

Year 9 Drama for St Patrick's Day Assembly

Characters: Narrators, Patrick, Patrick's mother & father, Milchu, Irish raiders, market place traders, angel/man in dream, Captain of ship and crew, Irish King, Irish converts to Christianity – *a lot of these parts can be acted out by the same students*).

Narrator: St Patrick was born in Roman Britain around the end of the 4th Century, that's nearly 1,600 years ago. (Enter student acting as Patrick)

Student holds up placard with date on it (389) or on powerpoint?

Narrator: His father's name was Calpurnius. We don't know his mother's name but we do know that they were a well off family. (Enter Patrick's Father & Mother – they stand either side of Patrick). His father was a Deacon in his local Christian Church and worked with other Christians in helping to organise and run it. So Patrick was brought up as a Christian as Christianity was the official religion of the Roman Empire at that time. However, Patrick didn't often think about God or faith. His life was too busy with other things, he had no time for prayer.

Patrick's real name was Succat and he most likely lived on the west coast of Britain, perhaps in Wales. Patrick was attending school and could read and write. (Act out Patrick going off to school with other boys and parents waving him off – map showing location of Wales on power-point).

When Patrick was just 16 his life dramatically changed. The town was raided by a horde of strange, red-haired, armed and cloaked giants and Patrick was kidnapped. (Students act out kidnapping of Patrick – Patrick is tied up and a cloak put over his head and he is led away)

He was captured with thousands of others and he was taken back to Ireland and sold as a slave to an Irish Chieftain called Milchu. (Student's act out the selling of Patrick to Milchu – sold for the price of one sheep)

Patrick viewed his kidnapping and captivity as a punishment for his sinful youth and his general indifference towards religion and faith. His slave master was very cruel and made him work as a herdsman looking after sheep and pigs on Slemish Mountain, near Ballymena, in County Antrim. Patrick spent many long days and nights on Slemish and was very lonely, cold and frightened. (Student acts as Patrick on Slemish, shivering with cold and very sad – and map showing location of Mount Slemish on powerpoint).

Having no-one else to talk to, Patrick began to talk to God and bit by bit his interest in God and faith was re-awakened. Some days he said over 100 prayers and almost as many in the night. He felt that God was with him and that God would keep him safe and eventually guide him safely home to his family. (Student kneels and prays earnestly)

Patrick really missed his family and longed to see them again. Then one night God answered his prayers. Patrick had a dream and in the dream a voice told him to run away from his master and that he should keep going until he found a ship bound for Britain. (Students act this out – Patrick lying sleeping – other student calls Patrick’s name, ‘Succat, Succat, when you wake up you must run away from your master. Keep going west until you find a ship that will take you back to your family in Britain. It is a long way off, about 200 miles, but take heart Succat. Soon you will be with your family again.’)

So Patrick got up and left the man who had held him captive for 6 years. He travelled day and night until he had walked the 200 miles to the west coast of Ireland where the ship was waiting. (Student acts this – Patrick walking, exhausted - but so hopeful when he eventually sees the ship).

Patrick approached the captain and begged to be allowed to travel with the crew. (Students acts this). The captain refused and Patrick was terribly disappointed.

He began to walk away and as he did he began to pray. Next thing he heard the captain calling him. (Student says ‘Come back boy. You can travel with us and work to cover your fare.’)

Patrick was delighted. After six years he would see his family again. He praised God in thanks.

After several years journeying Patrick was finally united with his family in Britain. (Students act reunion) His family were so glad to have him back after his terrible ordeal.

Then one night, several years later, Patrick had another dream. In the dream a man appeared to him and begged him to return to Ireland. Then, suddenly, the one man became hundreds of voices calling out to Patrick. (Students act this out) (O Holy Youth Succat, I/we am/are the voice(s) of the people of Ireland. Come and walk amongst us once more – start with one voice and then add more and more)

Patrick awoke and decided then and there that he must train to be a priest and then a Bishop and then return to Ireland. His family were horrified at the idea of Patrick going back to Ireland after his experiences there and they tried to persuade him to stay. (Act this out)

After many years of study and prayer, Patrick was ordained a priest and then a Bishop. It was at this time that he was given the name Patricius or Patrick. (Act this out – Patrick receiving his mitre - hat and crosier - staff)

In the year 432, Patrick got his wish when he was sent to Ireland to replace Bishop Palladius who had died a short while after arriving in Ireland. Patrick and his small band of helpers

landed on the shores of Strangford Lough and were welcomed by the local King. (Act out Patrick arriving in Ireland)

Despite many hardships, Patrick was very successful as a missionary. He built his first Church at Saul in County Down and spent approximately 30 years travelling around Ireland preaching the faith. He converted many thousands of Irish people to Christianity. (Students act this out)

Near the end of his life, Patrick decided to write down his story. He called his book his confession and it tells the story of his work in converting the people of Ireland. This book still exists today and is our main source of information about Patrick. (Act out Patrick writing his book – Quill pen & parchment)

Patrick is believed to have died around 461 at the Church in Saul. (Act out Patrick's death – picture of Saul Church & date on power-point).

Legend has it that Patrick was visited by an angel before his death who told him that on his death his body was to be transferred onto a cart and the cart was to be yoked to some untamed oxen. They were to be let roam free and Patrick was to be buried wherever they stopped. The story goes that they stopped at the highest hill in Downpatrick and on that site Down Cathedral was built in honour of the saint. (Picture of gravestone – power-point)

Prayers:

Dear God,

We recall the story of our Patron Saint, Patrick. We recall how his town was raided and how he was kidnapped when he was just 16 years old. We think of how frightened he must have been to be attacked in his own home and carried off to an unknown land. We picture him lost, alone and frightened as he faced an uncertain future. We pray today for anyone who feels frightened, lost or alone. We pray that, like Patrick, they may come to know your loving presence in their lives and believe that you are always by their side. Lord hear us.

All: Lord graciously hear us

Dear God,

We recall how Patrick was sold into slavery and forced to work as a herdsman for six years on Slemish Mountain. We think of the harsh conditions in which Patrick worked and the cruelty of his master. We picture Patrick huddled against the cold and the dark of the mountainside with only the animals for company. We pray today for anyone who is sold

into slavery and is forced to work inhumane conditions. We pray that like Patrick, they will come to know freedom and justice. Lord hear us.

All: Lord graciously hear us

Dear God,

We recall how Patrick escaped after six years and returned to his family in Britain. We think of how difficult and dangerous the journey back home was for Patrick. We picture the joy on his face when he was reunited with his family again. We pray today for all those who long to escape from the oppression of addiction or ill health in their lives. We pray that like Patrick they may experience the joy of freedom and peace. Lord hear us.

All: Lord graciously hear us

Dear God,

We recall how Patrick answered God's call and returned to the Irish as a missionary bishop in 432AD. We think of how hard a decision this must have been for Patrick, to leave his family once again and return to the land of his captivity. We picture Patrick arriving on the shores of Strangford Lough ready to begin his mission to the Irish. We pray today for all those who are charged with the responsibility of leading others and of having to make difficult decisions. We pray that they will have the same courage as Patrick and rely on God's Spirit to guide them in all that they do. Lord hear us.

All: Lord graciously hear us

Dear God,

We recall how Patrick served you faithfully in Ireland for over 30 years. We think of the many hardships he endured while conducting his mission. We picture him tired and old, sitting at a desk, writing his last Confession. We pray today for all those working in ministry who are tired of mind, body and spirit. We pray that they, like Patrick, will give their lives over to you and allow your healing love to renew them and give them hope. Lord hear us.

All: Lord graciously hear us