

St. Patrick's Day



ST. PATRICK'S DAY is celebrated every year on **MARCH 17**. It honors a man named Patrick, who is known as the patron saint of Ireland. A **PATRON SAINT** (a special religious figure believed to guide or protect a country or group of people) holds an important place in history and tradition. Over time, this day became a celebration not only of Patrick's life, but of Irish culture around the world.

Patrick did not grow up in **IRELAND**. He was born in Britain during the late 300s. When he was a teenager, he was taken to Ireland and forced to work as a **SHEPHERD**. During those difficult years, he deepened his faith. Eventually, he escaped and returned home. Later, he went back to his home. As a grown man, he returned to Ireland to teach people about his **BELIEFS** (ideas about faith and religion).

Today, St. Patrick's Day includes both religious observance and cultural celebration. It is a time when people recognize Ireland's influence on history, music and traditions.

SPELL

ST PATRICKS DAY

SHEPHERD

BELIEFS

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the title for a special religious figure believed to protect or guide a country?
PATRON SAINT
2. Which country is most closely connected to St. Patrick's Day? IRELAND
3. On what day do we celebrate St. Patrick's Day? MARCH 17

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE QUESTION

Ireland is part of which continent? EUROPE

Symbols of the Holiday

Many holidays use **SYMBOLS** to represent important ideas. A well-known symbol of St. Patrick's Day is the **SHAMROCK** (a small plant with three leaves). According to legend, Patrick used this plant to explain the Holy Trinity, an important Christian belief. Shamrocks are also symbols of Irish heritage, luck and Spring.

Ireland is sometimes called the **EMERALD ISLE** because of its green landscape. On St. Patrick's Day many people wear green clothing to show participation in the celebration. This tradition has become a fun and visible way to join the holiday.

Some people also talk about **LEPRECHAUNS** (small pretend characters from Irish stories). These characters are part of old tales passed down through families.



SPELL

SYMBOL

EMERALD ISLE

SPRING

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the small three-leaf plant connected to this holiday? **SHAMROCK**
2. What color do people wear on this day? **GREEN**
3. What do we call small pretend characters from Irish tales? **LEPRECHAUNS**

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

What are other symbols of St. Patrick's Day? **RAINBOW, POT OF GOLD**

What does the word isle mean? **ISLAND**

How People Celebrate

St. Patrick's Day is **CELEBRATED** in many places through large public events. Cities organize **PARADES** that include marching bands, dancers and floats. In many cities, people dye rivers, lakes or fountains green in celebration of St. Patrick's Day. Large buildings, bridges and other **LANDMARKS** are sometimes lit with green lights.

Long ago, many Irish families moved to other countries including the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Argentina. These **IMMIGRANTS** brought their traditions with them. Over time, St. Patrick's Day has grown into a celebration of **HERITAGE** (traditions and history passed down from earlier generations) that reminds people of their shared **IDENTITY**.

SPELL

CELEBRATE

PARADE

LANDMARK

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What word describes people who move permanently to a new country? IMMIGRANT
2. What is the term for traditions and history passed down from earlier generations?
HERITAGE
3. Name a country where large numbers of Irish families moved to. (choose one from paragraph 2)
4. What is the name for decorated vehicles or giant balloons that are featured in a parade?
FLOATS

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE QUESTION

Can you name the famous city show below that always dyes its river green for St. Patrick's Day?
CHICAGO

