

# The Real Patrick

By Julie Filby



Saint Patrick was a real person, born in Britain in the year 385 C. E. He was once a slave, then ultimately a priest in Ireland. He brought many people to God at a time when many had turned away from the Lord.

**For**  
Young Family

## Season

Spring, on or around St. Patrick's Day, March 17

## Needed

About St. Patrick worksheet (see last page), crayons or markers. Optional: YouTube video: [A History of St. Patrick—A Short Story](#); ingredients for green pancakes or sugar cookies; green paper, scissors, tape.

## Prepare in Advance

Make a copy of the "About St. Patrick" worksheet for each person. Preview the video, if you will use it.

## Activity Plan

1. Gather in a comfortable space and say this prayer to begin:

*Thank you, God, for all the men and women and children who serve you faithfully each day. Help us to follow their example. Amen.*

2. Explain how there are several Christian holidays that have become widely celebrated in today's world, even by people who are not Christian. For example, for some people Christmas is all about Santa instead of celebrating Jesus' birth and Easter is all about a bunny that brings presents instead of a celebration of how God raised Jesus from death. Tell how St. Patrick's Day is just like that. While it's fun to wear green (and pinch friends who don't!) and make shamrocks, it's important to remember the roots of the holiday—it's a celebration to honor a real man, a Christian leader who was faithful to God, a saint.
3. Read aloud the story on the "About Saint Patrick" worksheet. Take a moment for each person to illustrate his or her favorite part of the story with markers or crayons.
4. OPTIONAL: Watch "[A History of St. Patrick—A Short Story](#)." Plan to go to a parade, make green pancakes or sugar cookies, or cut shamrocks from green paper to tape to your windows.
5. Pray aloud a St. Patrick's Day prayer:

*Holy God, you sent St. Patrick to preach your glory, love, and salvation to the people of Ireland. Help us to follow his example and proclaim your saving love to all people. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns forever. Amen.*

## About Saint Patrick

Patrick was born around the year 385 in Scotland. His parents were Romans, but they lived in Britain to govern the people on behalf of Rome. When Patrick was about fourteen years old, he was captured and taken to Ireland as a slave. His job was herding and tending sheep—being a shepherd. Patrick learned the Irish language and customs.

In that day, the people in Ireland did not believe in Jesus Christ, God's Savior. While he was a slave, Patrick turned to faith in God. When he was twenty years old, Patrick escaped after God told him in a dream to leave Ireland by going to the coast, where he found some sailors who took him back to Britain. Patrick went back home to his family.

Soon, Patrick had another dream. In this dream, the people of Ireland called out to him: "We beg you, holy youth, to come and walk among us once more." Patrick began studying to become a priest. He was ordained a priest and later became a bishop.

Patrick returned to Ireland in the year 433. One legend says that when he arrived, he met a chieftain of one of the tribes, who tried to kill him. Patrick led the chieftain to put his faith in God; the chieftain was unable to move his arm until he became friendly to Patrick.

Patrick began preaching the good news of God's love in Christ throughout Ireland, leading many people to faith in Christ. He built churches all over Ireland. Kings, their families, and entire communities turned to faith in God and Jesus Christ after they heard Patrick's preaching and teaching.

Patrick served in Ireland for about thirty years. God's Spirit helped him perform many miracles. He died on March 17 in the year 461.

### **Why a shamrock?**

Patrick used the shamrock plant to explain the Trinity: three persons in one God, just like the three parts to the leaf of the shamrock. The shamrock has been associated with Patrick and the Irish people ever since.

*Source: Catholic Online*

### **My favorite part of Saint Patrick's story:**

