

Today our story is about a saint who taught about Jesus and God 400 years after Jesus' time. His special symbol is a shamrock, a three-leaf clover, because this follower of God used the shamrock to teach new Christians about the Trinity. His Feast Day is today, March 17. We know him as St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland.

But our story doesn't start in Ireland. It starts across the Irish Sea where Patrick grows up in England. He is a boy in a Christian family. And then a scary thing happens. When he is only 16 years old, he is forced onto a boat and taken as a slave to Ireland. Patrick is a slave in Ireland for six long years. He takes care of sheep and dogs. The people in Ireland are not Christians. He is lonely and far away from his family. But not far away from God. Patrick starts praying. Some people say he prayed a hundred times a day.

While Patrick prays to God, God speaks to Patrick. God directs Patrick to run away to the sea, that there will be a boat waiting to take him back to England. So Patrick escapes. Sure enough, he finds sailors who help him return to England.

You can imagine how happy he is to be home. And how much he is thanking God for helping him. He decides to become a priest.

One night, he has a vision of the people of Ireland calling him back to teach them about God and Jesus.

Patrick returns to Ireland to spread the message of Jesus Christ. Patrick becomes Bishop of the Church in Ireland. In Ireland, St. Patrick uses nature to show lessons about God. He uses the shamrock to explain the Trinity. The shamrock is three leaves in one. The one stem shows the one God. The three leaves represent the three parts of God- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Not three Gods, but three dimensions of one God, the Trinity. When Patrick uses the shamrock to explain, new Christians understand God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit better.

Even now, more than a thousand years later, St. Patrick's ideas help us learn about God, too.

**Wonder Question:** In the story, how do you think God used a bad thing (Patrick is taken as a slave to Ireland) to become something good?

### Shamrock Trinity Maze

