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Lá Fhéile Pádraig — St Patrick's Day

Classroom Activity Pack

Who was St Patrick? — Cé hé Pádraig Naofa?

1

St Patrick (c.385–461 CE)

The patron saint of Ireland. Born in Roman Britain, captured by Irish raiders as a teenager, enslaved in Ireland for 6 years. Escaped, returned to Britain, then came back to Ireland as a Christian missionary.

2

The shamrock — seamróg

St Patrick is said to have used the three-leafed clover to explain the Christian Trinity. Now the symbol of Ireland internationally.

3

The harp — an chláirseach

Ireland's national symbol, predating Christianity. Featured on Irish coins, the President's flag, and Guinness. One of the few countries to use an instrument as a national symbol.

4

The tricolour — an trídathach

Ireland's national flag: green (Gaelic tradition), white (peace between traditions), orange (William of Orange / Protestant tradition). Introduced in 1848, adopted officially in 1922.

5

17 March

The feast day of St Patrick — traditionally marking his death. A public holiday in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Day — Ireland vs. abroad

The difference between how it's celebrated at home



- IN IRELAND: traditionally a religious feast day. Parades in cities and towns — Dublin's parade is one of Europe's largest.
- IN IRELAND: the colour green, shamrocks, traditional music, céilí dancing. Schools and businesses close.
- ABROAD (esp. USA): 'wearing of the green', dying rivers green (Chicago has dyed the Chicago River green since 1962), Irish pubs, parades. More exuberant than in Ireland itself.
- WORLDWIDE: St Patrick's Day is celebrated in more countries than any other national holiday. There are Irish diaspora communities in 70+ countries.
- CROSS-CURRICULAR: Art — shamrock weaving or Celtic knotwork. Geography — trace Irish migration patterns. History — who was the real Patrick? Music — traditional Irish tunes. Gaeilge — phrases for Lá Fhéile Pádraig.

