

Name _____

Date _____

St. Patrick

The color green, a shamrock, St. Paddy's Day parades? All of these things have become associated with our celebration of St. Patrick's Day every March. But why?

One of Christianity's most well known figures, Saint Patrick was born in Britain to a wealthy family near the end of the fourth century. At the age of sixteen, Patrick was taken prisoner by a group of Irish raiders. He was carried away to Ireland where he was held captive for more than six years. During his time as a slave, Patrick worked as a shepherd, attending the flocks of his master. Alone and homesick, Patrick prayed many times a day while in the pastures with the sheep.

In Patrick's work, "Confessio", he wrote, "the love of God and His fear increased in me more and more, and the faith grew in me, and the spirit was aroused, so that, in a single day, I have said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same, so that whilst in the woods and on the mountain, even before the dawn, I was roused to prayer and felt no hurt from it, whether there was snow or ice or rain; nor was there any slothfulness in me such as I see now, because the spirit was then fervent within me."

While a slave in Ireland, Patrick learned the Celtic language and became familiar with the culture. After six years of living as a slave, he escaped from his master and set sail on a ship to Britain. Patrick was reunited with friends and family. However, things were different with Patrick when he returned. Patrick had a new desire in his heart and that was to devote himself to the service of God.

Patrick joined St. Martin's monastery at Tours, learning the Christian life, which would help prepare him for his future ministry amongst the Irish. After years of learning and growing in faith, Patrick and his companions set sail to Ireland in the summer months of 433. Upon his arrival, Patrick went to his former master to pay the price of ransom as well as to impart to him the blessings of God but by the time he had arrived, his master had set fire to his own mansion and treasures, even casting himself upon the flame.

Patrick evangelized in Ireland for many years. It wasn't easy as St. Patrick endured trials and persecutions from those who opposed the Christian faith. In his "Confessio", he tells of the numerous times he and his missionary companions were captured. But through these hardships, St. Patrick prevailed and remained steadfast in the faith, sharing the Gospel throughout Ireland.

St. Patrick used the shamrock, a three-leaf clover, to explain the difficult understanding of the Holy Trinity to the pre-Christian Irish. To this day, the shamrock has become a symbol of Ireland.

St. Patrick founded many churches in Ireland and continued looking after them until his death on March 17, 493. Every year, on March 17, millions of people celebrate this annual feast day that celebrates St. Patrick, a patron of Ireland. In Ireland, March 17 is a national holiday as they remember the life and work of Saint Patrick.

Name _____

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St. Patrick Questions

1. Where was St. Patrick born? _____
2. At the age of 16, what significant event happened to St. Patrick? _____

3. As a slave, what was St. Patrick's job? _____

4. While in Ireland, what language did St. Patrick learn? _____

5. While alone in the fields tending to the sheep, what did St. Patrick do frequently?

6. After returning to his family, what new desire did St. Patrick have? _____

7. In what year did St. Patrick and his companions travel to Ireland as missionaries?

8. What happened when St. Patrick tried to return to his former slave owner? _____

9. What did St. Patrick use the shamrock for? _____

10. What did St. Patrick establish in Ireland? _____
11. What day is St. Patrick's Day celebrated each year? _____

Name _____

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St. Patrick Answers

1. Where was St. Patrick born?

Britain

2. At the age of 16, what significant event happened to St. Patrick?

Patrick was taken prisoner by a group of Irish prisoners and taken to Ireland.

3. As a slave, what was St. Patrick's job? He attended his master's sheep.

4. While in Ireland, what language did St. Patrick learn? Celtic

5. While alone in the fields tending to the sheep, what did St. Patrick do frequently?

He would pray often.

6. After returning to his family, what new desire did St. Patrick have?

To devote himself to the service of God, specifically to the Irish people.

7. In what year did St. Patrick and his companions travel to Ireland as missionaries? 433

8. What happened when St. Patrick tried to return to his former slave owner?

By the time St. Patrick arrived, his former slave owner had burnt not only his own mansion and treasures but himself as well.

9. What did St. Patrick use the shamrock for?

St. Patrick used the shamrock, a three-leaf clover, to explain the difficult understanding of the Holy Trinity to the pre-Christian Irish. To this day, the shamrock has become a symbol of Ireland.

10. What did St. Patrick establish in Ireland? Churches

2. What day is St. Patrick's Day celebrated each year? March 17