Saint Patrick's Day

St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in Wales around 385 AD. His real name was not Patrick but Maewyn Succat. He had wealthy parents and they had a good life in the country. When he was 16 years, he was captured by pirates who took him to Ireland and sold him to a farmer.

He worked as a shepherd, tending sheep and pigs. He was very lonely and prayed all the time. One night, after more than six years as a prisoner, Patrick heard a voice – which he believed to be God's - telling him to escape. He walked for more than 200 miles until he reached the coast. He boarded a ship that took him to France where he became a priest.

He went back to Wales but, several years later, another vision told him that he had to return to Ireland to convert the Druid Irish people to Christianity.

St. Patrick lived and preached in Ireland for many years.
Instead of disregarding native Irish beliefs, he incorporated traditional customs and rituals into his lessons. He used the shamrock, a three-leaf clover, to explain the Christian concept of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

According to a legend, St. Patrick drove all the snakes from Ireland. This is not true. Ireland never actually had snakes.

Saint Patrick died on March 17 – the day we now celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Lots of cities in Ireland and in the US have St. Patrick's Day parades. Most people wear green and one of the fun Irish traditions is to pinch anyone who is not wearing green on St. Patrick's Day.

Happy St. Pat's Day