

Courage

Learn about courage and help the virtue of courage grow in you!



What Is Courage?

Courage is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Courage is the ability to face difficulties and overcome fear with faith. Fortitude, or courage, strengthens us to give witness to our faith in Jesus Christ.

To have courage is to be brave when we face difficulties. Courage means being brave in doing the right thing, even when it isn't easy. Courage gives us the ability to face danger and to find strength to overcome fear. During those times when we find it hard to have courage, we can put our faith in God, knowing that he is with us always.

Jesus said,
“Take courage,
I have conquered
the world.”
(John 16:33)

Discuss and Respond

With a partner, talk about courage. Have you ever done something brave, even when you were afraid to? What happened next?

Write about and illustrate an act of courage here.



Witnessing with Courage

The Story of Pentecost

Jesus called all his disciples to be his witnesses. This meant that he wanted them to spread the message of God's Kingdom. Before he ascended into heaven, Jesus promised his Apostles that the Holy Spirit would come to help them do this. He said, "The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that (I) told you" (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit would help Jesus' disciples become great teachers.

The disciples were gathered together on the Jewish feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem in a big room. Suddenly, a great wind came out of nowhere! A flame split into little fires above the heads of all gathered—but these very special fires did not burn. Everyone started talking in a different language, and yet, they could all understand one another. The Apostles and their followers knew that they had been blessed with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave the disciples the courage to go out into the world and witness to the Good News.

Today, on Pentecost, we celebrate in a special way the coming of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost is also a feast of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, including fortitude or courage.

FUN FACT

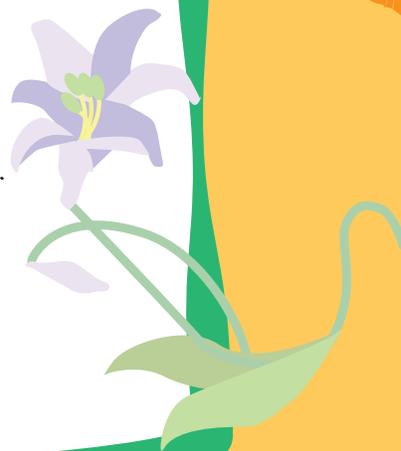
We celebrate Pentecost 50 days after Easter. Did you know that the Greek word *Pentecost* means "50th day"?

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you will renew the face of the earth.

Lord,
by the light of the Holy Spirit
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.
In the same Spirit
help us to relish what is right
and always rejoice in your consolation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit

The Sacrament of Confirmation

After Pentecost, the Apostles were strengthened by the Holy Spirit and they went out to witness to Jesus Christ. As they shared the Good News, they baptized many believers. The Apostles placed their hands on them to share the strengthening power of the Holy Spirit.

“Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”
(Rite of Confirmation)

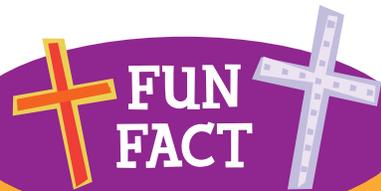
The laying on of hands is a powerful sign of God’s blessing. As the Church grew, an anointing was joined to the laying on of hands. The laying on of hands and anointing during our celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation reminds us of the laying on of hands and anointing by the Apostles in the early Church. Confirmation is the sacrament in which we receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit in a special way.



Anoint means to apply oil to someone as a sign that God has chosen that person for a special mission. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Bishop uses *chrism*, blessed oil, to anoint each candidate. By the anointing, we receive the seal of the Holy Spirit.

In Confirmation, we are sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit, become more like Jesus, and are given the courage to be his witnesses. Our relationship with God and the Church is strengthened, and we are sent forth to live our faith in the world.

SYMBOLS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



There are several symbols that remind us of the Holy Spirit. Can you name each one?



Exemplifying Courage

Profiles of Courageous Saints

Saint Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc was faithful to God's will in her life. It seemed impossible for a teenage girl to become a soldier, lead an army, and unite the country of France, but Joan did just that because of her faith. When things seem to be impossible in our lives, we can be like Joan and take courage, letting our faith guide us.

Saint Charles Lwanga

Saint Charles Lwanga taught others about Jesus. He stood up to and protected his friends from the evil king. Even when faced with death, he would not stop loving Jesus. Like Saint Charles Lwanga, we can share our faith with others. We can also be courageous and stand up for what is right.

Add these important spring dates to your calendar to celebrate and remember courage!



Prayer to Courageous Saints

Courageous saints,
Help me to be strong and brave like you.
Be by my side as I care for others,
And give me the fortitude to stand up
for what is right,
Even when it's difficult to do so.
Amen.

Growing in Courage

Design a “Courage Tree”

It isn't always easy to have the courage to do the right thing. But, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we know that we can be brave.

Design a “courage tree” in your classroom or home to record and display your acts of courage year-round.

What you'll need:

- ✓ construction paper
- ✓ scissors
- ✓ glue
- ✓ markers or crayons



What you'll do:

STEP 1: Use construction paper to draw and cut out a tree trunk shape and branches. Use your imagination—make it as big or give it as many branches as you like! Ask an adult for help if you need it.

STEP 2: Cut out leaves from construction paper. Make them big enough to write or draw acts of courage on.

STEP 3: Reflect. What have you done that was courageous? Have you been scared to try something new but decided to do so anyway? Maybe you had a hard time sharing with a friend but were able to come up with a solution. Perhaps you found yourself in a situation where you stood up for what was right, even though it was really hard!

STEP 4: Write or draw your acts of courage on the leaves you cut out. Keep blank leaves handy so you can add acts of courage as they happen.

STEP 5: Find a place where you would like to hang or display your tree. Hang your leaves on your tree to share and remember your courageous acts. You may find that you inspire others with your display, too!