Meet St. Patrick! • Saints for kids

LIVED: Patrick grew up in Britain, probably in the early 400s, and was kidnapped by Irish raiders at the age of sixteen. After being enslaved for six years, he managed to escape home.

MISSION: After returning to Britain, Patrick became a bishop. Then he had a dream in which he heard the Irish calling to him, “We appeal to you, holy servant boy, to come and walk among us.” He traveled back to Ireland, and spent 29 years building the Church there.

ADVENTURES: Shortly after returning to Ireland, Patrick and some companions traveled to the land of the High King of Tara. They camped at the hill of Slane on the night of Holy Saturday—the night of the Easter Vigil. As the sun set, Patrick and his friends could see the palace of King Laeghaire sitting high on the hill of Tara, ten miles to the south.

Now, the Irish people were celebrating their own festival, and it was the law that there should be no fire in the whole land until the druids lit a bonfire on top of the hill of Tara. Breaking this law meant death.

But Patrick had come to bring the light of Christ to Ireland, and he was determined to celebrate Easter that night. If you have ever attended the Easter Vigil, you know that it begins with a large bonfire, from which the Easter candle, representing the light of Christ, is lit. Well, Patrick and his friends built the largest Easter bonfire ever, one that the king and his druids would be sure to see.

When they did, the king was furious, and his druids were afraid. “If that fire is not put out this night, O king,” they said, “it will never be extinguished from the land.”

Angrily, the king rode out with his whole retinue, intending to kill Patrick. But Patrick and his friends bravely walked out to meet the king and his warriors, chanting: “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will call upon the Name of the Lord our God.”

The bravery of the Christians so impressed the warriors that one believed in God on the spot—the first of more than 100,000 Irish to whom Patrick would bring the light of Christ. And just as the druids had predicted, it was never extinguished from the land.

Learn more

Paddy and the Wolves: A Story About Saint Patrick When He Was a Young Boy

Paddy and the Wolves coloring book

St. Patrick at Wikipedia