



Happy St. Patrick's Day! - The Story of St. Patrick

By Karen Sue Nyquist

- 1. Who doesn't love a holiday?** - In America, we enjoy celebrating holidays, indulging in the various ethnic foods and the joyous associated activities. For St. Patrick's Day, we wear outfits with green, decorate our houses, eat corned beef and cabbage, watch whimsical movies, sometimes even go to a parade. But do we even know the story of St. Patrick? Who was he?
- 2. Who was Saint Patrick?** - "Saint Patrick is Ireland's patron saint, known for spreading Christianity throughout the country as a missionary during the 5th century." (1) "St. Patrick: Biography, Missionary, Patron Saint of Ireland" – Famous Religious figures, <https://www.biography.com/religious-figures/saint-patron> "He is credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland ... He is known only from two short works, the *Confessio*, his spiritual autobiography, and his *Letter to Coroticus...*" (2) "St. Patrick – Bishop and Patron Saint of Ireland," Britannica – History and Society, [https://www.britannica.com/.../Festivals & Holidays](https://www.britannica.com/.../Festivals%20and%20Holidays)
- 3. What is known about his early years?** - Patrick was born in Britain in 386 AD. Even though his father and grandfather were Christian clergy and his mother was a Christian also, religion and education were not really emphasized in his upbringing (1). He even lived "on the wild side" (3). But God had a plan for his life! "Like Joseph sold into slavery to one day save Egypt and his brothers (Genesis 50:20) so God sent Patrick into slavery to ready Ireland for a coming salvation" (3). "The Mission of St. Patrick, Desiring God" www.desiringgod.org/the-mission-of-saint-patrick What! He was enslaved! How!
- 4. Patrick was kidnapped!** - "When Patrick was 16 years old, he was captured by Irish pirates. They brought him to Ireland, where he was sold into slavery in Dalriada. There, his job was to tend sheep. Patrick's master, Milchu, was a high priest of Druidism, a pagan sect that held major religious influence over the country at the time" (1). Druids believed in life after death and offered human and animal sacrifices to demons. (4) "Celtic Religion – Druids, Rituals, and Gods," www.britannica.com/topic/Celtic-religion
- 5. While in slavery, Patrick called out to God** – God tells us, "Call to Me and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3). "Patrick came to view his enslavement as God's test of his faith. During his six years of captivity, he became deeply devoted to Christianity through constant prayer. He saw the children of pagan Ireland reaching out their hands to him in a vision and grew increasingly determined to convert the Irish to Christianity" (2). The Irish had religion, but they did not have a relationship with the true God, nor with Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- 6. God opened Patrick's eyes and he escapes** – "While a slave in Ireland, God opened his eyes to the gospel of his childhood. It was as a captive that 'he came to understand the Irish Celtic people, and their language and culture'"(3). In a dream, he saw himself escaping in a boat, so he acted on his dream (1). "When he eventually escaped from slavery, he was a changed man, now a Christian from the heart. He studied for the ministry, and led a parish in Britain for nearly 20 years" (3).
- 7. God called Patrick back to Ireland** – At the age of 48 (well past the age of retirement in the 5th century), "Patrick had a dream, which proved to be his own version of a Macedonian Call (Acts 16:9). An Irish accent pleaded, 'We appeal to you, holy servant boy, to come and walk among us' ... "Having known the language and the customs from his captivity, and long having strategized about how the gospel might come to the Irish, he now answered the call to return to the place of his pain



with the message of joy. The slave returned to his captors with good news of true freedom” (3).

8. Patrick reached the hearts of the Irish - “Their belief that Ultimate Reality is complex, and their fascination with rhetorical triads and the number three opened them to Christianity’s Triune God. Christianity’s contrasting features of idealism and practicality engaged identical traits in the Irish character. No other religion could have engaged the Irish people’s love for heroism, stories, and legends like Christianity. Some of Christianity’s values and virtues essentially matched, or fulfilled, ideals in Irish piety and folklore. Irish Christianity was able to deeply affirm, and fulfill, the Irish love for nature and their belief in the closeness of the divine” (3).

9. Celebrating St. Patrick’s Day – Patrick wanted to so honor Jesus with his life that everyone who saw, heard, or thought of him would see, hear, and think of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (St. Patrick’s Breastplate). So when we joyously celebrate, let’s remember and honor this godly man, his legacy, and his Jesus Christ that he so lovingly and faithfully served. “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of Jesus” (Colossians 3:17).

- 10. What can we learn from St. Patrick’s life?** – He consistently made the following choices:
- a. **Never lose hope, trust God.** - “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:4-5).
 - b. **Pray to God and He will answer you** – “You will call the Lord and He will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am’” (Isaiah 58:9).
 - c. **Love God, your neighbor, and your enemies** – You shall love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and your neighbor as yourself (Luke 10:27). Jesus said, “Love your enemies, ... do good to those who hate you” (Matthew 5:44).
 - d. **Forgive others** – Jesus said, “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” but if you don’t, God won’t forgive you (Matthew 6:14-15 NIV).
 - e. **Tell others God’s good news about Jesus** – “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (*person*). He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:15-16).

11. Have you received Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Or have you done so before, but know you need renew your commitment to Him? - If so here is a suggested prayer: “Jesus, thank You for dying to pay for my sins. I believe you are the Son of God. I repent of my sins and confess You as my Lord and Savior. Please, forgive me, help me to turn away from them, and live to honor You. Please, fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I want to be Your servant and know You better. God, You can use me for Your purposes. Thank You for saving me. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen!”

Name _____ Date _____

Now Jesus will start revealing Himself even more to you. To steadily improve your relationship, spend time with Him. Start talking (praying) to Him. Read the Bible. Go to a good church where you feel God’s presence and they preach the Bible. Come visit us! Here you can get baptized, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and can fellowship with other believers. We learn much about God from each other.

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