

## SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

## READING LEVEL 2

### True or False

1. Saint Patrick had a quiet life TRUE - FALSE
2. He was born in the V<sup>th</sup> century AD TRUE - FALSE
3. St Patrick brought Christianity to Ireland TRUE - FALSE
4. A shamrock looks like a clover with four leaves on each stem. TRUE - FALSE
5. According to the tale, Ireland has no snakes thanks to St Patrick TRUE - FALSE

### About St. Patrick

St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland and the Irish. He was born about 389 A.D. in Northern Wales, which at that time may have been part of England or Scotland.

Saint Patrick had an adventurous life. He was captured by pirates at the age of 16. The Irish pirates brought him to Ireland to tend the flocks of a chieftain in Ulster. Six years of slavery made him a devoted Christian. He escaped to France and became a monk. In 432, a vision led him to return to Ireland as a missionary bishop. He brought Christianity to Ireland and taught there for 29 years. St. Patrick founded 365 churches, baptized over 120,000 people and consecrated 450 bishops.

### The shamrock

He used the shamrock, a 3 leaf clover, (Ireland's national flower) to explain the Blessed Trinity. According to legend, Saint Patrick used a shamrock to explain about God. The shamrock, which looks like clover, has three leaves on each stem. Saint Patrick told the people that the shamrock was like the idea of the Trinity, that in the one God there are three divine beings: the Father, the Son and the Holy

Spirit. The shamrock was sacred to the Druids, so Saint Patrick's use of it in explaining the trinity was very wise.



## Saint Patrick and the Snakes

Many tales sprung up about this popular saint. One tale about Patrick is that he drove the snakes from Ireland. Different versions of the story, tell of him standing upon a hill, using a wooden staff to drive the serpents into the sea, banishing them forever from Ireland.

One version says that an old serpent resisted banishment, but that Patrick outwitted him. Patrick made a box and invited the snake to enter. The snake insisted it was too small and the two argued. Finally to prove his point, the snake entered the box to show how tight the fit was. Patrick slammed the lid closed and threw the box into the sea.

Although it's true that Ireland has no snakes, this likely had more to do with the fact that Ireland is an island and being separated from the rest of the continent the snakes couldn't get there. The stories of Saint Patrick and the snakes are likely a metaphor for his bringing Christianity to Ireland and driving out the pagan religions (serpents were a common symbol in many of these religions).

## Saint Patrick's day

According to some Irish writings, St. Patrick died on March 17, 461 A.D. The anniversary of his death is celebrated as St. Patrick's Day. It's interesting to note that the shamrock clover flowers around that time of year.

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated each year on March 17<sup>th</sup> by the Irish as well as by many Americans with parades, parties, Irish songs and jigs. People wear green on this day to represent the lushness of Ireland - The Emerald Isle.

In Ireland, Saint Patrick's Day is both a holyday and a national holiday. Saint Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland as he was the one who brought Christianity to the Irish.

Although it began in Ireland, Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated in countries around the world. People with Irish heritage remind themselves of the beautiful green countryside of Ireland by wearing green and taking part in the festivities.

Saint Patrick's Day is usually celebrated with a parade. The one in Dublin, Ireland, is known to some as the Irish Mardi Gras. But the one in New York City is actually one of the biggest. It lasts for hours. Two Irish wolfhounds, the mascots of the New York National Guard infantry regiment the Fighting 69<sup>th</sup>, always lead the parade. More than one hundred bands and a hundred thousand marchers follow the wolfhounds in the parade.

**THE END**