**Fortitude**

The gift of fortitude allows a person to overcome difficulties and endure pain and suffering with the strength infused by God. In other words, the gift of fortitude helps someone grow stronger in hardship, stand against evil and persevere to everlasting life. Fortitude also carries with it a confidence in the success of suffering. It gives someone the ability to live heroically, suffer with patience and joy and overcome luke-warmness. A modern-day example of someone with the gift of fortitude is St. Maximilian Kolbe. He gave his life as an exchange for another, endured the suffering of the concentration camps and a horrible death with the strength infused by God. He had confidence that he would overcome the power of evil and gain everlasting life.

Questions: 1• Give an example of a time in your life where you overcame a difficult situation or temptation with God’s help.

2• What is an area in your life that you are struggling? How can you allow God to bring you strength in that situation?

3• Do you truly believe that God is with you no matter how hard the struggles in your life get?

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GOF:

For a minute or two, think about OR discuss with you family question #1 above. When you come up with a thought, text Sue Ann and Mike at 716-909-7110 and share your thoughts! We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Fortitude

St. Luke’s 11:21 “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his castle, his property is

safe.” Who is the strong man, what is the armor, what is the castle, and what is the

property? For our purposes, this verse can be about the family. The castle is the home,

and the children are the *most precious,* though not property.

Parents, both mothers and fathers, you are called to be strong. Your most effective armor

is the deep confidence that comes from having our Eucharistic Lord at your center: the

Lord who died on Calvary, shedding every drop of His Blood for love of you. Armor

also is the Word of God, knowledge of Sacred Scripture, for to know Scripture is to know

Christ. Understanding what 1 the Church teaches and why—knowing who is he human

person and what is needed for him to flourish—this also is strong armor, so read the

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*.2

Fortitude is willingness to engage the arduous for the sake of the good. The person who

lives this way pursues the good even when it is difficult. This person follows the way of

goodness even when emotion pulls in the opposite direction. This person is heroic in

doing what is right even though times of temptation, fatigue, or distress. It is the virtue

that makes every saint, and we are called to be saints.

“…his property is safe.” When will your children be safe? Ultimately, when they have

finished the race and won their victory, in faithfulness to Christ who saves us. Here are

some thoughts for parents.

• Your children need fortitude in order to become saints. They have to learn to live by

faith and reason, knowing the good and pursuing it, even when their feelings run

contrary to it. Living according to reality instead of by one’s emotions is the core of

having meaning in life and growing in true happiness.

• Children need armor to protect them from the culture. Is a child safe who has an

online computer in the bedroom, or an electronic device with a data plan? Boys and

girls are both susceptible to spending hours daily online, whether creating a “virtual

self” or falling into the trap of pornography. These behaviors, both degrading to the

beauty of human nature, are only part of what can pull kids down online.

• Follow the principle that duties are first, and privileges are dependent upon duties; then

follow through. Consider this true story from a Bosco parent: Middle School Son

1 St. John Henry Newman

2 The Catechism of the Catholic Church is available online full-text at

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\_INDEX.HTM

expressed his interest (twice) in venturing out onto the porch roof. Parents informed

Middle School Son (twice) that such adventure would not be allowed under any

circumstances. On the morning of a planned trip to SeaBreeze, Middle School Son

was discovered on the porch roof with his two friends (who had been invited to go to

SeaBreeze). Parent’s response: “Get down. You two, call your parents. You’re going

home.” End of story, with no guilt for letting the kids down. A serious breach takes

away all *perceived rights* to special privileges for oneself and one’s friends.

• Make direct connections. A child who has neglected homework can be told, “Of

course, we want you to (*insert favorite weekly activity here*). So we will keep

checking your homework until then, and when it’s all done, you can do that.” It takes

parental fortitude to follow through on this plan. Pray for it. Take enough time to

really pray for it.

Children thrive with strong limits; they flourish within firmness. So parents who want

their children to thrive and flourish will be strong and firm. They realize that their

parental strength and firmness show the love and tenderness they have for their children.

Masculinity is under attack today. Although both sexes need fortitude, masculinity has

been crippled by a lack of this virtue. Men and women receive fortitude by the Holy

Spirit. We act virtuously because we are living in the power of God Himself. “Be of

good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.”3

Fortitude starts with “fort”. A fort is built to last. It takes a lot of hits from enemy

artillery. It stands strong, and even if it gets chipped around the edges, the inhabitants

inside are safe from the battle, sheltered from the war. Inside, because it is safe, there are

beautiful things that delight us, courtyards with gardens that invite us, and warm firesides

that welcome friends. You, parents, are the fort. The child lives within your world.

Teach your child reality through the strength that you draw from time spent in union with

God. Then within your fort, children will find peace and joy.

One of the most essential gifts a parent can hand to their children is formation in

fortitude. Usually unconsciously, this wins the respect of others: it is what children really

admire in storybook heroes, and why every story has a conflict to overcome. We love to

see fortitude because we know we are seeing something good, we are seeing something

divine.

3 Ps 31:24

**5 Inspiring Lessons of Faith from Joan of Arc**

By Linda Clyde, FaithCounts.com Contributor

[](https://faithcounts.com/wp-content/uploads/joan-of-arc-banner.jpg)

[The life of Joan of Arc](https://www.history.com/topics/saint-joan-of-arc) is a perfect example of why faith counts. Joan was raised Catholic and lived a life of faith from beginning to end—a span of 19 years. What she accomplished in her short life and the lessons of faith she left behind might surprise you.

**She Believed in Her Mission**

When Joan was 12 or 13 years old, she believed she heard heavenly voices. These voices, she claimed, urged her to live her faith and to never deviate from a righteous path. She believed what they told her and followed their counsel. As she grew, she claimed her voices were preparing her to liberate France from the English, who were at the time successfully acquiring and usurping anything French.

**Her Faith Motivated Others**

Joan was not timid about sharing her faith. She told others of her voices and her mission. She believed that God had called her and that He would help her successfully rid her country of the English and crown the young, hesitant French prince, [Charles VII](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-VII-king-of-France).

The French were in need of hope. Joan’s faith inspired many of them to believe in themselves and trust that they could drive the English out of France. She lit the fire of faith in the hearts of her countrymen. Word spread, hope was kindled, and before long they flocked to her, rallied beneath her banner, and began fighting and winning battles and recovering French cities.

**She Encouraged Others to Live Their Faith**

Most of the Frenchmen that fought for Joan were also Catholic and shared her faith. She encouraged them to live it strictly and provided them ways to do so as they travelled with her from battle to battle. It is said that she even drove prostitutes away from the French army camps to protect and preserve the righteousness and faith of her soldiers.

**She Relied on Her Faith for Protection**

Joan believed her faith would protect her. Though she was wounded twice in battle—once, taking an arrow to the shoulder, and later, a crossbow bolt to the thigh—her faith and intuition seemed to keep her from serious harm until she accomplished what she believed to be her mission.

**Her Faith Helped Her Do Hard Things**

Joan overcame tremendous obstacles throughout her life, from lifting the siege of Orleans, to winning essential battles, to crowning Prince Charles VII at Reims, to facing down her English accusers alone after her capture in Compiègne.

She was terrified of being burned at the stake, which ultimately became her fate. She relied heavily on her faith during the final days and hours of her life. She requested a cross before they bound her hands and feet and lit the tinder beneath her. A compassionate onlooker quickly fashioned one from sticks and gave it to her. Another found a cross, and at her request, held it high for her to gaze upon as she succumbed to the flames. It is written that Joan yelled “Jesus” six times before she expired from this life. She held fast to her faith until the very end.

Like Joan, we can have faith that our lives have purpose. Like Joan, our faith can inspire others to rise up, have hope, and live according to their faith, in spite of overwhelming odds and paralyzing challenges. Like Joan, our faith also has the power to protect us and help us do hard things.

Whether Joan’s accomplishments came about because of her faith in God, or faith in herself, much can be learned from her life about the power of faith and what’s really possible if one is willing to believe.

**Adults : Watch “Joan of Arc” on Formed!! SOOO well done. 3 hours well spent! Let us know what you think!**

**Fortitude for Kids**

by [Mikki Sciba](https://stphilipinstitute.org/author/mikki-sciba/) | Jan 6, 2020 | [Essays](https://stphilipinstitute.org/category/essays/)

**What is Fortitude?**

If you have ever watched a football game you know that the goal of the game is for your team to get the ball across your goal line, a touchdown. You also know that the person who is running with the football has many players from the other team trying to stop him and take him down. The other team does not want your team to reach the goal line and will make it difficult for your team to reach its goal. This is also true in our lives. We have a goal and things will make that difficult to accomplish. This is why we need fortitude.

Your biggest and most important goal is to be in perfect union with God. This perfect unity can only happen in heaven, but you can work in many ways here on earth to be united more fully God. You are called to know God, love him, and serve him always. This can be difficult at times, but practicing virtues help! Fortitude is the virtue that helps you stay committed to Jesus and his teachings especially when you encounter obstacles. Fortitude is being brave for God and doing what he wants you to do in the best way you can even when it’s hard.

Below are some of the virtues of fortitude. Take some time to read over these and think about ways to practice them in your life.

**Magnanimity**

Magnanimity means being great of mind and heart. Magnanimous people are fixed on thinking about and desiring to do great things for God. It’s not really about wanting to do big things that get a lot of attention. Magnanimity is about wanting to do all things well, whether big or small. Practice being ready and willing to do what is good and right to the best of your ability. You are good and made in God’s image and likeness. God created you for a mission and he wants you to desire to do his work. Pope Benedict XVI once said, “The ways of the Lord are not comfortable. But we were not created for comfort, but for greatness.” Be great by loving like God loves and strive to become a saint.

**Magnificence**

Magnanimity is about seeking to do great things and magnificence is actually doing great things. Magnificence helps you accomplish what you have already set out to do. This virtue helps you diligently complete any task that you have been given by doing it well whether it is your homework or a household chore. Being magnificent is about doing more than you have to, making an extra sacrifice, and choosing to do the harder task if given the choice. Practice magnificence by doing a good task in the best way you can. If there is room for improvement, then work on improving it. St. Teresa of Calcutta said, “Do small things with great love.” (Color and hang up the quote page as a reminder.) When you can put great love, the love of God, into your actions you are being magnificent! Check out the “Magnanimity and Magnificence” worksheet in the resource section.

**Patience**

Patience helps you stick to doing the right thing when it is painful and difficult. Practicing patience helps you from getting easily frustrated, mad, or sad when doing what God wants you to do is hard. A patient person endures his difficulty without complaining and continues to trust in God. Some ways to practice patience are to calmly wait your turn, do not complain if something unpleasant lasts for a long time, offer to be the last person in line, and learn to pray when you are waiting for something.

**Perseverance**

Perseverance is staying committed to your good goal or action. Don’t give up! If you are trying to accomplish a goal, do not let distractions, temptations, or laziness keep you from completing it.

At times we may all experience timidity, which are moments where we avoid doing what is right because we are afraid. We may fail to stand up for a friend who is being bullied or pray before eating our meal because we are afraid others may make fun of us. There may also be times where we do not feel scared and act foolishly by doing things that are unnecessary, dangerous, and not very smart. The virtue of fortitude helps us overcome being timid and foolish. Acts of fortitude will require overcoming some obstacle or difficulty. Many times making sacrifices are necessary do what God wants you to do. You may have to sacrifice your time, effort, comfort, or popularity to do God’s will. There are some people who have even sacrificed their lives for Christ. These people are called martyrs. Martyrs provide a great example of the practice of fortitude because they bravely faced death for the sake of Jesus. Use the “Research a Martyr” worksheet to help you learn more about martyred saints.

**The Bible and Fortitude**

A great story in the Bible about fortitude is the story of David and Goliath. You can find the whole story in 1 Samuel 15-17, but here is a summary:

Saul was the king of Israel at the time, but God became displeased with Saul because he was not listening to God. So God told a priest and prophet named Samuel to anoint another king to take Saul’s place. God told Samuel to go to Bethlehem and anoint a young shepherd boy named David to be the next king. Samuel did as he was told, and after David was anointed he started working for King Saul. David’s brothers also went to work for King Saul as members of his army to help battle their enemy, the Philistines. One day when David was bringing food to his brothers who were on the battlefield, he saw Goliath for the first time. Now Goliath was a very big Philistine who would yell at and insult the Israelites. He would challenge the Israelites by saying, “Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us. I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together” (1 Samuel 17:8-10). Everyone else was scared to fight Goliath since he was so mean and big, but when David heard this he went to King Saul asking if he could fight the Philistine. At first King Saul said David was too young. David explained to Saul that when he was a shepherd he had to protect his flock by fighting off bears and lions. David was confident that he since he was kept safe from the bears and lions that God would also keep him safe from Goliath. David came to battle with a slingshot and five stones while Goliath came to the battle with a sword, a spear, and another sword with a curved blade. With one stone that came flying from his sling, David hit Goliath in the head and he fell down in defeat. David showed much fortitude and trusted in the Lord.

You may never have to fight an actual giant, but you will encounter obstacles and trials that may seem scary and difficult. You can think of the example of David and how he trusted in God and persevered. Check out the “David and Goliath” coloring page to remind you of this story of fortitude.

**Prayer for Fortitude**

Lord, I want to be brave for you. I want to stay committed to you and your teachings. Help me to grow in the virtue of fortitude so I may do your will and not give up when things get hard. Teach me to practice patience and perseverance in times of difficulty. I want to honor you, Lord, in all I do whether it’s big or small. Give me a heart like yours so I can do all things with great love. Amen

**Suggestions for Practicing Fortitude**

* Stand up for someone who is being mistreated.
* Make a list of some things that frighten you. Now write some steps you can take to be stronger when those fears arise.
* Read stories about saints who were martyred or persecuted.
* Practice praying in public (For example, cross yourself and pray when you’re out to eat or before a sporting event.)
* Find a Bible verse about fortitude or courage and memorize it.

**Have the Courage to Do the Right Thing**

What does having courage mean to you?

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Describe a 􀆟me when you had the courage to do the right thing:

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How does having courage help when you see bullying?

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*Name:*

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HOW TO TEACH YOUR KIDS GRIT *By Jeremy Bangs*

“Jason wants to fix the lake,” said his mother. She was the front office secretary at Palmer Lake Elementary School where Jason was a third-grader and she said this to me when I stopped by the school to pick up something for another story I was working on.

She explained that Jason’s class was asked to write about a volunteer project they’d like to tackle. As I understand it, the question was posed as more of a writing exercise. The service aspect of the prompt was mostly an afterthought. No one expected his paper to launch a community-wide movement, probably because no one paid much attention to the lake.

Palmer Lake Elementary School is right in the middle of a small town called Palmer Lake in the Colorado foothills just north of the United States Air Force Academy. Palmer Lake itself is at the center of this town and an easy after school bike ride away for Jason and his classmates.

Palmer Lake had once been an integral part of the economic development of Colorado’s Front Range. General William J. Palmer moved to the area after the Civil War and purchased the surrounding land, made valuable by the fact that steam engines used Palmer Lake’s water to refill their boilers after climbing either side of the divide. Forced stops equated to captive audiences for commerce.

Historic photos and painting, which Jason had seen on field trips to the local museum or other points of interest, showed the lake in its heyday. One painting in particular showed a couple, sharply-dressed, cruise across the lake in a rowboat. In the background, a steam engine passed by and in the middle of the lake, a fountain. It looked like the sort of place worthy of giving rise to a town.

The Palmer Lake of Jason’s childhood looked nothing like the painting. There was no fountain. No one enjoyed his Palmer Lake on a lazy, sunny afternoon. You couldn’t even catch a fish in it. It was, as he pointed out in his class project, a lake in need of fixing.

By the time Jason’s mom had told me about Jason’s idea, she had already spread the word. In small communities like this, secretaries like Jason’s mom have contacts and information and are therefore the kind of power brokers mayors and school superintendents can only dream of becoming one day. She had already spoken to a grant writer in town who had matched Jason’s idea to the recently established Great Outdoors Colorado Fund (GOCO) which put a portion of the states lottery proceeds toward outdoor recreation projects. She had also spoken to a local artist who painted Jason’s vision of a restored Palmer Lake and was selling prints to raise money for the project.

As I began writing about the lake, I realized how bad it was. The official at the Colorado Division of Wildlife who would ordinarily stock the lake with fish explained that so much sediment had collected on the lake bottom that there wasn’t enough oxygen to support aquatic life. “If you could find a way to keep from sinking in the mud, you could probably wade across the thing,” he said.

Fixing the lake would be no small job. It would have to be drained, excavated with an eye toward creating fish habitat and refilling it. Teams of construction workers would have coordinate with wildlife biologists from the state to make all of this happen – cha-ching, cha-ching, cha-ching

Jason raised almost $400 for the project himself. He formed a Kids Committee of classmates and friends who raised more than $6,000. Jason worked the Palmer Lake lecture circuit. He got a local restaurant to have a fund-raising dinner that added another $1,000 to the effort. He spoke to the town council about the project. He gave the school board a presentation. Both pledged their support of the project which built momentum for the grant proposal in the works. When the grant was won, the $150,000 project began. It seemed to take forever to drain the lake and for the muddy bottom to dry enough to support heavy equipment. But then, front-end loaders, excavators and scrapers crawled over the lake bottom like ants removing tons of mud and even some of the ash dumped from steam engines a hundred years earlier. Eventually, the bottom of what had been a very large mud puddle became a sculpture that made one think, “If I was a fish, I’d hang out over there. Or maybe there.” As the excavation continued, the springs that originally created the lake emerged and went to work filling it.

The following year, Palmer Lake was alive again. A fountain threw a stream or water from the center of the lake and families were fishing from its shores. A dock was built from assorted paddle craft were launched or where people could simply dangle their feet over the water.

All of this happened because a third-grader wondered how it could be done and his parents met him halfway. They connected him with people in the community that did the same. On and on it went until an extraordinary vision was realized by an entire community.

I wanted to tell you this story as we consider the traits of courage, fortitude and grit because I wanted to ask this question: How many of us, as parents, would have met Jason half way on this? I like to think I would have, but I can think of many smaller projects with my own third-grader that I did not. We want them to stay the course with chores, homework, soccer practice and piano lessons. But how many times do we stand in the way of their bigger dreams – the ones that take real work and could weave fortitude into their makeup as tightly as any of their other core beliefs?

The reconstruction of Palmer Lake in the mid to late-90s is a grand, public example of something that plays out for parents all the time. Kids dream. Sometimes, their dreams are impractical. But when they’re not, we ought to think about meeting them halfway. If you’ve done something like this, or you’re starting out on a project, let us know so we can learn, support and celebrate it with you.

[*Jeremy Bangs*](https://www.familiesofcharacter.com/devblog10809?author=5ee2da247d3f04792abb9002)*April 23, 2019*

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**THE SELFLESS COURAGE OF ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE**

*by Fr. Steve Grunow • August 14, 2015*

362

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The tale is told that as a yong boy, Maximilian Kolbe had a vision of the Mother of God, her arms extended

toward him, holding two crowns, one white and the other red. Which crown would he choose?

Such visions are not easily dismissed by those privileged to see such wonders, and so Maximilian dedicated his

life to Christ, joining the Franciscan Order and later being ordained a priest.

Maximilian created an association called the Militia of Mary Immaculate,” which was dedicated to promote

devotion to the Mother of God, and in doing so, bring others closer to Christ and his Church.

The movement grew, and Maximilian became a rather formidable and outspoken figure. In another time, this

might have brought him fame, and maybe ecclesiastical advancement — but the time was World War II and

Maximilian lived in Poland.

The Nazis arrested Maximilian in a purge of Poland’s clergy and intellectuals. He was sent to the deathcamp

Auschwitz.

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There he was stripped of any vestige of his former life. His Franciscan habit was taken away and Maximlian was

given a prisoner’s striped uniform. To reinforce his indignity, he was made to wear the symbol of a pink triangle,

which the Nazis used to identify prisoners who were homosexuals.

On July 30, 1941, in retaliation for the escape of a prisoner from the camp, ten men in Maximilians’s cellblock

were chosen at random to be executed.

Maximilian, seeing that one of the prisoners had a wife and children, volunteered to take the man’s place. The

Nazis were more than willing to accept his generosity.

Maximilian and the other men were stripped naked, locked in a basement cell and left to starve to death.

Impatient that prisoners were not dying fast enough, Maximilian and the other remaining prisoners were killed

by a lethal injection on August 14, 1941.

In 1982, Pope John Paul II declared Maximilian a saint, acclaiming him as a “martyr for charity.”

Christians, the century just past, the twentieth, was perhaps the bloodiest and most inhumane in all the many

years of human civlization. We might note all the advancements, technological and otherwise, of this period, but

what we became most skilled in was mass death.

We should not look back wistfully on the twentieth century, nor should we be uncritical about the so-called

achievement of the modern world.

One of the lessons we might learn from all this is that what we call civilization is a rather thin veneer, and what

lies beneath this surface is a terrifying heart of darkness. Christians, who are called to live in the truth, must be

realists about this and cannot afford to be naive.

It was in the heart of civlized Europe, among the fading remains of Christian culture, that the death camps were

built and millions of innocent men, women and children were put to death for no other reason than that their

very existence challenged the ideological conceits of their oppressors.

In the midst of the world’s darkeness, we are called by our Baptism to be a light in the shadows of this fallen

world. Saint Maximilian is one such light, his life and death stands as a testimony to Christ, the eternal light,

whom the darkness cannot overcome.

For too many Christians, the faith is a safe routine, a kind of philosophy of self-improvement, something meant

to be comfortable and comforting.

The witness of St. Maximilian stands against this illusion. Christian faith is not so much about safety as it is

about risk. It is meant to take us out into the world, into the shadows, to be a light to show the way home to

/

those who live in darkness.

May St. Maximilian intercede for us. May we imitate his selfless courage. May the fire of his holy light enkindle

the embers of faith that may have grown cold in our own hearts.



