

## School Prayer Service for St. Patrick



**Introduction for the leader:** The feast of St. Patrick is celebrated on March 17<sup>th</sup>. On this day, Irish people across the world celebrate their Irishness, with music, dance and language, and through their faith and customs. St. Patrick was born in Wales and was brought to Ireland as a slave at about

the age of sixteen. After 6 years, he managed to escape and returned home. Later in life, he became a priest and then a bishop, and, eventually, returned to Ireland to spread the Christian faith here. Most of what we know about Patrick today comes from his Confessions and Letters to Coroticus.

**You will need:** 9 children to read, 5 children to bring symbols to the Sacred Space, a class group of musicians (if you have them).

**Sacred Space:** White or green cloth, Bible, Candle, Image of St. Patrick, Holy Water, a cross/crucifix, 4 pictures attached herewith.



Opening song: Christ be beside me.

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen

**Leader:** Let us begin with a prayer to our Guardian Angel

**All:** O Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

**Leader:** We gather together today to reflect on the life of St. Patrick, who brought the Christian faith to Ireland many years ago. Let us learn about his life:

**Reader 1:** St. Patrick was born in Wales around 389 AD. His father was a Christian and was a deacon in his local church. Patrick did not have much time for God, or for his prayers, as he was too busy going to school and doing other things.

*Child holds up a coloured-in picture of 389 AD and places it in the Sacred Space.*

**Reader 2:** At the age of 16, St. Patrick was captured by slave traders and taken to Ireland where he was sold as a slave. He was bought by a chieftain farmer named Milchu. St. Patrick was sent to work, minding sheep and pigs, on a mountain called Slieve Mish in Co. Antrim.

*Child holds up a picture of sheep and pigs and places it in the Sacred Space.*

**Reader 3:** This was a very lonely time in St. Patrick's life and he turned to God in prayer. He wrote "I used to stay out in the forests and on the mountain and I would wake up before daylight to pray in the snow, in icy coldness and in the rain". He lived his life like this for 6 years until he finally escaped back to his family in Wales. He was so happy when he got back home that he praised God for answering his prayers.

*Child holds up the crucifix and places it in the Sacred Space.*

**Reader 4:** When he grew up, St. Patrick decided that he wanted to become a priest. After some years, he was made a bishop. Many years later, St. Patrick had a dream. In that dream, the people of Ireland were calling him to come back. St. Patrick decided that he would return to Ireland to tell the people about Jesus.

**Reader 5:** St. Patrick returned to Ireland in about 432 AD. He built his first church in a place called Saul in County Down and spent the next 30 years going around Ireland telling the people about Jesus. He is most famously known for using the shamrock that was growing wild in the countryside, to explain the Holy Trinity....three persons in One God. St. Patrick died around 461 AD. His grave is in Co. Down.

*Child holds up the picture of a shamrock and places it in the Sacred Space.*

**Leader:** As we gather here today to remember St. Patrick, we do so in thanksgiving for the gift of faith which he brought to our country.

**The response to each prayer is: *Glory to God forever.***

**Reader 6:** We pray for all who are trying to bring the message of Jesus and Christianity to different parts of the world.....

**Response: *Glory to God forever.***

**Reader 7:** We pray for all those who have recently been baptised. **Response: *Glory to God forever.***

**Reader 8:** *We pray for all who have been wrongly put into prison.*

**Response:** ***Glory to God forever.***

**Reader 9:** *We pray for all Irish people across the World.*

**Response:** ***Glory to God forever.***

**Leader:** *We bring all our prayers together in our Prayer to Jesus, which was written by St. Patrick, called **St. Patrick's Breastplate***

**All together:** *Christ be with me, Christ be beside me,*

*Christ be before me, Christ be behind me,*

*Christ be at my right hand, Christ be at my left hand,*

*Christ be with me wherever I go,*

*Christ be my friend, forever and ever. Amen.*

**Leader:** **We finish with an old Irish blessing.**

***The response is Amen.***

May the Lord bless us and keep us. Amen

May his face shine on us and be gracious to us. Amen

May he look upon us with kindness and give us his peace. Amen

Leader: And may God bless us all, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit. Amen

***Closing Hymn: Hail Glorious, St. Patrick.***