**Background history pertinent to the life of Saint Joan of Arc - Hundred Years War**
Joan of Arc's life took place during what is known in history as the Hundred Years War. To completely understand her life it is necessary to have some understanding about this War since it was the predominant influence upon the age in which she lived. The War actually covers a series of battles fought between the French and the English from 1337 to 1453. To learn more visit the following pages:

**Joan of Arc's Birth and Childhood**
[Joan of Arc](http://www.maidofheaven.com) was born on January 6, 1412 (Actual date was not recorded but historians have generally accepted this date) in the small village of Domremy in the region of France known as Lorraine. "Joan busied herself like any other girl; she did the house work and spun and sometime- I have seen her- she kept her father's flocks."

**Joan of Arc's Family**
Joan's parents Jacques d'Arc and Isabelle were simple peasants similar to most of the other people who lived in Domremy. Years later, one of Joan's godmothers, for whom she was named, described them as: "Simple labourers, honest in their poverty, for they were of small means." Joan's father Jacques did hold some type of public office in their small village.

**Joan of Arc's Faith & Voices**
"When I was thirteen years old, I had a Voice from God to help me govern my conduct. And the first time I was very fearful. And came this Voice, about the hour of noon, in the summer-time, in my father's garden; I had not fasted on the eve preceding that day." Joan of Arc testified at her trial that the first Voice to visit her was Saint Michael who came to her to give her guidance and counseling. He was soon joined by Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret on subsequent visits. Joan also testified that: " I have seen them with my corporeal eyes as plainly as I see you, and when they went away from me I wept and I greatly wished they had taken me with them."

**Joan of Arc's Mission**
"I have been commanded to do two things on the part of the King of Heaven: one, to raise the siege of Orleans; the other, to conduct the King to Reims for his sacrament and his coronation." Joan later stated at her trial that: "Since God had commanded it, it was right to do it" and added that had she had a hundred fathers and a hundred mothers, and had she been the daughter of a king, she still would have gone.

**[Joan of Arc](http://www.maidofheaven.com) Leaves Home - Vaucouleurs**
"Two or three times a week this Voice exhorted me to go to France. My father knew nothing of my going. The Voice kept urging me; I could no longer endure it. It told me I would raise the siege of Orleans. It told me to go to Robert de Baudricourt, captain, and he would give me men to come with me." Joan had to make three visits to Robert de Baudricourt and it was only after she accurately predicted the French loss at the Battle of the Herrings that he finally agreed to aid her. As she left Vaucouleurs de Baudricourt yelled to Joan: "Va, et advienne que pourra!" "Go, and let come what may!"

**Joan of Arc's Journey To See Charles VII**
"From Vaucouleurs I set out, clad as a man, wearing a sword which the captain had given me, without other arms. Accompanied by a knight, a squire, and four followers, I directed my course toward St. Urbain, and found shelter that night at the abbey."
Joan's journey from Vaucouleurs to Chinon was around 400 miles through mostly enemy territory in the dead of winter. That she successfully made such a harsh journey in eleven days gave many people of her time faith that she was truly sent from God.

**[Joan of Arc](http://www.maidofheaven.com) Meets Charles VII**
"After dinner, I went to the King, who was at the Castle. When I entered the room where he was I recognized him among many others by the counsel of my Voice, which revealed him to me. I told him that I wished to go and make war on the English."
Charles VII, always shrewd when it came to his own survival, tested Joan by hiding himself among the crowd in hall of his palace but Joan was not fooled and immediately found him and fell to her knees before him. Joan of Arc's first words to Charles VII were: "Very noble Lord Dauphin, I am come, being sent on the part of God, to give succour to the kingdom and to you."

**Joan of Arc Is Tested by Charles VII**
"Why have you come? The King wishes to know what impulse prompted you to seek him out." Joan replied: "As I guarded the animals a Voice appeared to me. This Voice said to me: 'God has great pity for the people of France. It is required that thou, Joan , betake thee to France.' Having heard these words, I wept. Then the Voice said to me: 'go to Vaucouleurs. Thou will find there a captain who will conduct thee safely to France, and to the King. Be without fear.' I have done what was commanded me. And I reached the King without prevention of any sort."
Charles was a cautious man and had Joan tested to determine that she was indeed physically pure and sent from God. Her examinations took several weeks while she was examined by the ladies of court and by theologians at Poitiers.

**[Joan of Arc](http://www.maidofheaven.com) Prepares For Battle**
"In God's name, the soldiers will fight and God will give the victory" "En nom De, les gens d'armes batailleront et Dieu donnera victoire"
is the famous response Joan gave when she was asked why she needed soldiers if God wished to deliver France. After gaining approval from the Church theologians that examined her, Joan was given command of the French army and proceeded to the town of Tours to prepare for battle.

**[Joan of Arc](http://www.maidofheaven.com) Shows Her "Sign" At Orleans**
"Trust in God. God will aid the city of Orleans and expel the enemy."
Joan of Arc's victory at Orleans is one of the great victories in the history of warfare and was the final turning point in the Hundred Years War. In only three days of fighting Joan was able to compel the English to retreat from the city ending their siege of nearly seven months.

**[Joan of Arc](http://www.maidofheaven.com) And The Loire Valley Campaign**
"Noble Dauphin, come at once to Reims."
Having fulfilled the first part of her mission, Joan immediately went on the offensive in a march through the Loire Valley to clear the way for the coronation of Charles VII at Reims. At the battle of Patay, Joan of Arc wins her greatest military victory by annihilating a much larger English army killing thousands while losing only a few of her own soldiers. The battle of Patay is considered a mirror image of the battle of Agincourt which was the battle that had brought France to its knees and necessitated the miracle that Joan delivered.

**[Joan of Arc](http://www.maidofheaven.com) And The Coronation Of Charles VII**
"Noble King, now is accomplished the will of God, who desired that I should raise the siege of Orleans, and should bring you to this city of Reims to receive you holy coronation, thus showing that you are the true King, him to whom the throne of France must belong."
With the coronation of Charles VII as King of France, Joan of Arc reached the height of her success. She accomplished her impossible prediction "to conduct the King to Reims for his sacrament and his coronation" in only a matter of months after she had arrived in Chinon a simple maid with a mission from God.

**[Joan of Arc](http://www.maidofheaven.com) And Paris**
"By my staff, the place would have been taken!"
After crowning Charles VII, Joan and her best military commanders wanted to immediately march to Paris and liberate France's largest city. If Joan had been fully supported by Charles and immediately gone to Paris she would have succeeded because the city was lightly fortified at that time. Unfortunately, Charles either lost his nerve or allowed himself to be overly influenced by his corrupt advisors because he entered into two useless treaties that delayed Joan's attack on Paris by over a month. The delay proved very costly.

**Joan of Arc's Last Campaigns**
"I am not alone! I have fifty thousand of my own company to fight with me!"
After Joan of Arc's defeat at Paris, Charles and his corrupt advisors disbanded the army and withdrew back toward the Loire. Joan was forced to stay at court with Charles as a sort of trophy but was occasionally allowed to lead small bands of soldiers sent to aid certain cities that had petitioned Charles for help.

**[Joan of Arc](http://www.maidofheaven.com) Captured At Compiegne**
"By my staff! We are enough! I shall go to see my good friends in Compiegne!"
Joan of Arc responded to the cry for help by the city of Compiegne and arrived on the morning of May 23, 1430, with about three to four hundred soldiers. In the afternoon while making a sortie against a Burgundian camp, more Burgundian and English reinforcements arrived and the French were forced to retreat. Joan lead the rearguard action and was cut off from re-entering Compiegne when the drawbridge was raised. Fighting to the last she was surrounded and pulled from her horse by a Burgundian soldier.

**Joan of Arc's Captivity**
"I would rather die than be in the hands of the English."
Joan of Arc was a prisoner of the Burgundians for six months. She made several attempts to escape the most daring being a jump from a tower seventy feet high. In mid-November 1430, she was sold to the English for ten thousand francs and transferred to Rouen. Once in English hands she was kept in chains and guarded constantly by harsh English soldiers.

**The Trial Of [Joan of Arc](http://www.maidofheaven.com)**
"I came into France at God's command, and I have never acted except at God's command."
The outcome of the trial of Joan of Arc was arranged long before it ever started but the Church officials involved still went to great lengths to make it appear that she was given a fair trial even though they violated Church rules throughout. Joan was the only witness, one of the clear violations of Church rules, but she proved to be a very formidable witness for herself. The trial lasted through the spring during which time the Church officials used every trick they knew, including threatening her with torture, to try to get her to publicly confess that her Voices were not from God. Finally, they took her to the cemetery of Ouen on May 24, 1431, and told her she would burn unless she agreed to "abjure." Afraid of the fire she agreed after she was promised she would save her life and be taken to a Church prison to be guarded by woman instead of soldiers.

**Joan of Arc's Execution and Death**
"Alas! Am I to be so horribly and cruelly treated? Alas! That my body, clean and whole, which has never been corrupted, should this day be consumed and burned to ashes! Ah! I would far rather have my head chopped off seven times over, than to be burned!"
After Joan abjured she expected to be taken to a Church prison but the head Church official Pierre Cauchon was not going to allow her to escape being burned. He ordered her taken back to her prison cell and arranged for her English guards to threaten her with rape. Since Joan's only protection was her soldier's clothes this was an evil trick by Cauchon to get her to resume dressing as a man so that he could pronounce her a relapsed heretic. After suffering in prison like this for three days and being subjected to unknown cruelty at the hands of her English guards, Joan resumed her forbidden attire. Three days later on May 30, 1430, she was burned in Rouen as a relapsed heretic.

**Aftermath of Joan of Arc's Death**
"We are all lost for it is a good and holy woman that has been burned. I believe her soul is in the hands of God, and I believe damned all who joined in her condemnation" lamented Jean Tressard, secretary for the King of England, shortly after Joan's execution and were sentiments shared by many who witnessed her death.
Out of all the people of her time then thought of as important it is only the simple maid known as Joan of Arc that is still remembered and loved today.