

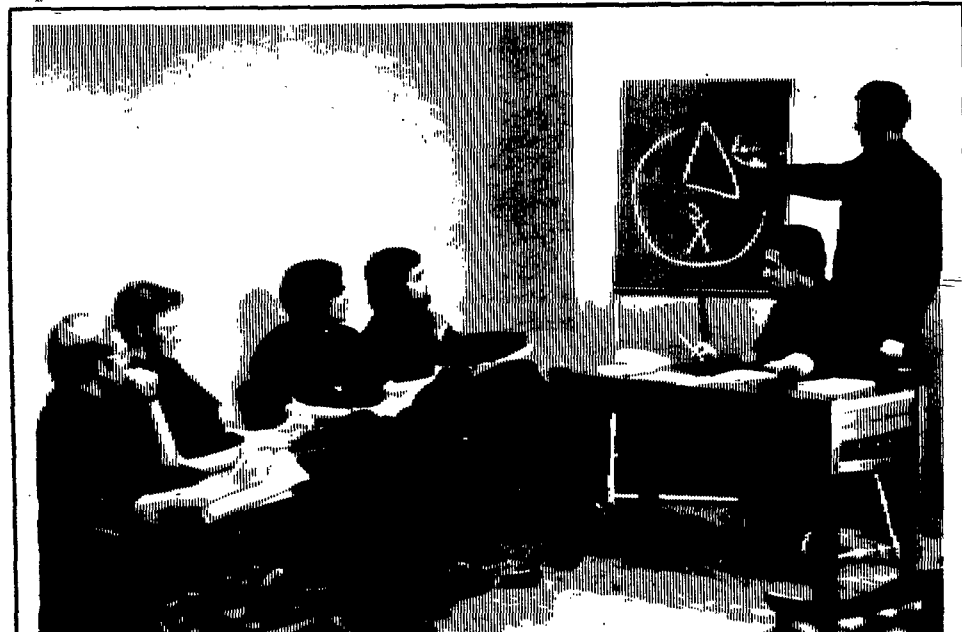


HOW ABOUT YOU?

Joan of Arc was only 13 when she became convinced that God had something special for her to do. Pretend you were a friend of Joan's then. What would you have said when she told you she felt God wanted her to lead her country's soldiers in the war?

Children's Reading Corner

In "The Saint Book" by Mary Reed Newland there is a well-researched story about Joan of Arc. Parents might read it first alone and then with a child. Afterward talk about God's call in Joan's life and how costly her response was. Help your child begin to sense that God calls all of us, though perhaps not as dramatically as he did Joan. Consider how what you are doing, as a parent, a worker, is your way of living out your vocation. Consider too how the things your child does — as a family member, student, etc. — are ways of living out a call. Pray at the close of your time together for courage to live as responsible, caring people. (Seabury Press, 815 Second Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017. Hardback, \$9.95.)



Frontier

There is a frontier ruggedness about young men studying for the priesthood in Alaska. They have to be tough. After ordination, planes, boats and snowmobiles will take them to remote missions in Eskimo villages, logging camps and outposts in the Aleutian Islands.

With funding from the Catholic Church Extension Society, they are now able to pursue the priesthood with intense missionary zeal. They are part of a team that brings God's Word to isolated people here in the United States. But that team can't do

the job alone. It needs new members. It needs you.

Join us. Become a member of the Extension team. Although you won't be present in the home missions personally, your impact will be felt in this holy effort. Together we will bring Christ to those living in remote home mission areas.

Write for a free subscription to Extension magazine today and discover the difference you can make. Together, and with God's grace, we can achieve His missionary goals here in our own beloved country.



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